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Oct. 17, 1755.
P L U N G I N G

A

Subject of BIGOTRY,

When made essential to

B A P T I S M.

BIGOTRY is an excessive Fondness for a Man's own Sentiments, or standing up for this, or the other Set of Opinions, with more Conceit and Eagerness than the Reason and Importance of them require. — True Zeal is always according to Knowledge, measured by the Moments of Things, and within due Bounds : But BIGOTRY is a disproportionate Concern to the Weight of the Matter, and to the Prejudice of some other Truth.

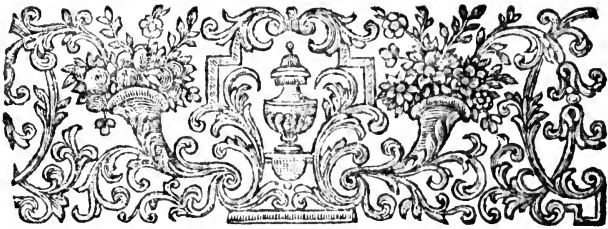
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By C. Fenner



L O N D O N,

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 P L U N G I N G
 I N
 B A P T I S M.



THAT man, who wisheth well to all men, whose good will and kind affections are truly *catholick*, who regards every man as a *creature of God*, and from the love he has to him that created, loves him that is created by him; every such man will feel a *painful concern* about the happiness of others, especially, when he perceives how *first principles* lose their spring and moment, by **TRIFLES** engaging the attention. Men usually fix on those things as the subjects of contentious, angry zeal, which the doctrine of Je-

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fus has proposed to be the occasions of *charity*, and a suitable means of displaying the benevolent affections.

FOR my own part, I am of opinion, that such mistaken conduct should be freely examined, and the folly of it, as much as possible exposed.—Nor would I, whilst censuring the bigotry of another, shew a temper unworthy the christian character; being fully persuaded, that neither *sprinkling*, *pouring*, nor *plunging*, should be looked upon, as sufficient occasion of any abatement of my esteem, love, and brotherly affection. The *modes* of baptism should certainly be placed among those *indifferent* things, concerning which, all christians have the liberty either to use the one or the other. And in no one instance wherein christians may differ, has any person the *least right* to judge or censure his brother, or to despise or contemn him.

LET us not therefore judge one another any more; BUT JUDGE THIS RATHER, that no man put a *stumbling block*, or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. It is very dangerous to make that *essential* or *necessary*, either to christian communion, or salvation, which the doctrine of Christ, and of his apostles have not.—

THE question before us, is, *what foundation can be discovered in scripture, for laying any stress upon PLUNGING in baptism?*—Nor is the question unreasonable or impertinent; for, *it is well known,*

known, that there are numbers among us, who will have it, that CHRISTIAN BAPTISM must imply IMMERSION, understood by so plunging in water, as to cover the whole body: and that pouring, or sprinkling of water on the body, is no baptism.

BUT inasmuch as these persons must allow that the word βαπτίζω is sometimes used, nay, frequently, for pouring or sprinkling: and since they have no manner of evidence that either *John* the fore-runner, or the disciples of *Jesus*, did so plunge and cover with water, it seems wrong to lay so great a stress upon it.

THAT *John*, or the disciples of our Lord did plunge, is not a clear point, as shall be shewn from many places, where the word can intend no more than pouring or sprinkling; and likewise from those passages which are said to prove that *Christian Baptism* expressly implies plunging, i. e. covering all over with water. And,

I. TAKE we notice of some of those *Texts*, which do not use the word for plunging: and they are as followeth, *Mark* viii. 4.—*And when they come from the market, except they WASH they eat not. And many other things they do, which they have received to hold, as the washing, [βαπτισμῶν,] of cups and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables.* In the first instance, it is not probable that they plunged themselves, and cover'd their whole bodies with water, before they eat;—and in the

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the *latter*, tho' they might plunge their pots and cups, and brazen vessels, yet it is not likely they should plunge their *beds*; for so the word rendered tables (*χρῆμα*) is generally understood.—Of this *variety* of baptisms, we have mention made, *Heb. ix. 10. and divers baptisms.*—*Βαπτισμοῖς*—which *washings* or *baptisms* are after notified, as being only *perfusions* or *sprinklings*; see *ver. 13, 19, 21.* such as, *sprinkling* the unclean with the blood of bulls, &c. and *sprinkling* the book and the people with the blood of calves, and of goats, &c. and the tabernacle and vessels *sprinkled* with blood: these belong to the *διαφοροῖς βαπτισμοῖς*, the *divers washings* or *baptisms*. So that the word is evidently used for *pouring* or *sprinkling*, and cannot here either intend or allow of *plunging*.

AGAIN, we are told, *1 Cor. x. 2. that the Israelites were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea.* But sure none will say, *that they were all plunged.*—That was not their baptism, but the baptism of the *Egyptians*; for so *Castellio*—*obrutī sunt mari & plumbi ritu in aquas nobiles demersi*, *Exod. xv. 10.* the sea rushed in upon them, and like lead did they plunge or sink in the mighty waters!—

THE same word is used, as signifying to *tinge* or *colour* with baptizing; *Rev. xix. 13.* And he was clothed with a vesture *dipt* in blood,—*ἑκαμύνητο*—but even here, when one would suppose *the washing* did require most time to *stain*,
tinge

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tinge or *colour* it, it intends not plunging; but is an evident allusion to the lxiii^d of *Isaiab*, the beginning; and by a lively similitude of a *great general* returning from the slaughter of his enemies, with his garments stained, and sprinkled over with the blood of the slain; so is the *Lamb of God* described—but *generals* don't use to plunge and imbrue their garments in blood.—

IN these places, the *word* does not necessarily imply *baptism* understood as plunging: but on the contrary, it intimates baptism by *pouring*, or *sprinkling*, or *partial* washing.

To get rid of the force of this objection against plunging, it should be shewn that the word, *baptizo*, when expressing the *christian rite*, has as many places where it necessarily implies *plunging*; or, at least, it ought to be shewn, that in some *one* place it implies an *absurdity*, to understand it otherwise.—But, till this is done, let none who contend for *plunging*, boast that they have the *infallibly* right sense of the word, in their practice; and that all who differ from them, are in the wrong.

UNDER this head, I shall make a citation of what Dr. POTTER has observ'd, concerning the practice of *washing*, among the *Greeks* and *Romans*; viz. “ That the ancient *Greeks* had
“ no *Balncos* like those of later times—but had
“ a large basin or vessel to wash in—and that
“ likewise the ancient *Romans* had a vessel in
“ their

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“ their own houses, wherein they washed,
“ call’d *lavatrina*, or *latrina*, which was after-
“ wards termed *balneum*.—That the Greeks
“ had, among other rooms in their *Balneos*,
“ one called *Baptisterion*, which was an *hot*
“ *Bath*; and another, *Loutron*, which was a
“ *cold Bath*.”—And as to the *times* of their
bathing; “ *they usually bathed* (he tells us) after
“ *war, journeyings, or any fatigue*.—And that
“ after bathing, it was the custom both in
“ *Greece and other hot countries*, to ANOINT
“ the body.” But as to their *decency* of bath-
ing, “ in the heroical ages, men and women,
“ without distinction, bathed themselves in
“ rivers *”.

BUT more modest were the *primitive christians*, says Dr. Cave, for when they were brought to the *font*, and were first *stripped of their garments* (intimating thereby *their putting off the old man which is corrupt with his deceitful lusts*) and that all occasions of scandal and immodesty might be prevented in so sacred an action, the men and women were baptized in their distinct *apartments*, the women having Deaconesses to attend them, to undress and dress them, to stand about and overshadow them that nothing of indecency might appear. †

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* See his *Antiq. of Greece*, Vol. ii. p. 370, 372.

† Cave’s *Prim. Christianity*. Part i. pag. 317.

WE are next to attend to those texts of scripture on which so much stress is laid about PLUNGING in baptism.

AND all persons, even the least acquainted with the controversy, know, that the practice of *John* the Harbinger, is urg'd. It is said, *Matt.* iii. 11. that *John* baptized with water unto repentance, but that the *Messias* should baptize with the *Holy Spirit and fire*. Compare *Mark* i. 8. *Luke* iii. 16. *John* i. 33. All which texts agree in their description of this doctrine of *John's*, and of our Lord's baptism. Now, if *baptizing*, when applied to *John*, necessarily signified plunging over head in water, and covering the whole body; what must the word import, when applied to our Lord's baptizing with the Holy Spirit and fire?—Must we in the *one* case suppose covering *all over* with water, *necessary*, as the cleansing rite: and not suppose that the *other* method of purification should be alike extensive?—but, it was certainly sufficient that the Holy Spirit descending like an hovering flame upon Jesus, and upon the heads of the apostles and first christians, was all the apparent or external application or symbol, which mark'd out the *separated* persons. And why should not *pouring* water on the head of our Lord by *John* the Baptist, determine *John's* baptism to be *valid*, as well as our Lord's only *sprinkling* with the Spirit, or, by an effusion of pointed flame on the heads of his apostles

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and witnesses of his resurrection, for this reason be called, a *baptism*; and be esteemed valid; tho' he did not *dip* or *plunge* men over head in the Spirit?—An unprejudic'd mind will find it very difficult to discern the reason of such difference. But if we were to look for ANALOGY, or resemblance between *John's* applying water, and the visible token of the Spirit *coming* upon *Jesus*, we should be inclined to conclude, that *John* had not plunged *Jesus*, but only poured water upon his head, to which the dove-like descent or pouring of the Spirit answered.—The *fondness* those Gentlemen shew for *analogy*, in mode, will vindicate such an interpretation in the case before us, and shew it to be, *at least*, *argumentum ad hominem*.

As to *John's* chusing to baptize in *Enon*, because *there was much water*, John iii. 23. this does not seem to carry any thing in it that will be *conclusive* on the side of dipping, or plunging.—It may be otherways accounted for, as, there being *many waters*, streams, or rivulets, would render it more convenient and commodious for *John* and his disciples; forasmuch as thereby they had it in their power to be *all* employed in baptizing the crowds who came from *Jerusalem*, and the country around them. And as to the *much*, or *great*, or *deep* water, if we consider whereabouts it was that *John* baptized, or if we regard the wilderness of *Judah*, as dry and thirsty, *Psal.* lxxiii. 1. *i. e.*
not

not very well stored with waters, it will follow, that whatever the wilderness was where *John* baptized, the *much*, or *great*, or *deep* may be understood in a *comparative* view, and will afford us nothing conclusive. But suppose (for supposition sake) that the *υδατα πολλα*, intended to hint to us the *depth* of the waters, or intended a *large* river, like the *Euphrates*; or should we stretch our imagination so far, as to think it might intimate the *roaring of an high sea*, as in other places *, we should only by this means render it more difficult to account for their *safety* in going into it; and for their capacity of performing the *religious rite*, when in it.—

BESIDES, tho' the waters of *Enon* were allowedly deep enough for *plunging*, and large enough to accommodate the crowds that came to be wash'd in them; is it not strange, that no *hint* should ever be *once* let fall, that might inform us whether the baptized *quitted* their clothes, or went in with them on.—Surprizing! that not one word should ever express or intimate that they were actually *plunged*; or that they were *plunged naked*, or in *garments*.—If they were not *plunged*, but only *stept* into the rivulet, in order to have some water poured upon them, there is no difficulty would arise from this *silence*; because we are inform'd of the nature of their *dress*, which would easily admit of such practice without much trouble, or inconvenience.

* *Dr. Doddridge's Fam. Expof. Vol. i. pag. 159.*

NOR should any say, that this is too mean a circumstance to be taken notice of, for the *decency* or *indecency* of the rite would depend upon it, if *plunging*, and especially *plunging naked* † was essential to christian baptism.

UNDER this head, which respects mens uneasy scruples about the *quantity* of water; we might expect that the *tender conscience* should be as much, nay *more* solicitous about its *quality*, that is to say, whether it should be *hard* or *soft*, *fresh* or *salt*, *spring* or *pond*, *river* or *sea* water.—

IT is not sufficient that *John* baptized in *Enon*, where were much or many waters, unless we know the *quality* of them. They might be running waters or standing pools: or they might be *wells* that had been sunk there for the convenience of cattle. And if the *many* or *much* waters should allude to the roaring of an high sea, they might be *salt* waters.

BUT in reply, it may be said, that the *Jayler* could not be suppos'd to have any *salt* or *sea* water in his house; and therefore, we may suppose that it was *fresh* water. Grant it; it does not yet appear whether it was *running* or *standing* water that he had laid in, any more than what quantity. And methinks if either quality or quantity was of importance, one would have
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† Cave's Prim. Christianity. P. i. pag. 317. as before.

expected much clearer hints concerning the *quality*; because, this seems to deserve in its own nature a *first* regard: for supposing a man would apply an instituted baptismal *rite* as a symbol of purity, and was so situated that he could not have water sufficient to *plunge*, but what was foul and muddy, as from standing and unwholesome lakes; and he could, at the same time, be able to come at a clear and sweet spring, that would admit of his applying the pure element only by *pouring* or *sprinkling*, any stander-by would be able to discern the *aptness* of the *latter* symbol in a light much preferable to the *former*.

BUT, that neither *quantity* nor *quality* is essential to christian baptism, is deducible from the *silence* of the sacred historians: for even *Lydia* herself and her household, tho' baptized after prayer by the river-side, are not said to have gone into it, or to have been plung'd in it. Nay, their *not being said to have gone into it*, probably may intimate that it was a *deep* river, and not so fit for baptism as the many waters, or rivulets, or wells, where *John* baptized.—The *mark* or *note* of plunging, from *their going down into the water, and coming up out of it*, is quite lost in the case of *Lydia*, and the instance of the *Jayler* will only suffer a warm imagination to invent plunging.

BUT I proceed to consider the strength of some of their chief fortresses.—And the greatest
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stress seems to be laid on the *two* following passages of scripture, *Rom. vi. 3, 4.* and *Col. ii. 12.*—The *first* is, *Rom. vi. 3, 4.* *Know ye not that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ, were baptised into his death? therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

BAPTIZING *into Christ*, all must allow to be a *figure*, and to intend no more than baptizing into an open profession of his doctrine: but the author of it having been crucified, the doctrine which the apostles and first christians professed, was that of a *crucified Jesus*. For *grace*, or *favour*, reigneth thro' righteousness unto eternal life, by this crucified Jesus; tho' *sin*, or the *one offence* had reigned unto death, see *chap. v. 9, 10, 12* and *21 ver.* compared. *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death*; i. e. into this doctrine of the cross. But what was this? see *ver. 10.* *In that he died, he died unto sin once.* Now, *sin* had no manner of place in him, stripped of a figure: but his dying unto *sin once*, must intend his willing subjection to the curse of that *positive law*, *in the day thou eatest, &c.* which had denounced death upon the humane family. *Death* was not imposed on him as a *demerit*, but as the body which he took upon him was humane, and so capable of *mortality*, he, agreeable to his mission, gave up his life a sacrifice to the
sin

sin and rage of men; *he died unto sin once, but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.* And the *privilege* we are initiated into, by *baptism*, shews us a most reconciling view of our perilous state; since death is destroyed by his dying *once*, or, once submitting to death; *for in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.*—*And if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we SHALL also be in the likeness of his resurrection*, ver. 5. That this cannot intend any resemblance from the *baptismal water*, seems evident; because, then, it would have been rendered, we also *have been in the likeness of his resurrection*, when *rising out of the water*, and not we also *shall be*.—

THE being *planted in the likeness of his death*, don't seem to intend the being *plunged in water*, as such plunging bears no resemblance to his *death*, or *crucifixion*; for there, the blood which came from his *head, hands, feet, and side*, did not imbrue his whole body, or cover it, as a body immersed or plunged in water. Nor does a *likeness of his resurrection* stand imag'd by the *rising out of the water*. It evidently refers to what is *future*, and has for its antecedent *our* (the apostles) so being *planted together* in the likeness of his death, as to be interested in the *atonement*, to be justified by his blood. *Knowing this, that our OLD man, (or this animal life) is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin; for he that is dead, is freed*

freed from sin; which expressions seem to refer to *our* (the apostle's) being secure of life, tho' the body must be dissolved. And, notwithstanding *our being dead with Christ*, subject to die once as well as Christ, yet *we are assured of life with him*; forasmuch, as he being raised from the dead, *dieth no more; death has no more dominion over him.* And tho' this mortal BODY of ours must be destroyed, yet, henceforth, (*μικετι*, non amplius,) yet no more shall we be subject to its dominion; when like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we also shall walk in newness of life, ver. 4.

APPLYING the phrase, *walk in newness of life*, to a future state of existence, I imagine, may be defended, from its being the only state in which we can resemble Christ, considered as *raised from the dead by the glory of the Father.* And if we keep our eye upon *sin still reigning to death*, ch. v. ver. 21. notwithstanding the abounding grace of God in Jesus; we may then understand the question directly put upon this, ch. vi. ver. 1. to have respect to *sin's reigning unto death*; and, consequently, we may look upon St. Paul as using a metonymy, putting the cause for the effect, *sin* for *death*: hereupon the question will be understood thus; *shall we continue under the reign of sin, under death, that grace may abound? far from it; this is every way inconsistent: some of us are dead to sin, how after this shall we live in it? or, be under its dominion.* And the manner

ner of our being dead to sin, ye know; *viz.* our *being* [emphatically] *baptized into Christ's death.*

IF this rendring be just, then *the walking in newness of life*, would fitly be expressive of the *after-state*, or of a resurrection from the dead, in resemblance of *Christ's being raised from the dead, by the glory of the Father.*

I HAVE found the word, *newness*, but twice used in the New Testament, *i. e.* here, and chap. vii. 6. There it is joined to Spirit, *newness of Spirit*, and refers to their being dead to the *Mosaic law*, as become the subjects of a *new constitution*.—No impropriety then appears in St. *Paul's* expressing himself thus, with reference to the *state* he should be in, *when raised up from the dead, like to his Lord*: forasmuch, as his walking in *newness of life*, would suit the *restitution* or re-creating of all things, the *new body*, the *resurrection body*, and the *new heavens and new earth* in which dwells righteousness.—

BESIDES, *ver. 15.* seems to shew, that the question put, *ver. 1.* refers to our (the Apostle's) subjection to death, rather than to his continuing the *slave* of sin, or vice. And this sense may be confirm'd from *ver. 14.* for he had declared, that sin should not have dominion over the converts, no more than over him, because *they were not under the law but*

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under grace. Upon the mention of which, he sees a *perverse* question arising in their minds, viz. Whether this would be a *toleration* or *license* for their *sinning*? and he answers, *far from it.*—

HE must then in this *former* part of the chapter, have *death*, and not *transgression* in view; and *security* from death, as obtain'd by the *death* and *resurrection* of Jesus; or, his argument through the whole chapter will seem very *indistinct* and *confused.*—

THUS the apostle appears, to me, to be describing the *high advantages* secured to the christian, who has embraced the doctrine of his Lord, whom he before has been placing in contrast with the first *Adam*; and therein shewn, that the benefits *confer'd* by Jesus, are of an infinitely superior nature, to those *lost* by the first *Adam*. So that although the questions are put, *ver. 1, 2.* viz. *Whether we shall continue in sin, that grace may abound? And how shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?* Yet, if understood of *vice*, the direct answer to these questions appears not to take place, till *ver. 11, 12.* *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin; but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lust thereof.*—But if from *ver. 3.* to *ver. 11.* be understood as an immediate answer to the questions

tions put, *ver.* 1, 2. the sense and reasoning will perhaps be plain and intelligible, should we apply the paragraph *to the apostles*, who were, in an high sense, *baptized into Christ's death!* as may be illustrated from such passages as these, *Matth.* xx. 23. *Ye shall indeed drink of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with.*—In which sort of *baptisms*, *St. Paul* says, he had often been; *in deaths often*, 2 *Cor.* xi. 23.—*I die daily*, 1 *Cor.* xv. 31. And how many converts to Christianity (says *Dr. S. Clarke*) in the primitive ages, before they could be baptized, were carried immediately to *martyrdom?* yet no one doubted, but their dying *literally* with and for Christ, was more than equivalent to their being *figuratively* buried with him by baptism into death.—*Serm.* Vol. vii. pag. 253.

BUT upon the *custom* and *practice* of the primitive ages, subsequent to the apostles, I lay no stress.—

SUFFERINGS and *death* for the cause of Christ were a proper *baptism*, as the efficacy of Christ's doctrine was very significantly *exhibited* by such death and sufferings.

BESIDES, there seems to be a great agreement between the reasoning of *St. Paul* here, and in that xvth of 1st *Cor.* There, he had been asserting the foundation of the christian's hopes of a resurrection to eternal life, upon

Christ's being *risen*, and become the *first fruits* of them that sleep; and *that since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead; that as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive*, ver. 20, 21, 22. And then he takes notice of the *exaltation* of Jesus: but at ver. 29. he draws this inference; *else what shall they do, which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead? and why stand we in jeopardy every hour?* and in ver. 31, 32. he mentions his *own* perils. After that, he expatiates upon the nature of the resurrection; and concludes the chapter with an exhortation to his *brethren*, to be steadfast.—A *parallel* to this, we have in *Rom. v.* and *vi.*—We are then to consider *St. Paul*, as having, in chap. v. represented *Adam* and *Christ* in contrast, and shewed the great advantage that the *mediation* of Jesus introduc'd;—and in chap. vi. representing the *certainty* of the doctrine, as built upon the resurrection of Jesus, and his *dying no more*. Hence, it is not at all *unnatural* for him to mention himself, as being *buried* with Christ in baptism; and to keep in his eye the *security* of immortal life which he had through him,—and *after this*, to enforce the doctrine upon christians.

NOR can we suppose *St. Paul* to have laid any manner of stress upon the *mode* of water-baptism here; since we find him, *1 Cor. i, 14.*
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and onward, glorying, that had he *baptized* but few; and that baptism was of *small importance* compared with the preaching of the gospel; for *Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.*

THE other passage of Scripture on which so much stress is laid, is, *Col. ii. 12. Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.*

HERE the advocates for plunging would have it, that this must refer to the rite of *water-baptism*; to our being covered with water, or *buried* with him in it; and to our rising again out of it, as answering to his resurrection. But the *wherein also*, is not just; for the same phrase is rendered, *ver. 11. In whom also, εν τω*—*In whom also you are risen together; and the burying with him*, confirms this rendering. So that if we attend to the argument, it can intend *no more* than that by baptism, they professed to embrace the christian doctrine, and to renounce *Judaism*, and all *pagan* and *idoletrous rites and customs*; for the twentieth verse is a comment upon this; *if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world*—this is the being *buried with him*. But it cannot refer to the rite of *water-baptism*, intimating, as some would have it, a *plunging* or *covering over* with water, as Christ was by *John in Jordan*. For, it is not probable that

that *John* did plunge our Lord; but if he did, and that this was the custom of the *Jews*, in their *baptism*, yet this *burying with Christ in baptism*, can by no means refer to that *resemblance* of him; for, he remain'd a *conformist* to *Judaism* in many respects till he had fulfilled his ministry; and the *hand-writing of ordinances*, he took not out of the way, till he nailed them to his *cross*! so that being *dead with him* from the *rudiments of the world*, or being *buried with him* in baptism, as it here respects an absolute freedom from all the carnal ordinances of *Jew* or *Gentile*, must have reference to the death or cross of *Christ*. And *baptism* being the external sign of mens acknowledging his doctrine and mission, would presuppose and include their being dead with him to these rudiments, tho' they had no more than a *small* quantity of water applied by *infusion*, *aspersion*, or *pouring*.

FARTHER, if *plunging* in water must be understood in these places; I should ask, who we have now that are the *proper subjects* of baptism? none, unless they be *Jews*, who throw off *Judaism*; or *Gentiles*, who renounce idolatry; or men, who have lived under the *dominion* of sin. Men cannot, with any propriety, be *plunged* in order to shew their being *dead* and *buried* from that they never indulged, embraced, or submitted to; and how they can be *buried with Christ* from sin, or from the *Mosaic* law, in baptism, I know not.

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The blessed Jesus was without spot, and had no guile. And the Jewish ordinances he died not unto at his baptism, they were nailed to his cross, and blotted out there, not by *immersion*, but rather by *aspersion*.—

FARTHER, as the word *baptizo*, is capable of different senses, and has been differently applied by the *sacred writers* themselves, we might reasonably have expected some *expletive*, that should have fasten'd down the sense to *plunging*: so that when used concerning the *christian rite* of water-baptism, none might by the ambiguity of the word, be led into any doubt concerning it. And certainly if the thing had been of *importance*, this would have been done. But as the strong term of *burying*, very probably, has no reference to water-baptism, when annexed to the word *baptisma*, it will by no means lend us any *aid* in determining its signification, on the side of *plunging*.

NAY, should we imagine that the word there intended *plunging*, we should be difficultly set to find out the *moral* or *spiritual* meaning of the mode. For as applied now, few *Jews* renounce Judaism, or are plung'd. Many, I doubt not among christians that are plung'd, have had no habits of vice to renounce; have no *new* religion to make a public profession of, and openly to embrace,
but

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but have been all their days *putting on Christ*, without making provision for the flesh, to fulfil its lusts. How these are *buried* with Christ in baptism, to sin, and how they rise in it to *newness* of life, is difficult to discover. They have had no *putting off* the old man, with his deeds, which are corrupt.—And if we should understand it as referring to the doctrine of a *dead and risen* Jesus, our being plung'd in water has no manner of resemblance with it. The manner of his descending into *Hades* seems to have nothing in it *imitable* by us; unless our actual dissolution be. Nor can *rising out of the water* convey any *similar* idea to his resurrection, the *manner* or *modus* of which, was *hid* from the observation of all men.

THE most then, that can possibly be made of these *texts*, as supposing the practice of *plunging*, is, that if they do respect *water-baptism*, they are nothing more than an ALLUSION to that *mode* of dipping or plunging. They enter not into the *nature* of an INSTITUTION; but only express the *manner* in which they baptized, in those hot countries.—They can intend no more, for even where the *order* is given for the disciples *to go and baptize*, not one word is said about *all nations* being *dipped* or *plunged*; nor that any *one* nation should; no, nor any *one* person. *Families*, we find, whole *households* baptized together. One household baptized in
their

their own house ; but no *quantity* of water mentioned.—But should we understand the *burying with Christ in baptism*, Rom vi. to refer to St. Paul in his own person, as it seems probable it must be so refer'd, then we should expect to have had some account of his having been plung'd himself, *Acts* ix. 18. at his baptism : whereas we have not *one word* about it, nor of his going out of the house of *Judas* to receive his baptism, in his weak and infirm condition.—

ONCE *more* ; should we grant that the christian baptismal rite was administered by *plunging* ; as this *mode* of the *rite* would be suitable to an hot climate ; it will not thence follow, that 'tis suitable to a cold one. None will pretend that a *rite* can lose the *nature of a rite*. And if it cannot, then *the change of circumstances*, will render it *fit* or *unfit*. Instances of which sort of rites the Jewish state abounded with.—Their washings, and purifications, numbers of them, would have had no fitness or suitability in them in a cold climate.—They were *local*, tho' positive institutions, and tended to their health ; preserving them more free from infectious distempers. — But as great care was taken, by their laws, to preserve modesty and chastity of body among them, as well as cleanliness and health, we cannot suppose that their *bathings* were promiscuous. So that

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the difficulty will *recoil* upon us, if we imagine that the *crowds* of the first converts were *dipped*, or *plunged* in baptism. For, inasmuch as we have no account of women baptizing of the women, and of men baptizing only the men, it would have brought an early reproach upon the christian *rite*, if *plunging* had been the practice.

LEST it should be thought that *Tit.* iii. 5. was wilfully pass'd over, because of its weight, I shall *add* it here;—*according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration.* *ἄλσιν*, *lavacrum*, if strictly rendered, should be the *washing-place* of regeneration, or the *bath* of regeneration. But who sees not that here the figure is exceedingly high.—The PLACE wherein we are washed, does not surely, in any proper sense, contribute to our salvation. If it did, then there would be a *material* cause producing an *immaterial* and spiritual effect.—The *Romanists* have indeed shewn us, in many astonishing instances, to what extravagancies our laying stress on *modes* and *rituals* may carry us.—

THUS the texts lie, in my view; if I mistake them, it is after some pains taken to understand the true sense of them; nor would my mistaking their direct sense help the argument, for, as I have already observed,

served, should they allude to the *mode* of baptism; they will conclude nothing farther, than that plunging in baptism was used in an hot country. They can no way recommend or enforce the *mode* upon us,—— unless it could be proved that a greater *quantity* of water makes a stronger impression upon the *moral temper* of the mind, and has a greater aptitude to make men *die to sin, and live to God*, than a lesser quantity of water has. —

MOREOVER, here might be subjoined a *presumptive* argument against plunging; and that is, that since plunging was *common* to bathing, it is not probable that it should be adopted as the *mode* of a *sacred rite*. We know that eating bread and drinking wine, in the common *usage* of it, *i. e.* so as to make a meal, or to satisfy hunger and thirst, was not permitted in the other *christian rite*, but looked upon by *St. Paul* as a *profanation* of the Supper; 1 Cor. xi. 20, 21, 22. And if *analogy* might here take place, then to plunge in baptism would be no other than a *profane use* of water; it having been the *common way* of bathing.— This argument against plunging, seems to have as firm a *basis*, as most, if not all that are brought for it: none of them rising much, if any, above presumption.—

BUT it is farther said, by the advocates for plunging, *that going down into the water, and coming up out of the water*, do imply

immersion, *Acts* viii. 38, 39. — Was this the case; it would prove *too much*; for both *Philip* and the *Eunuch*, are said to do so: and if it implies *plunging*, then *Philip* was plung'd as well as the *Eunuch*. But there being nothing that will account for the fitness of *Philip's* being plung'd, we must not imagine that *going down into the water*, and *coming up out of it*, are expressions which intimate plunging.

BESIDES, the prepositions *εις* and *εκ*, rendered *into*, and *out of*, are as justly rendered *to*, and *from*. Tho', allowing that the country was a land of hills, and of valleys, and that the springs run among the valleys, *Deut.* xi. 11. *Psal.* civ. 10. it is a very natural rendring, *going down to*, and *coming up from*, or *out of*.

ADD we to this, that the circumstance of *dipping* or *plunging*, don't appear to have the advantage of *pouring* or *sprinkling* in the sacred text. Nor is *one* or the *other* form or mode at all essential to *baptism*, consider'd as a *christian rite*, neither is it probable it should have any force given it, forasmuch as the other christian rite, *viz.* the *Lord's Supper*, is left to be *discretionally* administr'd; no *form* or *posture* of administration being appointed — unless, we make the *posture* of our Lord, and of his apostles essential, as an *authoritative precedent*; and then, I question,
whether

whether any part of the christian church has the *essentials* of that ordinance. For it is generally agreed to have been instituted in a *reclining* posture; our Lord and his disciples *leaning upon each other*. But—why men should take the liberty of differing from our Lord in the method and form of celebrating *one* positive rite, without making any the least difficulty of it; and yet make the circumstances of the *other* to give the very *essence* of the rite, is very unaccountable.—It cannot be pretended, that baptism is a *more solemn* ordinance than the *supper*; — most, if not all christians have agreed to carry *the Eucharist* rather beyond *, than to leave it so much upon a *level* with baptism. Of those who are the most earnest and solicitous to make important the *modes* of baptism, some of them have *taken great liberties* in their celebration of the Eucharist.—And as to the *posture*; none of them, I believe, make a conscience of reclining on *squabbs* or *beds* when receiving the elements. —

BESIDES, it is remarkable in the institution of the *Eucharist*, that the *quantity* either of bread or wine is not specified; what reason then have we to imagine that the *quantity* of water applied in baptism, shou'd be determin'd as of importance, [when not *one*

word

* *With what reason I do not here enquire.*

word has been said about it in all the sacred writings,] any more than that the quantity of bread and wine, should be discretionally left to communicants?—

BUT *if after all*, it should be granted, that possibly the apostles baptized by *immersion*; since this is not any where, either by express account, or by indubitable consequence, the *voice of revelation*, that they did; *much less*, since there is not any stress at all laid upon it, it appears no way incumbent on us, who live in a *different climate*, and cloth after a *different manner*, that we should practise *immersion*.—It cannot become our duty, unless it was a matter of *clear revelation*. For nothing can demand our conformity to it, as the appointment, or as the will of Christ, but what the revelation makes plain to be so.

IT will therefore be greatly injurious to the *credit*, and *dignity* of the REVELATION should we suppose that the *mode* must be necessary and essential to baptism; even so essential as that the *validity* of it is destroyed by the want of plunging.—Had this been the case, and that any important consequences depended upon it, it would express *great defect* either of wisdom or faithfulness, or of both, not only in the apostles, but in our Lord himself.—*On the contrary*, it is

is *certain*, that there is no one place, which has laid any weight upon it; nay, so far from any thing being built upon it, it has no *plain* and *evident* foundation in all the Holy Scriptures. And in cool thought and reflection, such *persons* must see great reason for abating their zeal, who have ventured to make the *want of baptism itself in any form a damnable sin*: forasmuch as such exceed the sentence pronounc'd by the SON OF GOD, *Mark xvi. 16. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.* Not a syllable of the want of baptism, as the reason of damnation.—And wisely has our Lord left out the *baptismal rite* in the denunciation; yea, and very friendly too, to great numbers of professors among *plunging Baptists*, who have died out of this world, *believers in Christ*, and yet have remained unbaptized. For, I doubt not, but many thousands have received Christ, and his words, who have never *been* able to discern the importance of water-baptism; persons, who have been taught superstitiously, to apply ideas to it, which in the nature of things, never did, never can belong to it.

IT is yet a thing *unprov'd*, that the apostles of our Lord were ever baptized with any baptism, except that of *John*. Tho' it is probable, that several of them had received

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ceived that ; of some, it is manifest that they had been *John's* disciples, *John* i. 37. Of *Matthew* indeed we have no traces, that I can find, of his having been a disciple of *John's*. Our Lord called him, when sitting at the receipt of custom, *Mark* ix. 9. And in chap. x. 3. we find him *numbered* among the *twelve apostles*, without any intervening account of his baptism, or any intimations of his having been a *disciple* of the Baptist. Moreover, it is never said that our Lord baptized any with water, unless *John* iii. 12. should be so understood. But when we compare chap. iv. 2. we find no way of reconciling these places, but by understanding the former passage, either of our Lord's baptizing with the Spirit, or of his continuing with his disciples in *Judea*, whilst they baptized with water.—

IT was perhaps sufficient, and answered all the ends of baptism, that the apostles of our Lord constantly attended him, and openly professed their adherence to him. As this had the *moral design* of baptism contained in it.—

BESIDES, baptism is not essential to mens being disciples of Jesus, for we have instances upon record of men being *believers in Christ*, and receiving the *gifts of the Spirit*, to whom christian baptism had never been applied, *Acts* x. 44.—But who dare

dare be so presumptuous, as to say, that had these died before the baptismal water had been applied, they would have been damned? — or that the baptismal water would have secured their salvation?

THE RITE, if understood rightly, does not purify the subject with regard to God or Jesus; but is primarily designed to affect and influence others. In the early ages, it was (applied to adult persons) to be a public and open acknowledgment of mens believing the gospel.—

UPON *the whole*, How dangerous a part do those persons act, who upon such unwarranted foundations make *plunging* essential to baptism: and not only so, but make baptism by plunging essential to salvation! — It is very dangerous to *narrow* or *enlarge* the foundation laid by Christ. The apostles themselves never had authority to do it; they durst not preach up any thing as *essential*, that Christ had not declared to be so. Nor do I know of any one principle of faith that is fundamental, or requisite to denominate a man a *christian*, more than that, of believing that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, or that he is *the sent of God*.
1 John iv. 2. *Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God.*

NOR of any thing that is fundamental in practice, in order to salvation, but that of forming the temper and conduct by the doctrine and example of our Lord. — *If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them,* John xiii. 17.

THESE may be built upon, as *fundamentals*, though men differ about RITES; their *modes* and *forms* of being administered; especially, when no explicate rule or canon is delivered about them.

HE is to all intents and purposes a *christian*, and entitled to salvation, who wanders not from the *rule*; who makes nothing binding, that the gospel has not made binding, and nothing *loosing* which the gospel has not made *loosing*. Though he should imagine *plunging* preferable to pouring; or *pouring* preferable to plunging.—

BUT whoever, in either case, is so bigoted, as to make his *mode* essential, has thereby deviated from the gospel rule; has brought in *offences*; has introduced *uncharitableness*; and lies exposed hereupon to a terrible ANATHEMA! forasmuch, as he cannot be a true christian, who saps and destroys the Spirit of the religion of Jesus; which is CHARITY. And he may be assured, that that principle

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principle or practice *in* and *about* which good men may and do differ, cannot possibly enter into the essence of *truth* or *piety*.——

BUT, by the law of charity, we may judge there are *fifty* to *one* among us of good men, who have not thought plunging at all requisite or essential to baptism; *ergo*, ——

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