

**"THE OLD-FASHIONED BIBLE,"**

OR

**TEN REASONS**

AGAINST THE

**PROPOSED BAPTIST VERSION**

OF THE

**NEW TESTAMENT:**

A DISCOURSE DELIVERED AT

**HOPE CHAPEL, BROADWAY, MARCH 31st, 1850.**

BY JOHN DOWLING, D.D.,

Pastor of the Broadway Baptist Church, New York.

NEW YORK:

**EDWARD H. FLETCHER,**

141 NASSAU STREET.

1850.

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**District of New York.**

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Stereotyped by C. Duvison & Co., 33 Gold st., N. Y.

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NEW YORK, April 1st, 1850.

REV. AND DEAR SIR:—The undersigned having listened with great pleasure and satisfaction to your recent able and conclusive discourse at the Broadway Baptist Church, against the proposed new version of the Scriptures substituting *Immerse* for *Baptize*, would most respectfully and urgently, on behalf of hundreds who were present on that occasion, request its immediate publication; believing, as they do, that the discourse is well adapted to enlighten the public mind upon this vitally important question, far beyond the limits of the crowded assembly who listened to it, and of the city in which it was delivered.

NATHAN C. PLATT.  
S. P. TOWNSEND.  
W. D. SALISBURY.  
B. S. SQUIRES.  
CHAS. WHITING.  
JAMES M. PLUMB.  
HENRY C. YALE.

REV. JOHN DOWLING, D. D.

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NEW YORK, April 5th, 1850.

GENTLEMEN:—I cheerfully comply with your kind and earnest request for the publication of my discourse against the proposed Baptist version of the New Testament. Although as firmly convinced as yourselves of the urgency and importance of this subject, I am not sure that I should have consented to publish, had not an unauthorized edition of my discourse already been printed from a phonographic report, under a title which I did not select, and do not approve; and abounding with those minute but sometimes important typographical and other errors, inseparable from phonographic reports however skilfully taken, where the proof is not submitted to the author's inspection, before being committed to the press. Hoping that your expectations may be more than realized, as to the good to be accomplished by this humble effort,

I remain, gentlemen,  
yours, most respectfully,  
J. DOWLING.

MESSRS. NATHAN C. PLATT,  
S. P. TOWNSEND,  
W. D. SALISBURY,  
B. S. SQUIRES,  
CHARLES WHITING,  
• JAMES M. PLUMB,  
HENRY C. YALE.

# INTRODUCTORY

## STATEMENT OF FACTS.

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THE following historical facts are here succinctly stated, in order to assist the readers of the following discourse in understanding the matter in controversy between those who think with the author, on the one side, and the President and Secretary of the American and Foreign Bible Society, on the other.

1. The American and Foreign Bible Society was provisionally organized by a Convention of Delegates who assembled at the Oliver Street church, N. Y., May 12th and 13th, 1836.

2. The immediate cause of its formation was the passage of the following resolution by the Board of Managers of the American Bible Society, adopted February 17th, 1836.

*“ Resolved, That in appropriating money for the translating, printing, or distributing of the Sacred Scriptures in foreign languages, the Managers feel at liberty to encourage only such versions as conform in the principle of their translation to the common English version; at least so far as that all the religious denominations represented in this Society, can consistently use and circulate said versions in their several schools and communities.”*

3. In April, 1837, a large Bible Convention, consisting of Baptists from all parts of the United States, assembled in Philadelphia, “ to decide upon the duty of the denomination, in existing circumstances, respecting the translation and distribution of the Sacred Scriptures.” At this Convention, several days were occupied in discussing the above

subject; a large portion of the time upon the question, whether the Society should be confined to the *foreign* field, or should also include operations *at home*. It was thought by many, that as the difficulty with the American Bible Society referred only to the foreign field, the Society ought to be confined to that. A fear, also, was repeatedly expressed, lest, if the new Society should include the home field, the Managers should attempt an alteration of the commonly received version of the Scriptures.

4. In the circular issued by that Bible Convention, we are informed as follows:

“As a matter of *compromise*, it was unanimously agreed to confine the operations of the society which has been organized by the Convention, *during the ensuing year*, to the circulation of the Sacred Scriptures in foreign tongues; and in the mean time to solicit the denomination throughout our land, to send up to the first annual meeting of the Society in New York, the last week in April, 1838, their views as to the duty of the Society to engage in home distribution after that period. The following are the resolutions passed by the Convention on this subject:

1. “*Resolved*, That under existing circumstances, it is the indispensable duty of the Baptist denomination in the United States, to organize a distinct society for the purpose of aiding in the translation, printing, and circulation of the Sacred Scriptures.

2. “*Resolved*, That this organization be known by the name of the American and Foreign Bible Society.

3. “*Resolved*, That the Society confine its efforts, during the ensuing year, to the circulation of the word of God, in foreign tongues.

4. “*Resolved*, That the Baptist denomination in the United States be affectionately requested to send to the Society, at its annual meeting, during the last week in April, 1838, their views as to the duty of the Society to engage in the work of home distribution.”

5. At the annual meeting, held at Oliver st., New York, April 26th, 1838, in compliance with a very general response from the denomination, it was resolved that the Society should include in its operations the HOME as well as the foreign field, and it was at the same time also

“*Resolved*, That in the distribution of the Scriptures in the Eng-

lish language, they will use the commonly received version until otherwise directed by the Society."

6. In April, 1845, a memorial signed by Rev. Spencer H. Cone, President of the Society, and others, remonstrating against the addition of the title *Baptist* to the name of the Society, in a proposed charter, was addressed to the New York legislature, containing the following expressions :

"In addition to other insuperable objections to any alteration of title, the introduction of the term *Baptist* was peculiarly offensive, because the opponents of the Society had, from the time of its organization, *industriously circulated the unfounded charge*, that your memorialists could not co-operate in circulating the common English Bible, but were bent upon publishing a 'Baptist Bible,'—which design, if not already accomplished, they would certainly carry into effect at some future day. Such a charge would wear the color of probability with the common mind, were the institution, represented by your memorialists, to be officially designated a *Baptist Bible Society*."

7. At the Annual Meeting of the Society, May 11th, 1849, at a short business meeting of one hour, previous to the public Anniversary, at which few members were present except those residing in the immediate vicinity, the following Resolution was hurriedly passed—no notice having been previously given of any intention to take so important a step, and no opportunity for discussing it having been afforded, viz. :

"*Resolved*, That the restriction laid by the Society upon the Board of Managers, in 1838, to use only the commonly received version in the distribution of the Scriptures in the English language, be *removed*."

8. During the present year, a corrected version of the English New Testament, with the word *immerse* substituted for *baptize*, and various other alterations, has been "prepared" and stereotyped, under the supervision of the Rev. Dr. Cone, President of the American and Foreign Bible Society, and Mr. Wm. H. Wyckoff, Corres-

ponding Secretary; and a pamphlet advocating such a "version" as they have "prepared," has been published and circulated very extensively, with their own signatures attached. In this pamphlet, the authors say—

"A corrected edition of the English New Testament has been prepared by the subscribers, in connection with eminent scholars, who have kindly co-operated, and given their hearty approval to the proposed corrections. A copy of this will be sent gratuitously to the written order of each member of the Society, who wishes to examine it. You are invited to procure and read it, and to attend the ensuing anniversary of the Society, when the stereotype plates will be offered as a donation, with the provision that they be printed from according to the demand."

9. It is in opposition to the encouragement of such a "new version" by American Baptists, and to dissuade from its adoption by the American and Foreign Bible Society, at its approaching anniversary in May, 1850, that the following "ten reasons" have been given to the public. The discourse was first delivered at Hope Chapel, Broadway, New York, and repeated, by request, at the First Baptist church, Brooklyn, under the pastoral care of the Rev. J. L. Hodge. On the latter occasion, a few additional paragraphs were added, which are incorporated in the following pages. •

NEW YORK, }  
April 10th, 1850. }

J. D.



**TEN REASONS**  
AGAINST THE  
**PROPOSED BAPTIST VERSION**  
OF THE  
**NEW TESTAMENT.**

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" I speak as to wise men ; judge ye what I say." 1 Cor. x. 15.

I AM about to address you this evening, beloved brethren, upon a new and unusual topic ; upon one too, concerning which, I am pained to say, that I am compelled to differ from some of my brethren in this city with whom I have long been intimate, and whom I have ever been accustomed to venerate, esteem, and love. The fact, however, that I most consciously and heartily differ from them on this important subject, shall not, I trust, prevent me from continuing to cherish towards them the same ardent Christian affection as ever, as brethren beloved in the Lord. If I feel compelled to speak my sentiments freely in relation to the object they have proposed, the means they have taken to accomplish it, and the disastrous consequences to the Baptist denomination that would follow its adoption ; believe me, brethren, when I say that I am prompted only by the solemn conviction which I have of the painful and perilous crisis in which our beloved denomination is placed by this movement, and by the imperative duty that devolves upon me, in connection with my brethren, who entertain the same views with myself, to defeat it if we can. If, in this effort, however, we shall fail, then we shall at least retire from the contest with the satisfaction that we have done all we can to avert the threatened evil, and that we have freed ourselves from any responsibility in the disastrous consequences which may result from the adoption of the measure we oppose.

It is probably known to most of this audience that within a few months past, a design has been entertained by a small number of prominent Baptists, mostly residing in this city, to supplant—at least so far as the Baptist denomination are concerned—the commonly received version of the English Scriptures by a new or revised version, the distinctive feature of which shall be the substitution of the words Immerse, Immersion, Immerser, instead of the words Baptize, Baptism, Baptist. For example—“I have an immersion to be immersed with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished;” “In those days came John the Immerser preaching in the wilderness of Judea;” and so in all corresponding passages, where these words occur. Among the most prominent and influential individuals who have engaged in this enterprise, are the venerable Pastor of the Broome Street Baptist Church, who is also the President of the American and Foreign Bible Society, together with the Corresponding Secretary, and one or two wealthy members of the Board, who have stood ready to supply the funds needed for carrying this design into effect.

If any apology is needed from me for making this proposed “new version” the subject of a public discourse, that apology may be found partly in the desire I have, that my own church and congregation may be fortified against the plausible but sophistical reasons which have been industriously circulated in favor of this enterprise; and partly, because I consider it my duty to the cause of truth, to contribute whatever may be in my own power towards defeating a purpose so fraught with injury to the denomination with which I stand connected, so destructive of that brotherly love and harmony which should exist between all the followers of Christ, so suicidal to the American and Foreign Bible Society itself, and so utterly uncalled for by any consideration of principle or of duty.

Had the design of these brethren been merely the publication of a new version of the Scriptures, upon their own individual responsibility, with their own names on the title page as editors or as publishers, I should not have felt called upon to take any public notice of such an enterprise. In such a case the consequences would have rested with themselves, the public would have estimated their production at its just value, and the book would either have been left to shrink into deserved insignificance like some similar attempts; or, if worthy of a better fate, to take its place on the shelves

of our libraries, by the side of Lowth, or of Campbell, Doddridge, Macknight or Bernard.

In the present instance, however, the projectors of this enterprise, unwilling to send forth the book which we understand *they have already prepared*—to stand or fall by its own intrinsic worth—are determined, if possible, to secure its adoption and publication by the American and Foreign Bible Society, a great denominational institution; and thus, as far as it possibly can be done, to make the whole Baptist denomination of the United States responsible for the publication, so that it shall be regarded by the world in the light, not of an individual, but of a great denominational enterprise; and that thus a great body of nearly one million Baptists who compose that denomination, and more especially the three or four thousand Life Members and Directors residing in all the States of this Union, shall be held accountable therefor at the bar of public opinion. Now as a member and a minister of the Baptist denomination, and as one among the multitude of Life Members and Directors of the American and Foreign Bible Society who heartily disapprove of this movement, I cannot consent to be silent, while an act is urged onward to its consummation, for which, if we were to hold our peace, not only we, but all the long list of members of that Society, whose names are annually published in its minutes, would be held specially accountable before the world, and deserving of all the odium and reproach which such an act would justly provoke. Some, perhaps, may think that, notwithstanding this attempt to involve a great society and a great denomination in the responsibility and the consequences of what is, in reality, only an individual act—still the proper time to oppose it would be, not in a public address from the pulpit, but at the annual meeting of the Bible Society. To this I would reply—such would be precisely my own opinion, were it not that the prominent leader in this movement, who, from his position as President of the Bible Society, has facilities for disseminating his own private views, and for exerting an influence far superior to any other individual, has himself elaborately and repeatedly presented from the pulpit and argued his own views on this subject; and that both himself and the Secretary of the Bible Society have enlisted also the aid of the press, publishing an elaborate argument, and aided by funds which might otherwise have been contributed to the Bible Society, gratuitously forwarding it to all parts of the

land for the purpose of forestalling public opinion ; and besides all this, preparing and publishing in advance the proposed "new version," upon the presumption that it will be adopted by the Bible Society—thus employing all the influence of their position as officers of the Bible Society in the attempt to bring over to their own private views the Life Members and Directors of that Society in all the different States of this wide-spread Union. While such energies have been employed by the officers of the Society for doing a work for which they were certainly not appointed when elected to their present stations, namely the preparation of this new or amended version ; and while such premature, persevering and unintermitted efforts are put forth to forestall public opinion in favor of the book they have prepared, and thus to affiliate upon the denomination the progeny which they have begotten ; I hold that it is the duty of every one who dares to think and act for himself, and who is unwilling to pin his faith to the sleeve of any man or body of men, to declare, in the exercise of a bold and manly independence, his convictions upon this matter, and to clear himself from the responsibility in the case which silence might involve. Actuated by these convictions, I shall proceed to state the reasons why I shall feel it to be my duty to oppose, with what little of energy or ability God may have favored me, the attempt to induce the American and Foreign Bible Society to father and to adopt the "new version" which their President and Secretary have taken upon themselves to prepare, or any other version the distinguishing feature of which is the expulsion from the sacred text of the endeared and cherished word which we have ever used as a designation of the ordinance of Baptism, or the epithet so dear to the sainted fathers in our Baptist Zion who have gone home to their rest—that epithet by which our denomination has been so long distinguished, applied to the forerunner of our Lord—John the *Baptist*.

In the document which has been issued by the President and Secretary of the Bible Society, various other corrections of the text have been recommended in the proposed "new version." Believing, however, most firmly as I do that these suggestions have been thrown in only as *make-weights*, in order to aid the great object of the substitution of "immerse" for "baptize," I shall not on the present occasion enter into any examination of the correctness of these criticisms. All

that notice to which they are entitled will be given to them in a document by a gentleman eminently qualified for the task, to be presented to the public during the present week :\* I will, however, remark that in common with hundreds of others I have been both pained and shocked at the flippant manner in which we have been told of the "absurdity and impiety" of that venerable and sacred name which is applied in our common version to the third Person in the adorable Trinity, the *Holy Ghost*, (instead of Spirit.) Certainly it would be amusing, were it not so painful, to notice the self-complacency with which the two good brethren who have issued this document brand with the reproach of "manifest blasphemy" the use of that holy name, which for hundreds of years has been revered and hallowed by such giants in learning and theology, as Owen and Charnock, Flavel and Howe, Edwards and Doddridge, Gill and Fuller, Hall and Carson, and by all the pious and the learned wherever the English language has been spoken for hundreds of years. "Manifest blasphemy" indeed! Is it possible that these brethren can have weighed the import of their words, when they thus brand the use of this sacred name in the formula of administering the ordinance of Baptism, or in the noblest Doxology ever written in the English language. In spite of this charge of manifest blasphemy, however, I shall not cease, as often as God shall grant me the privilege, to administer Christ's own ordinance of Baptism in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, nor to anticipate the blessedness of Heaven itself by singing that noble old Doxology which has so often thrilled through the hearts of thousands who are now in glory ;

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,  
 Praise Him all creatures here below,  
 Praise Him above, ye Heavenly Host,  
 Praise Father, Son and *Holy Ghost!*

The fact is that the common version which it is proposed to amend, is, taken as a whole, a wonderful translation, and although it may be conceded that it is not perfect—for what human performance is so?—yet it is exceedingly doubtful, whether a translation has ever been made from any ancient

\* This document, from the pen of the Rev. Edmund Turney of Utica, has since been presented at a public meeting in the Oliver St. Baptist Church, Thursday evening, April 4th, and is now before the public.

book, Greek, Latin, or Oriental—which in point of faithfulness to its original can be compared with this, or which has fewer errors in proportion to the entire amount of its contents. Seven years ago, I was called to defend the common version of the Scripture against the attacks of a Roman Catholic priest, who undertook to defend the burning of the bibles at Champlain, on account of the alleged worthlessness of the translation. In the little work published at the time, in which that controversy was printed, I used the following language, which I have never yet seen occasion to change.

“The circumstances under which the Protestant version was prepared by forty-seven of the most learned men of the reign of King James I., so eminently adapted to secure its fidelity, are too well known to need repeating. Permit me to quote a few testimonies to its value from some of the most learned scholars and theologians that England ever produced. And though the testimony of so humble an individual as myself can add but little to the value of an opinion expressed by these giants in Biblical literature, yet I will add, that, after more than one careful comparison of the whole Hebrew and Greek originals with the version in common use among Protestants, though I am, by no means, convinced that King James’ version is absolutely perfect, and I therefore rejoice in the additional light thrown upon many passages by the labors of Lowth, Doddridge, Campbell, Macknight and other more recent scholars, yet AS A WHOLE, I have never yet seen a version which I would be willing to substitute for that as the commonly received version of the mass of the people. I have seen many which I would have *lay by its side* to assist in the reading of it, but none which I should wish TO TAKE ITS PLACE. The following testimonies might easily have been increased.

“*John Selden*.—‘The English translation of the Bible is the best translation in the world.’

“*Bishop Walton*.—‘The last English translation, made by divers learned men, at the command of King James, may justly contend with any now extant in any other language in Europe.’

“*Bishop Lowth*.—‘The common translation of the Bible is the best standard of our language.’

“*Dr. Geddes*.—‘If accuracy, fidelity, and the strictest attention to the letter of the text be supposed to constitute the

qualities of an excellent version, this, of all versions, must, in general, be accounted the most excellent. Every sentence, every word, every syllable, every letter and point, seem to have been weighed with the nicest exactitude, and expressed either in the text or margin, with the greatest precision.'

"*Dr. Doddridge.*—'On a diligent comparison of our translation with the original, we find that of the New Testament, and I might also add that of the Old, in the main, faithful and judicious.'

"*Rev. J. W. Whitaker.*—'It may be compared with any translation in the world without fear of inferiority; it has not shrunk from the most vigorous examination; it challenges investigation, and in spite of numerous attempts to supersede it, it has hitherto remained unrivalled in the affections of the country.'

"*Dr. Adam Clarke.*—'The translators have seized the very spirit and soul of the original, and expressed this, almost every where, with pathos and energy. The *original* from which it was taken, is alone superior to the Bible translated by the authority of King James.'"

It will be unnecessary to enlarge this list by the names of equally eminent scholars and theologians of America, because it is well known, that on this Western Continent there has, till lately, been scarcely a dissentient voice from the opinions thus expressed. Yes, my brethren, the precious words of this cherished volume are incorporated throughout our whole religious literature, and treasured in the memories and enthroned in the hearts of all the followers of Jesus; and to attempt to supplant it by a "new version," or to introduce any material alterations, would be like "gilding refined gold," and would inflict a painful shock upon the religious sensibilities of the whole of English Christendom.

It is not my present purpose to notice the various additional emendations and corrections to be made in the proposed "new version," some of which might perhaps be desirable, if they could be adopted with the common consent of all Christians who speak the English language. I shall now proceed, therefore, to state my reasons why we should oppose the publication, by this great denominational Society, of a version of the English Scriptures, the distinguishing feature of which should be the substitution of *immerse* for *baptize* wherever it occurs in the New Testament. In relation to this subject

correspondence has been held with several eminent and learned Baptists, some of whom, however, have requested that their views shall not be made public. I shall occasionally fortify my own conclusions by extracts from those who have imposed no such restriction.

1. In the first place then, I remark, I should object to this "new version," because the publication of such a book by the American and Foreign Bible Society, which is a great denominational institution, *would be regarded as a denominational act*: and it would be unjust thus to involve the Baptist denomination in the odium of a work to which a very large portion of that denomination are cordially and heartily opposed.

This objection is so forcibly illustrated by a recent article from the pen of Rev. Dr. Hague, in the *Christian Watchman and Reflector*, that I shall be excused for the following quotation. Alluding to the assertion in the pamphlet of brethren Cone and Wyckoff, that the American and Foreign Bible Society is the proper and the only body which can perform the work of giving such a corrected version as they advocate, Dr. Hague remarks :

"If any man or any number of men, in the city of New York, are disposed to publish a new English version of the Scriptures at their own expense, no one has any ground to complain of their doing so, any more than of other versions, like those of Doddridge, Macknight, or of Prof. Stuart. But the American and Foreign Bible Society has secured the confidence and co-operation of individuals and of churches throughout the land, on the ground that, from the day of its organization, it has openly disclaimed all intention of publishing such a version. Its authorized agents, when engaged in soliciting funds, have proclaimed this again and again, and have pointed to its printed laws, which contained an express prohibition of it. And now, after the Society has become identified with the denomination throughout the country, after it has gained such a standing that it appears in the view of the world as the representative of a public denominational sentiment, it cannot do this thing without perpetrating a moral wrong; without violating the principles of Christian integrity, and bringing upon itself a stigma of dishonor. The officers of the Society have a perfect right to form and express their personal opinions on the question of a new version; but they know very well that their opinions jar against the avowed con-



victions of the great multitude of their brethren; and they have no moral right to take advantage of their position, to induce the Society to trample on its own covenant with the churches whose aid it has sought and received on well-defined conditions. They have no moral right to wound the sensibilities of those thousands of Israel who have given their names, their influence, and their contributions to the Society, simply because they had faith in its honor, and believed that its plighted word and its Christian spirit would keep it faithful to its engagements. There are multitudes of men and churches who, if such a course of proceeding were carried out, would feel that they had been entrapped, 'snared, and taken;' would feel that their denominational name had been tarnished, and their moral influence injured; would feel that a hand, like the hand of metropolitan power, had bound them fast to a measure which they abhor; would feel that the principles of honor which they look for in religious connections had been trifled with, and that their confidence in the best of men had been misplaced. The more we think of it, the more are we astonished that a group of individuals, however respectable, should undertake to commit a great denomination, embracing thousands of churches, to such a measure as a new version of the Bible, made by the help of 'eminent scholars,' whose very names are unknown to the great mass of persons called upon to share the responsibility of the proceedings."

In reply to these rebukes of the group of New York Baptists who have been engaged in this enterprise, let us not hesitate to declare to the world, that there are at least a few Baptists of this city and vicinity who refuse to be sharers in the deed.

Before passing on to my next reason, let me appeal to this audience and ask, would it be right thus to commit a great denomination to an act which multitudes of them disapprove and would deeply deplore, simply because it is a favorite project of some two or three individuals, who happen to occupy prominent positions in the management of our Bible Society? "I speak as unto wise men. Judge ye what I say."

2. I should oppose this change, because such a publication by our Bible Society *would justify the slanders of our opponents*, which have been so often and so indignantly repelled.

No one familiar with the history and operations of our Bi-

ble Society, can be ignorant of the fact that the appeals of our agents on behalf of the Society, have, in hundreds of instances, been met with the unfounded slander, that the Society either had published, or were about to publish, an English *Baptist Bible*. In the early history of the Society, there was, in fact, nothing which presented so great an obstacle to the labors of our agents as this oft-repeated charge, which was constantly and indignantly repelled as unfounded and false. As one instance of the hundreds which could be related by our agents, of the manner in which this charge has met them, and embarrassed their operations, I will give a single quotation from a letter of the Rev. E. D. Fendall, which was published in one of the Society's quarterly papers for 1837, and also appended to their annual report for the same year.

“Dear Brother:—When I providentially came to this place last year, I found the whole community in a state of great agitation, and the theme of all conversation was the new Baptist Bible; almost every hour I was asked the question, “Have you seen the new Baptist Bible?” And when I replied negatively, together with the declaration that I had not heard there was such a “new Bible,” the inquirers were astonished to think of my coming direct from Philadelphia to this remote place, without seeing or knowing any thing of that sacrilegious attempt to make a new Bible—and that the said Baptist Bible was now in circulation. The effect which these reports had, was of an unhappy nature. The Baptist cause was at a low ebb. The few Baptists themselves were almost ready to believe that there was indeed a new Bible to be imposed upon them by a “Baptist Ecclesiastical Council” of the nature of the ‘General Assembly,’ or the ‘General Conference,’ so boldly were these reports uttered. The friends of the Baptist cause began to regret that they had declared themselves friendly to such innovators; every thing looked gloomy, and I felt that it was high time to examine into the thing. I asked where the reports came from, and they were all traced to Mr. ———, a Methodist local preacher who was very busy in riding throughout the country, spreading the report; and not content with endeavoring to make enemies to the Baptist cause, in one instance, he went to the house of an old Baptist lady who is in her dotage, and told her that the Baptists were making a new Bible, and that they were going to take all the old ones from their members.

This good old sister, who was very much attached to her *old-fashioned Baptist Bible*, was nearly frantic at the thought of losing her Bible, and declared that they should never have it; for she 'would hide it and fight for it.' This is but one instance of many of a similar kind."

Slanders such as the above have been circulated every year and probably every month since the Society commenced its existence; and as I have often been informed by the agents of the Society, nothing has so materially embarrassed them in their labors, as these charges. Now, I ask the question—suppose we were to do the very thing which we have so often been charged with intending to do, and which we have so constantly repelled as an unfounded calumny; should we not by so doing justify these charges, and thereby show to the world that our opponents in making them did right, and we in repelling them did wrong? "I speak as unto wise men. Judge ye what I say."

3. I should oppose this change, because by issuing such a version, we should be *violating our own repeated and solemn assurances to the contrary*.

There are many here present who will distinctly remember the protracted discussions at the great Bible Convention of 1837, on the question whether the new Bible Society should be confined to the circulation of the Scriptures in foreign tongues, or whether it should include also in its operations the circulation of the Scriptures in the English language. Now I can assert from my own knowledge that the general and all-pervading fear that prompted many of the New-England and other brethren to oppose giving to the Society the home as well as the foreign field, was lest the managers of the Society should undertake to tamper with our good old English Bible. In reply to these fears, however, it was said that it was hardly generous to express this distrust and suspicion of their New York brethren, and that as they were brethren worthy of confidence, it would certainly be safe to confide in their wisdom and judgment. As for myself, being at that time a New York pastor, I thought it only just that the fears of our brethren should be quieted by an assurance that the Society would circulate only "the version in English now in common use," and accordingly made a motion to that effect, which was discussed at considerable length. The subject was finally disposed of, however, by the Society resolving, during one year, to con-

fine its efforts to the circulation of the Word of God in foreign tongues only ; and the question was referred to the Baptist denomination, who were, by resolution, " affectionately requested to send to the Society at its annual meeting in April 1838, their views as to the duty of the society to engage in the work of home distribution." At the annual meeting in 1838, in accordance with what appeared to be the views of the denomination, as embodied in " resolutions of Baptist State Conventions, Associations, Auxiliary Bible Societies and churches in every state of the Union," it was resolved to include the *home* field, as well as the *foreign* ; and at the same time, as expressive of the views of the denomination, it was also resolved, " that in the distribution of the Scriptures in the English language, they will use only the commonly received version, until otherwise directed by the society." The condition upon which the denomination, at that time, consented to include the home field at all, was that no other than the commonly received version should be used ; and had it not been for the repeated assurances a year before, that no alteration of the common version was contemplated, which had lulled all suspicions on this subject, I am fully persuaded that the decision of the denomination would then have been that the Society should have been confined to the foreign field.

Passing over other instances in which the agents and managers of the Society have made similar assurances, I will come down to the time of the application to the state of New York for a charter, in the year 1845. One year previous to this time, the legislature in reply to a petition of the American and Foreign Bible Society for a charter, had granted their request upon condition that they should accept an amendment to their title, and call themselves the American and Foreign *Baptist Bible Society*. This amendment to the title of the Society was unanimously disapproved by the denomination, because it was justly feared that the juxtaposition of the words " Baptist Bible Society," would give currency to the oft-repeated slander, that the object of the Society was to circulate a *Baptist Bible*. It is true that I regard the Bible as we have it now to be emphatically a Baptist Bible, because I think it teaches most clearly Baptist doctrines ; but, I use the term here in the sense in which our opponents intended it, namely a Bible with the word *immerse* or *dip*

substituted for *baptize*, and the circulation of which would thus be confined to Baptists.

In April, 1845, a memorial was prepared by the Board of Managers of the American and Foreign Bible Society, and sent to the legislature, remonstrating against this addition of the word *Baptist* to their title, and praying for an act of incorporation under the title they had themselves assumed. This memorial was signed by the officers of the Society, namely, the Rev. Spencer H. Cone, President; Rev. Messrs. Tucker and Sommers, Vice-Presidents; Wm. Colgate, Treasurer; Ira M. Allen, General Agent; and Thomas Wallace, Recording Secretary. In this document, the venerable President and other officers use the following language:—

“The American Bible Society was organized in 1816. In the address to the people of the United States accompanying and explaining the constitution, at the time of its adoption, it was stated by the framers of that instrument and the founders of the institution, that the great object of the Society would be the dissemination of the Scriptures, in the received versions where they exist, and the most faithful where they may be required. In the English language, the constitution confined the Society to the circulation of the commonly received version. *On the latter point there has never been any difference of opinion. Our Society, as well as the American, is confined, in the English language, to the circulation of this version.* The difficulties which have originated the organization of the American and Foreign Bible Society, concern exclusively the distribution in foreign languages.”

Here is a most solemn assurance in a document signed by the esteemed President and others, that on this point of circulating only the commonly received version, there never has been any difference of opinion—and that our Society, as well as the American, is confined in the English language to the circulation of this version. Farther on, the document asserts not only that they had not made a Baptist Bible, but *never intended to do so.* But you ask, is there not a possibility of mistake in thus interpreting the language of the President and other officers? This is shown conclusively by one additional quotation:

“In addition to other insuperable objections to any alteration of title, the introduction of the term *Baptist* was peculiarly offensive, because the opponents of the Society had, from the time of its organization, *industriously circulated the unfounded charge* that your memorialists could not co-operate in circulating the common English Bible, but were bent upon publishing a ‘Baptist Bible’—which design, if not already accomplished, *they would certainly carry into effect at some future day. Such a charge*

would wear the color of probability with the common mind, were the institution, represented by your memorialists, to be officially designated a *Baptist Bible Society*."

Now observe here, what anxiety is manifested to throw off the very "*color of probability*" that they ever intended to publish a Baptist Bible; and observe too, that this is language used only about five years ago.

Now I ask once more—If, after all these solemn assurances and indignant rebukes of this "*unfounded charge*," (as the memorialists termed it,) we were to do the very thing which we then indignantly resented *the very suspicion of intending to do*—might we not justly subject ourselves to the charge of bad faith and of violating our own repeated and solemn assurances to a contrary course of action? "I speak as unto wise men. Judge ye what I say."

4. I proceed to remark, in the fourth place, as another reason why I should oppose a new version with the word *Immerse* substituted for *Baptize*. Because *the word Baptize is itself to all intents and purposes an English word*.

It is well known to many of this audience, (for I published my views on this subject twelve years ago,) that in all our versions of the Scriptures among the heathens, I hold that we have no right to give to any nation a Hebrew or a Greek word, when a word of equivalent meaning can be found in their own vernacular tongue. Could it be proved therefore, that the word *Baptize* is not now an English word but a Greek word, this in my view would settle the question, and I should say—Away with the Greek word! and give the meaning to the people, so that they may read in "their own tongue wherein they were born the wonderful works of God."

In giving a translation of the Scriptures to Burmah or to Siam, both the Greek word *Baptizo* and the English word *Baptize* would be utterly barbarous and unintelligible. It has never before been heard in their language. It ought not, therefore, to be transferred but translated. In the case of the English version the circumstances are entirely different. When that version was published, in the reign of King James I. the word *Baptize* had for centuries been domesticated in the language. Wickliffe had used it more than two centuries before that time, and the word was in point of fact, as has recently been most conclusively demonstrated, as old as the language itself. The meaning of the word, too, was clearly understood and constantly illustrated in the daily administra-

tion of the ordinance according to the then prevailing practice of immersion. I am well aware that it is common among some of our Baptist brethren, to take it for granted that when King James directed the translators of the present version to retain the old "ecclesiastical words," he specially intended to prohibit the use of any other word for Baptize. I am by no means certain that there was any allusion whatever in this article of their instructions to the word Baptize. Most entirely therefore do I agree with the remark of the late learned Dr. Brantly, who says, that "if baptism was one of the old 'ecclesiastical words,' which was to be retained, it certainly could not have been because any partiality for infant sprinkling was detected in that term.\* "It had been," says Dr. B., "up to the time when King James' version was made, the uniform and invariable understanding that to baptize signified to dip or plunge in water." Mr. Wall, the

\* I formerly entertained the opinion that the translators of King James' version ought to have translated the word Baptize, *immerse* or *dip*. Since examining more fully the age of the English word Baptize, and its use when that version was made, I have come to a different conclusion. I am now fully satisfied that when the translators selected Baptize as the word descriptive of the ordinance, they made the best choice that could then be made. I append the following extract from a pamphlet of mine, published twelve years ago, expressing the above opinion, partly because it contains an opinion which further examination has led me to renounce, viz:—"that when our translation was made, the translators neglected their duty," in using the word Baptize—and partly because it may furnish a reply to the charge of inconsistency made by our Pedobaptist friends in being content with the transferred word in English and rejecting it in translations in the Heathen tongues.

After an allusion to the Rhemish version, in which the words *Pascha*, (passover,) and *Azumos* (unleavened,) are transferred, I inquired as follows:—"But is it not immediately perceived that the word *Baptizo* is in precisely the same predicament with the other two words? What valid reason, therefore, can be assigned why *Azumos* and *Pascha* should be translated, and *Baptizo* should be transferred, or left untranslated? It will probably be replied; 'though it be true that the word *Baptize* is simply the Greek word *Baptizo* with an English ending, yet by long use it has become familiar to English ears, and may therefore now be regarded as an English word.' We are satisfied with the answer as a sufficient reason for avoiding to make any alteration, *at this late day*, in our common English version, with which, if we may judge from the attempts of" Pedobaptists, to explain away "going down into," and "coming up out of the water" (Acts viii. 38, 39), we think we are as well satisfied as they are. Yet we still think, that when our translation was made, the translators neglected their duty in leaving *Baptizo* untranslated. But we would ask—Can the same reason be assigned for using the Greek term instead of a translation of it, in giving the Bible to the heathen, to whom

candid historian of Infant Baptism, though himself a Pedobaptist, remarks that "Dipping must have been pretty ordinary during the former half of King James' reign, if not longer," and the same historian quotes a pamphlet written by the Rev. Mr. Blake, a clergyman of the Church of England in 1645, about 37 years after the present version was published, in which he says: "I have been an eye-witness of many infants dipped, and know it to have been the constant practice of many ministers in their places for many years together. I have seen several dipped, I never saw nor heard of any sprinkled." What stronger proof could be required that immersion was the prevailing practice in England long after our present version was made, and that consequently this was understood to be the meaning of the English word Baptize? It was not till the time of the celebrated Westminster Assembly of Divines in the reign of the unfortunate Charles I., that sprinkling became at all current in England as a substitute for Baptism, and even then was it found so difficult to pervert the evident meaning of the well-understood English word Baptize, that the learned Selden, himself a member of the Westminster Assembly, made the following pointed and striking remark. Speaking of the practice of sprinkling then coming into vogue, he says: "In England of late years I ever thought the person baptized his own fingers rather than the child." Such was its meaning then, and such is its meaning now, notwithstanding the misapplication of the term to sprinkling, and I am glad that one English lexicographer, at least, in one of the best dictionaries of our language ever published, has had the independence to give the word its true and undisguised meaning. I refer to Richardson,

either *Baptizo* or *Baptize*, would be as perfectly strange and unintelligible, as a word of Burman or Shanscrit would be to the unlettered English reader?

Supposing it be admitted then, that the word *baptize*, by long use, has become an English word, and therefore may be safely retained in the English version; it will certainly not be pretended that *baptize* is a Bengalee or a Burman or a Karen word; and if it is not, then there is precisely the same reason for *translating*, and not *transferring* this word into those languages as there is for translating *Azumos*, *Pascha*, or any other Greek word. Supposing *baptize* were a native English or Saxon word, still we should have no more right to transfer it into the Burman language; as it would be quite as unjustifiable to cover up the meaning of this ordinance from the Burmans, by employing an English word, as to use a Greek word, both of which would be equally barbarous and unintelligible to them.



who in his Quarto Dictionary defines the English word *Baptize* without any equivocation, as signifying "to dip or merge frequently, to sink, to plunge, to immerge." Notwithstanding a contrary practice, there is also in the common mind a deep under-current of conviction that the word *baptize* does mean to immerse, which sometimes becomes involuntarily apparent. Thus I have more than once in the state of Rhode Island heard members of Pedobaptist churches, some of whose relatives were Baptists, express themselves in language like the following: "I was sprinkled but my mother or my sister was baptized." If it be true then that the word *Baptize* is an English word, current in the language many centuries before the present version was made; if such is its legitimate meaning, sometimes acknowledged by scholars and lexicographers, and very extensively believed to be so by the masses of the people; why should we be called upon to reject this old and cherished word *Baptize* in favor of another word *Immerse*, which is just as truly a transferred word from the Latin as *Baptize* is from the Greek, and which was introduced into the language at a far later period than the beautiful, cherished, and expressive word that it is proposed to supplant?

Permit me to close this portion of my argument by a quotation from a private letter on this subject recently received from one of our most eminent scholars, the Rev. Professor Ripley, of Newton Theological Institution. "It is impossible," says Prof. R., "to put aside or bring into comparative disuse the English version and therefore to alter the established name of the ordinance, so that the substitution of the word *immerse* would only be regarded as a party measure or as a Baptist interpretation, of value only within the precincts of a certain denomination. The words *baptize* and *baptism* cannot now be crowded out of our language; they belong to it as really as do *immerse* and *immersion*. And so far as I can now see, if I were proposing to make a new translation of the New Testament, I should retain the words *baptize* and *baptism*, wherever the Christian ordinance was evidently the subject spoken of." Thus far Professor Ripley. Whether the opinion thus soberly stated is preferable to that which would expunge the time-honored designation of the Christian ordinance from the sacred record, I leave for my audience to decide. "I speak as unto wise men. Judge ye what I say."

5. The next reason I would give why I am opposed to this

change, is because such a change, if generally adopted by the Baptists, *would be regarded as an admission that we cannot sustain ourselves with the present version of the Bible,* and are therefore compelled to make another.

Now, it is easy to assert in reply to this argument, that it would *be* no such admission. Certainly it would be *so regarded* by our opponents, and that, not without some apparent reason, to say the least. To judge of the effect of this measure in advancing what we believe to be the truth, let us ask the lessons of history and experience. The Socinians have tried this experiment, so have the Universalists. I mean individuals among them, not as denominations. What, then, was the effect of their amended versions? Did they make converts to their views? Rather, did not the issue of such versions put a weapon of tremendous power into the hands of their opponents? "So they have found out at length," it was said, "that the good old English Bible condemns their views, and they have made a Bible to suit themselves." Such experiments, however, have been short-lived, and so, I believe, would be ours. We should soon be glad to return again to the Bible of our fathers, but at a most fearful loss of money, of energy, and of moral power.

In the pamphlet advocating this scheme, issued by brethren Cone and Wyckoff, the language of the Rev. Dr. Fuller, of Baltimore, is quoted, and the impression thus left on the minds of many that he favors the publication of the proposed new version. The very reverse of this is the fact. He would regard the publication of this new version as a calamity, and a disgrace to the denomination. No one has spoken in more decided terms of grief and condemnation of this movement. I believe that our eloquent and gifted brother is rather more discouraged at the fear of success in this scheme than there is any need to be, certainly more so than I am; yet I will give a quotation from a recent letter of his upon this subject.— Says Dr. F., "I have long foreseen this movement and deprecated it. No opposition, no remonstrance will avail. A new version will be printed, and the Society will inflict upon itself a deep and lasting, if not fatal injury. The moment we resort to a new translation, we surrender the whole argument, and virtually say, 'As the book now is, we cannot make out our case; we must, therefore, follow the Campbellites and Socinians and others, and make a Bible to suit ourselves.' What minister will introduce the new book into his pulpit?"

If he does, the people will listen to the new words with pain and distrust. This project I deplore. But it will be carried; and this will be a precedent for other schemes. Different parties will follow, and as soon as the Bible is found to conflict with their wishes, they will adopt this remedy. The Romanists contend for the Church's interpretation of the Bible; other sects will be more summary; each will print a new translation, and thus seek to enforce its dogmas. My consolation is this: in the end these excesses work their own cure. Fifty years hence, the same old Family Bible will be the consolation and light of God's people, and these ephemeral productions be forgotten. But the waste of funds, and the suicidal effects on this noble institution, (the American and Foreign Bible Society,) I do most deeply lament."

In presenting to you this extract from Dr. Fuller, I do by no means sympathize with him in his gloomy forebodings. I most cordially believe that there is wisdom enough and independence enough in the American and Foreign Bible Society, if a full attendance of its members can only be secured, to defeat this suicidal project. An opinion prevails extensively abroad, that the Baptists of New York and vicinity would hardly dare or dream of opposing a measure sanctioned by the venerable authority of the revered President of the Bible Society. I believe that this idea has given rise to the discouraging apprehensions of Dr. Fuller. Let me hope, however, that the result of this scheme at the approaching anniversary will prove that this is a mistaken opinion; that however sincerely and deservedly we love and venerate the man, our love to the cause of truth and to our beloved denomination is greater. "Not that we love Cesar less, but that we love Rome more." We have generally thought and acted with our beloved brother Cone, because we have generally thought him to be right, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred he has been right. When he originates a project that we think to be wrong, we trust we shall be able to convince our brethren abroad, that New York Baptists pin their faith to no man's sleeve—that they can think and act for themselves.

The feelings of grief and alarm with which Dr. Fuller looks upon this scheme, are only a specimen of the manner in which it is regarded by hundreds of our best, most learned and holiest men throughout the land. Upon the supposition, therefore, that it might be carried by a bare majority at the

annual meeting, I ask—was it right, was it wise, was it kind, thus prematurely to urge forward, with so much zeal and impetuosity, a scheme which was known to be thus regarded by multitudes of the best men in our denomination? I will add a brief testimony from one more of our ablest men, the Rev. Dr. Howard Malcom, of Philadelphia, late President of Georgetown College, who refers to the movement with as much indignation as grief. Says Dr. Malcom, “Were I to utter all the objections which occur to me as to the proposed ‘version’ (!) I should want a week for it. When the world is allowed to say that *we needed*, as Baptists, a new version to sustain ourselves, then is our right arm broken in the fight. I can add no more than to say, I shall spurn from me the proposed publication, and the Society which gives it birth.”

To this expression of Dr. Malcom I heartily respond, and there are thousands of our brethren throughout New York, New-England, and other parts of our land, who will say, Amen. Let this plan be carried, and they can conscientiously work with the American and Foreign Bible Society no longer. It will have been guilty of a libel upon the Baptist name, and will be entitled no longer to be regarded as a Baptist denominational Society.\*

6. My next objection to the proposed change is, that *it is not true that we cannot sustain ourselves as Baptists with our present version*. Baptist principles have made and are making rapid progress with the present version, and it is very doubtful whether they would make speedier progress with a new one,

Time will forbid that I should enter into details relative to the past history and progress of our denomination throughout the world, for the two centuries or more since our present version has been in use; or, in our own country, since Roger Williams, with probably one of the first editions of this English version of the Bible in his hand, planted the first Baptist church upon the banks of the Providence river, up to our own day, when that little band has increased to

\* In the pamphlet of brethren Cone and Wyckoff the question is asked, in relation to such Baptists as would leave the Society in the event of the publication of the new Baptist version—“where will they go?” I answer—they will do as the Rev. Drs. Williams and Wayland and others have always done—circulate in English the Bibles of the American Bible Society, and send their contributions for foreign translations to the Board of the American Baptist Missionary Union in Boston.

near a million of Baptist members. It is sufficient to say that the hundred thousand of New York Baptists, and the million of American Baptists, have been made so chiefly by means of the good old English Bible. A very large majority of our membership are from the working classes of the people, men and women of good common sense, capable of reading and understanding the English language, and very generally unacquainted with any other; they have been made Baptists by the reading of their English Bibles, and few among them are there, who cannot successfully defend their sentiments out of this same English Bible, in such a manner as to convince the shrewdest opponent that they understand what they say, and "whereof they affirm."

Now, let me ask, would the substitution of "Immerse" for "Baptize" give any additional weight to the arguments of our ministry or membership, in defence of their views as Baptists? Such a substitution would not certainly make us stronger Baptists than we now are. It would therefore be entirely a work of supererogation among ourselves. What effect, then, would it have upon our opponents? The appeal of the learned would, of course, be to the original, as it is now. What, then, would be the effect of such an altered version in reasoning with a plain English Pedobaptist? Would it be more likely to convert him to our views than the present version, or would he not rather reject it as a mutilated instrument? "To demonstrate the utter imbecility of such a contrivance," says an able writer before referred to, "we have only to suppose a case. A Baptist with an altered copy of the New Testament in his hands meets his Pedobaptist neighbor who adheres to the old translation. They enter into an amicable discussion of the only topic on which they are known to disagree, touching the serious matter of religion. In order to refute at once every argument which his opponent may adduce, the Baptist brother brings forth his amended version, and behold in every case, instead of Baptize and Baptism, he shows him Immerse and Immersion. The Pedobaptist at once charges his Baptist neighbor with the corruption of the word of God, and refuses to be reasoned with out of such Scriptures. It will be vain for the Baptist to allege that this is the true and only meaning of the Greek word and is a correct translation. The Pedobaptist will betake himself to his own authorities, and the controversy will stand just where it did before the "new version" was made,

namely, *what is the meaning of the Greek word?* The Baptist will have gained not a particle of advantage by the change, while he will have incurred at least the suspicion in the mind of his Pedobaptist neighbor of tampering with the word of God, and of making a version expressly to suit his own particular views.\*

Now, I appeal to the common sense of this audience—is it likely that Baptists would be made more rapidly with such an altered version in our hands, than they have been and are, by means of the present version common to evangelical Christians of every name? “I speak as unto wise men. Judge ye what I say.”

The experiment has already been tried, in the case of Bernard’s Bible, which has now been before the public some fourteen years; and I have yet to learn of the first individual that has been converted to Baptist views, from the simple fact that in that version, *Immerse* is substituted for *Baptize*. And yet there are many excellent things in Bernard’s Bible, and I most cheerfully give it a place in my library by the side of Campbell or Stuart, because it contains much that is valuable and suggestive, and because it makes no claim of being any thing more than a private enterprise, for which its editors alone are responsible. I would do the same with Cone’s, or Wyckoff’s, or Colgate’s Testament, if published as an individual enterprise for which these gentlemen alone were responsible; † although I have vastly more confidence in the classical learning and biblical scholarship of Professors Whiting and Kendrick, who edited Bernard’s Bible, than in that of either of the gentlemen whose names have appeared in connection with the famous “new version,” which is probably now lying on the shelves of the Depository, ‡ like some poor fatherless child, ready to be affiliated

\* See an able article from the pen of the late Rev. Dr. Brantly, in the *Christian Review* for January 1837, written about the time of the publication of Bernard’s Bible.

† The venerable and Rev. Dr. Sharp, of Boston, said not long ago, “If any competent man, or body of men choose to publish a new English version, on his or their own authority, at their own expense, I should be glad to have it in my library, by the side of Doddridge or Macknight; but if it were published in the name of a denominational Society, I would not have it in my house.”

‡ I have been told that these Baptist Testaments are not, and will not be placed “on the shelves of the Depository” previous to the anniversary. Be it so. It matters but little where they are kept. It cannot be

upon the American and Foreign Bible Society at its approaching anniversary. Nor is this any reproach to those highly respectable gentlemen. They are well qualified for the position to which they were appointed, as President and Secretary of a Bible Society, to obtain funds and to print and to circulate Bibles. When the officers and Board of Managers were elected by the Society, *they were not appointed to prepare "new versions,"* and it is no discredit to a single one among them to say, that if the Society had wished for *scholars* to perform this work, they would have chosen different men. If such had been the duties to which they were appointed, they would have chosen *men eminent for their classical and biblical attainments, for their profound acquaintance with the Hebrew and Greek languages*—the Conants, the Sears, the Kendricks, the Ripleys, the Waylands and the Williamses of our land—and not gentlemen eminent only for their oratorical powers, business tact, or financial or executive ability. And the denomination may well say to the gentlemen who have so kindly prepared this amended version, in advance of an expected resolution of the Bible Society, "Who hath required this at *your hands?*"

7. In addition to the reasons already stated, I object to this course, because if we make a Bible with the word *Immerse* for *Baptize*, we lose the immense advantage of *contending with the Pedobaptist on his own ground.*

It is no small advantage to meet an opponent on his own ground. If I can prove the doctrines of Protestantism from the Douay Bible, a version made by Papists, the argument is far more powerful with the Romanist than when I use a Protestant version. Just so in reasoning with a Pedobaptist; if I can establish Baptist views from the common version which was made by Pedobaptists, his mouth must be entirely closed; he can say nothing against it. Here, then, is one great advantage to Baptists of using the common version.

So plainly is the common version in favor of Baptist doctrines, that the controversy might be safely submitted to any number of unprejudiced English readers, entirely unacquainted with Greek; and I will venture to say, that not one in a thousand of such plain English readers would ever suspect that the English word *baptize* meant sprinkle or pour, or any

denied that the President and Secretary of our Bible Society have issued a document, stating that they will be sent gratuitously to the written order of each member of the Society.

thing besides immerse. If such unprejudiced readers might be supposed, at the time of their examination, ignorant of the existence of any controversy upon this subject, and were afterwards to be told that some sects sprinkled and poured, while the Baptists alone immersed, a suspicion would at once arise in their minds that this translation had been made by Baptists. How strongly, then, would their conviction be strengthened that the Baptists are right, when told that the translation was made not by them, but by Pedobaptists!

I shall be excused for introducing here another extract from the letter of Rev. Dr. Fuller, bearing upon this point. "Next to the transmission by Roman Catholics," says Dr. Fuller, "of the very Bible which condemns their errors, I place the present English translation made by Pedobaptists, and so directly establishing our position. Who knows not that Pedobaptists are now more pressed by this very translation than by any argument? How accustomed are their writers to show that the translation is incorrect. To all this, our reply is overwhelming. We say, you translated the book; yet, after all, your own interested testimony is conclusive against you."

But let us alter the word *baptize* into *immerse*, and that instant we remove all this advantage, and render ourselves liable to the charge of making a Bible to suit our own purposes, because we could not maintain our cause with the common version.

8. My eighth reason for opposing this change is, that by expunging the word *baptize* from the New Testament, we *give up the word entirely to those who practise pouring and sprinkling*, and thus aid in identifying the English word *baptize* with the idea of affusion or pouring.

You will doubtless have this idea more fully illustrated in the document now in course of preparation. I will, therefore, under this head do no more than read a brief quotation from the pen of the gentleman who is preparing that document— "Is it expedient, is it consistent with duty, for the advocates of Scriptural baptism to adopt a measure which will tend to identify the word *baptize* in the English language with the idea of sprinkling? . That this will be the inevitable tendency of the course proposed, is too obvious to require extensive illustration. Whatever may have been the causes which brought the word into use, it is undeniable, that as a religious term it has become a part of the language, and is universally



understood as expressing the transaction involved in the observance of the rite of Christian Baptism; and it cannot be doubted that it will always continue to be so used, and so understood. And it is a gratifying reflection that by a large portion of those using the English language, not Baptists merely, but very many in the Pedobaptist communities, it continues to be, at least in its application to the baptism of the New Testament, identified with the idea of immersion. This is the result, almost entirely, of the fact that it has been kept in familiar use by those who have been careful to attach to it its true import. Among the Baptist denomination in the various countries where the English language is used, to baptize is to immerse; and as in this use of the term they are sustained by all facts, philological, historical, or Scriptural, it may confidently be hoped that the time is not distant when an application of it to the ceremony of sprinkling will be generally accompanied, even in the minds of Pedobaptists, with an irrepressible feeling that an incongruity is involved in the expression. And this will tend powerfully to effect a change of practice.

“But let the Baptists, in their use of the Scriptures in the family and in public worship, and in their allusions to baptism as taught in the Scriptures, by substituting the word *immerse*, generally abandon the use of the term *baptize*, and it will naturally become identified in the conceptions of the community at large, with the practice to which, in such an event, it will be almost exclusively applied. It will be understood and admitted, indeed, that Baptists *immerse*, but there will be nothing in their ordinary and familiar method of designating their practice, to call attention to the fact, that they *baptize*. Baptism as an English word—and it is only as such that its import will ever be appreciated by the mass of those using the English language—instead of denoting, as it now does to a very great extent, immersion, will commonly be used to designate the ceremony of *sprinkling as distinguished from immersion*. And can it admit of a doubt, that the cause of error from such an appropriation of the term, will receive an advantage, which, as far as influence on the common mind is concerned, no mere arguments from philology or history can possibly counteract? It will be difficult to bring those not educated under Baptist influence, to realize, that it is their duty to be *immersed* and not *baptized* in the sense which by universal usage they are left to attach to the term.”

In order to illustrate the idea thus forcibly expressed, let us suppose that a native of Japan or of China were to visit this country, totally unacquainted with the practices of Christian churches and entirely ignorant of the controversy relating to Baptism. After acquiring a partial acquaintance with our language, he resolves to visit some of the different Christian places of worship, in order that he may learn the customs of the country and improve in the knowledge of its language. In the first sanctuary that he enters, he beholds the minister of Christ take into his arms an infant, and sprinkling a few drops of water on its face, he says, "I baptize thee." In the afternoon of the same day, he goes to another place of worship, and here he sees an adult kneeling before the altar; and the minister, pouring a small portion of water upon his head, says, "I baptize thee." Leaving that, he enters a Baptist meeting-house, and here, a candidate goes down into the water, and as the minister buries him beneath it, he exclaims, "I immerse thee, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Now I ask, what would be the conclusion of this stranger, after visiting these different scenes? Would he not say to himself thus—"Ah, in this country, then, there are two ways of baptism, and one way of immersion. Sprinkling is baptism, and pouring is baptism, but immersion is something else. That is not baptism, for the minister does not call it so."—And thus, as is so well expressed by brother Turney, the word *baptism* comes to be used "to designate the ceremony of sprinkling or pouring, as distinguished from immersion."

9. I object moreover to this change, because, as I have said before, and I now repeat, *it would involve the abandonment of our name as a denomination.*

We have been accustomed, as Baptists, to glory in the fact that our name, our doctrines, our practices, are derived—all from the Bible. The forerunner of Christ was a Baptist, and so are we. Christ himself was baptized of John in Jordan. We imitate his example and therefore are Baptists. The Apostles baptized both men and women by burying them with Christ in baptism. We tread in their footsteps, and therefore are Baptists.

But turn the words baptize and baptism and Baptist out of the Bible, and what becomes of the authority for our name? We are Baptists no longer, for we repudiate the very word; nor can we with the slightest show of consistency expel the

word from our Bible and then cling to it as the name of our denomination. Now it is very easy for our opponents, finding themselves unable to answer this argument, to tell us that it is "purely ridiculous;"\* but every thinking man will see that the ridiculousness belongs to those who first expel the term from the Bible, and then, although professing to be guided by the Bible, cling to it as the name of their sect. "I speak as unto wise men. Judge ye what I say."

Once more then I repeat, if you expel this word from your Bible, you must give up the name of your sect; and if you refuse to do this, other denominations will do it for you. You must call yourselves Immersers, or, if that too is rejected because it is a transferred word, then you must call yourselves Dippers. Undeterred, therefore, by the assertion that such an argument is "purely ridiculous," I repeat the question in the same words as I uttered it on a former occasion,†—How would the members of this church like to see written over their door, "The Broadway Dippers' Church," or the members of a neighboring church, (some of whom I see here to-night,) the "Broome Street Immersers' Church?" Now, it certainly will be easy for our friends on the other side to say, for want of an argument, "all this is purely ridiculous." So thought not, however, a wiser and a better man than most of us. Rev. Dr. Brantly—taking it for granted that the rejection of the term from our Bibles would involve the rejection of the name of our denomination—thus writes: "It would appear injurious to us as a denomination, to renounce the agreeable and euphonic title of Baptists, and especially to take in place of it that of *Dippers*, or even *Immersers* or *Immersionists*. Even though a name import something doubtful or exceptionable, it is seldom eligible to change it; but our distinctive title is now consecrated by long and pious usage, besides being very expressive and agreeable

\* See the pamphlet of brethren Cone and Wyckoff, in which this important argument, which had been before urged by Warren Carter, Esq., a highly respectable member of the Board who has steadily opposed this movement, is met by the bare assertion that it is "purely ridiculous."

† This refers to a brief statement of reasons for opposing the substitution of *immerse* for *baptize*, which I had presented a few sabbaths previously, in connection with an address on a baptismal occasion, and which had been very inaccurately reported in a periodical, edited by a gentleman who takes strong grounds in favor of the proposed Baptist version of the New Testament.

both to the heart and the understanding. And though a rose may be as sweet by any other name, yet it is scarcely so respectable."

Various other arguments against this proposed change have suggested themselves to my mind, or have been suggested by others; as for instance, the injurious consequences of shaking the confidence of the people in the commonly received version, the embarrassment that would be produced in the introduction of the Bible into common schools, and so forth; but time forbids that I should dwell upon these. I must hasten, therefore, to the tenth and last reason to which I shall at present call your attention.

10. Finally, then, I am opposed to this project, because *it would immeasurably widen the distance which already exists between Baptists and other followers of Christ.*

It is an encouraging sign of the present times, that the various denominations of Evangelical Christians are manifesting a desire to draw nearer to each other. Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, Baptists, and other Evangelical Christians meet together and work together in the Tract Societies, the Christian Union, the Sunday School Union, and other institutions of Christian benevolence. In the prayer-meeting, in the social circle, at the family altar, they seem to forget their various differences, and with glowing hearts, speak of a common Saviour, kneel together at one common altar, and *read one common Bible*; but take away from such a picture of "Heaven on earth" their one common Bible; let the Baptist carry his Bible that none but a Baptist will use, and the Presbyterian his, that none but a Pedobaptist will use—and how soon will this beautiful picture of Christian harmony and brotherly love be marred and defaced! The pious Methodist visits his Baptist brother, and at the end of a social meeting, he is asked to close the interview with reading and prayer. He opens the holy volume, startles at some unusual expression, and finds that the book is what he will regard as a *Baptist Bible*! He reads on and kneels in prayer, but his mind is pained; his Christian sensibilities have been wounded, and the spirit of devotion is gone. Thus, too, a devoted Congregationalist or Presbyterian minister or missionary is invited to a Baptist pulpit to preach of a common salvation, and to tell of the triumphs of the cross, and he finds a different Bible from that dear old book which the pious fathers for centuries past, have agreed to love and to cherish as their conso-

lation in sorrow, and their lamp amid the darkness of the wilderness below.

Who can doubt for a moment, that such a version, if generally introduced into Baptist families and Baptist pulpits, would at once put an end to that interchange of Christian sympathies, and of pulpit labors between Baptists and other denominations of Evangelical believers, which has of late been so happily on the increase ?

Brethren, I may, perhaps, be deemed by some as but a *half-hearted* Baptist, for what I am now about to say ; well, be it so ; I feel, and therefore do I speak. Much as I love the name of my denomination, and unwilling as I should be to change it for another word, yet I glory in the name of *Protestant* more, and I cherish the name of *Christian* still dearer than all ! To me, Christians of every name are dear, because they belong to Christ. I will pray at the same altar with them, *I will read in the same Bible with them*—and God grant that I may sing the same song of Moses and the Lamb with them in Heaven ! So far as conscience and fealty to the laws of Christ's kingdom will allow, I will come nearer to them. I will shorten the distance between them and me. God forbid that I should embrace any project or adopt any scheme, where fidelity to my master does not plainly command, that should widen that distance a single hair !

In conclusion, then, I say, brethren, sisters and fathers, cling to your old-fashioned Bible ! Never consent to exchange for that cherished and blessed volume, a book which every other Christian but a Baptist will spurn from him with indignation and grief. American Baptists ! brethren, beloved in the Lord, do not, I entreat you, commit this suicidal act ! If you would not inflict a vital wound on your cherished Bible Society—if you would not make the humiliating confession, that you despair of sustaining your cause with the good old English Bible—if you would not identify the word Baptist with a practice which you believe to be foreign from the idea of the word itself—if you would not immeasurably widen the breach between Baptists and all other Christians—and if you would not throw back the Baptist denomination, in the estimation of all the rest of the Christian world, at least one hundred years, then frown down this project of making such a “new version,” as has been proposed, and cling to that old-fashioned Bible, which for centuries past has been the joy

and consolation of all the saints of God wherever the English language is spoken.

“The old fashioned Bible! the dear, blessed Bible!  
The family Bible that lay on the stand.”

And now, before I close, I have only one remark to add—If a single expression has fallen from me in this discourse, having the appearance of harshness or severity, it has proceeded from no unkindness of heart. I yield to no one in love for my brethren in Christ, and more especially—as both my expressions and writings have repeatedly shown—in sincere Christian regard for the venerable President of our Bible Society; and most earnestly do I hope that he may abandon the position he has taken, and that he may continue to occupy the office which he has so long adorned, till his master shall call him home.

Fidelity to truth, and a sense of imperative duty alone, have impelled me to the utterance of my convictions upon this subject; and this—after the publication of the pamphlet of brethren Cone and Wyckoff—it was impossible to do, without honestly and plainly commenting upon the position occupied by the advocates of this measure, the exclusive duties expected of them as officers of the Bible Society, and their qualifications for the work which they have volunteered to perform. May the great Head of the Church so guide our deliberations in the approaching anniversary, as to prevent a division in our ranks, to heal wounds which have already been occasioned by the bare agitation of this subject, and to redound to the glory of God, and the advancement of our beloved Zion! Amen.

THE END.

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