

were meant to answer. Though there has appeared, since the revival of letters, a numerous list of Critics on the Bible, little has been done, our Author thinks,

'For ascertaining the proper, and, in some respects peculiar rules of criticising the Sacred Books; for pointing out the difficulties and dangers to which the different methods have been exposed; and the most probable means of surmounting the one, and escaping the other. Something in this way has been attempted here.'

Dr. C. professes to have endeavoured with equal care, to avoid an immoderate attachment to *antiquity* and *novelty*; nor is he conscious of having

'In any instance been inclined to disguise the falsity of an opinion, because ancient, or hastily admit its truth, because new.—There are indeed (says he) many cases, wherein antiquity and universality are evidences of the same importance; and it has been all along my intention, never to overlook these circumstances, where they could be urged with propriety: for certain it is, that singularity is rather an unfavourable presumption: but I hope that, with the help of some things which are treated of in the dissertations, the intelligent and candid reader will be convinced, that no where have I more effectually restored the undisguised sentiments of antiquity, than where I employ expressions which, at first sight, may appear to proceed from the affectation of novelty.'

'In an age like the present, (says our author a little after) wherein literary productions are so greatly multiplied, it is not matter of wonder that readers, when they hear of any new work, enquire about what, in modern phrase, is called the *originality* of the thoughts, and the beauties of style it possesses. The press teems daily with the labours of the learned. Plenty in this, as in every other commodity, makes people harder to be pleased; hence it happens, that authors are sometimes tempted, for the sake of gratifying the fastidious taste of their readers, to affect paradoxes; being more solicitous about the newness, than about the truth of their sentiments. Though I cannot help thinking this preference injudicious whatever be the subject; it is highly blameable in every thing wherein religion or morals are concerned. To this humour, therefore, no sacrifice can be expected here. The principal part of the work is translation. A translator, if he do justice to his author and his subject, can lay no claim to originality. The thoughts are the author's: the translator's business is to convey them, unadulterated,

in the words of another language.—In the translation here offered, I have endeavoured to conform strictly to this obligation. As to the remarks to be found in the dissertations and notes, nothing was farther from my purpose than to sacrifice truth to novelty; at the same time, I will frankly acknowledge, that if I had not thought myself qualified to throw some light on this most important part of holy writ, no consideration should have induced me to obtrude my reflections on the public.

With regard to the language, particularly of the version itself, simplicity, propriety and perspicuity, are the qualities at which the author chiefly aimed; and we will take upon us to say, that his aim has been seldom frustrated.

Dr. C. then obviates the objections that have lately been made by some otherwise 'knowing and ingenious men,' against giving new translations of any part of scripture; and combats them by much the same reasonings, as Dr. Geddes has employed in the *appendix* to his *prolegomena* of a new translation of the bible. In fact, the same objections have been made against every new translation from the beginning: and—

It is remarkable (says our author) that from the days of Jerom to the present, the same terrible forebodings have always accompanied the undertaking, and vanished on the execution; insomuch that the fatal effects predisted, have never afterwards been heard of.

Some perhaps (continues he) are ready here to interpose, if new translations were only to be used as private helps for understanding the scriptures, they would not be objected to; but what has alarmed the minds of men is, that some attempts have been made to persuade the public, of the need there is for a new and more correct version of the bible, with the sanction of the higher powers for the use of the churches. As to any project of this kind I can say very little, as I know not in particular what is projected: at the same time I must acknowledge, that in the general view, it appears to me a very delicate point. To establish a version of scripture by human authority in the public service of God, to the express exclusion of every other version, is a measure about the public propriety of which, at any time I am far from being satisfied. The public use of particular translations of the bible, for many centuries, took its rise from the general use of them in private; and to this private use, no doubt, the favourable opinion of the pastors (but more we presume, the high idea that was entertained of the translator's abilities) greatly con-