

A

DEFENSE OF A BOOK, ENTITLED,  
'THE ANCIENT MODE OF BAPTIZING  
BY IMMERSION, PLUNGING, OR DIPPING  
IN WATER, ETC.'

AGAINST MR. MATTHIAS MAURICE'S REPLY, CALLED,  
*'Plunging into Water no Scriptural Mode of Baptizing, etc'.*

By John Gill

*Thou hast given a standard to them that fear thee;  
that it may be displayed because of the truth*  
— Psalm 60:4

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CHAPTER 1

*Some Remarks on Mr. M's entrance to his Work*

Having lately attempted to vindicate the ancient mode of baptizing, by immersion, plunging, or dipping into water, against the exceptions of an anonymous pamphlet, entitled, *The manner of baptizing with water, cleared up from the word of God and right reason, etc.* The author, who appears to be Mr. *Matthias Maurice* of Rowell in Northamptonshire, has thought fit to reply. He seems angry at the treatment he has met with; but if he thought that his name would have commanded greater respect, why did not he put it to his book? and why did he refuse to give satisfaction to his friends when inquired of about the author of it? Would he be treated as a gentleman, a scholar, or a Christian? he ought to have wrote as such. Who is the aggressor? who gave the first provocation? If I have any where exceeded the bounds of Christianity, or humanity, I would readily acknowledge it upon the first conviction; but who indeed "can touch pitch, without being defiled with it?" Three or four pages are filled up with a whining, insinuating harangue, upon the nature of controversies, and the disagreeable temper and spirit with which they are frequently managed; designing hereby to wipe himself clean, whilst he is casting reproach upon others. I would not be an advocate for burlesque and banter in religious controversies; but if he would have them banished from thence, why does he make use of them, even in this his performance, which begins with such loud exclamations against them. As for instance, how does he pun upon presumptive proofs, page 13 and in page 27. Speaking of our baptizing in *holes* or *cisterns*, as he is pleased to call them,

"Thus, says he, you have forsook the scriptural way of baptizing  
*with* water, and have hewn out unto yourselves cisterns,"

referring to Jeremiah 2:13 besides the frequent sneers with which his book

abounds. Now if burlesque and banter, in general, ought to be laid aside, much more punning and bantering with the words of scripture, which are sacred and awful. Is this the man that directs others to "write in the fear of God, having the awful Judge, and the approaching judgment in view;" and yet takes such a liberty as this? He says, page 7,

"I shall not entertain the reader with any remarks upon his performance, as it is ludicrous, virulent and defaming:"

Which, itself is a manifest defamation, as the reader cannot but observe; it being asserted without attempting to give one single instance wherein it appears to be so. With what face can he call it ludicrous; when he himself, in the debate, has been so wretchedly guilty that way? when he talks, page 9 of "Christ's being under water still: and in page 10 of *John's* thrusting the people into thorns and briars, when he baptized in the wilderness;" as also his concluding from *Philip* and the Eunuch's coming up out of the water, page 19 that

"neither of them was drowned there;"

with other such like rambling stuff, which he might have been attained to publish to the world. Moreover, what defamation has he been guilty of, in representing it, as the judgment of

"some of us to baptize naked?" page 22.

And in the words of *a servant of Christ*, as he calls him, page 44 tells the world that we

"baptize persons in thin and transparent garments;"

which, in other cases, would be accounted down right lying. Nay even in this his last performance, page 44 he has the assurance to insinuate, as if we ourselves thought plunging to be immodest, because we put lead at the bottom of our plunging garments; why could not he as well have argued from our making use of clothes themselves? it is strange that a carefulness to prevent every thing that looks like immodesty, should be improved as an evidence of it: None but a man that is ill-natured and virulent, would ever be guilty of such an insinuation.

What his friends, at Rowell, may think of his performances, I cannot tell; but I can assure him, that those of his persuasion at London think very meanly of them; and, as the most effectual way to secure the honor of their cause, which

is endangered by such kind of writing as his, say, "he is a weak man that has "engaged in the controversy;" though, perhaps, some of his admirers may think that he is one of the mighty men of Israel, who, like another Samson, has smote us hip and thigh; but if I should say, that it is with much such an instrument as he once used, I know that I should be very gravely and severely reprimanded for it, my grace and good manners called in question, and perhaps be pelted into the bargain, with an old musty proverb or sentence, either in Greek or Latin; but I will forbear, and proceed to the consideration of his work, as he calls it.

His first attack, page 8 is upon a final sentence of Latin, made use of to express the nauseous and fulsome repetition, of threadbare arguments in this controversy, to which he has thought fit, to give no less than three several answers.

1. He says the Latin is false, because of an **erratum** of *coctum* for *cocta*; which had I observed before the last half sheet had been worked off, should have been inserted among the *errata*; whereby he would have been prevented making this learned remark; though had it not fallen under my notice, before he pointed it to me, he should have had the honor of this great discovery. He does well indeed to excuse his making such low observations, as being beneath the vast designs he has in view. I might as well take notice of his Greek proverb, page 25 where *οσπερ*, is put for *ασπερ*, and charge it with being false Greek, though I should rather choose to ascribe it to the fault of the printer, than the inadvertency of the writer. However, he does well to let his readers know that he can write Greek; which they could not have come at the knowledge of, by his former performance. But why does not he give a version of his Latin and Greek scraps, especially seeing he writes for the benefit of the Lord's people, the Godly, and poor men and women, that cannot look into Dictionaries, and consult Lexicons; besides, all the wit therein will be lost to them, as well as others be left unacquainted with his happy genius for, and skill in translating.

2. He says, "the application of this *sentence* is false:" But how does it appear? why, because at *Rowell* he and his people are very moderate in the affair of baptism, they *seldom* discourse of it; when every body knows, that has read my book, that the paragraph referred to, regards not the private conversation of persons on that subject, but the repeated writings which have been

published to the world on his side the question. If the different sentiments of his people, about Baptism, "make no manner of difference in affection, church-relation," etc. as he says page 9 why does he give them any disturbance? what could provoke him to write after the manner he has done? He knows very well, however mistaken they may be about this ordinance, in his apprehensions, yet that they are conscientious in what they do; why should he then sneer at them, as he does for their practice of plunging, and fix upon them the heavy charges of superstition and will-worship? Is not this man a wise shepherd, that will give disturbance to his flock, when the sheep are still and quiet?

3. He would have his reader believe, that in using this sentence, I would insinuate, that the notions wherein they differ from us about baptism are poisonous, when I intend no such thing; nor does the proverb, as expressed by me, lead to any such thought, but is used for a nauseous repetition of things, with which his performance, we are considering, very plentifully abounds. We do not look upon mistakes about the grace of God, the person of Christ, and the person and operations of the Spirit, to be of a lesser nature than those about Baptism, as he reproachfully insinuates; for we do with a becoming zeal and courage, oppose such erroneous doctrines in those who are of the same mind with us, respecting baptism, as much as we do in those who differ from us therein.

Page 10. He seems to be angry with me for calling him an anonymous author; what should I have called him, since he did not put his name to his book? he asks, "Who was the penman of the epistle to the Hebrews?" Very much to the purpose indeed! and then brings in a scrap of Greek out of Synesius, with whom, however he may agree in the choice of an obscure life, yet will not in the affair of Baptism; for Synesius was baptized upon profession of his faith, and after that made bishop of Ptolemais. "Hundreds of precious tracts, he says, have been published without the names of their authors;" among which, I hope, he does not think his must have a place, it having no authority from the scripture, whatever else it may pretend to; as I hope hereafter to make appear.

## CHAPTER 2

*The proofs for immersion, taken from the circumstances which attended the Baptism of John, Christ, and his Apostles, maintained: and Mr. M's demonstrative proofs, for pouring or sprinkling, considered.*

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The ordinance of water-baptism, is not only frequently inculcated in the New Testament, as an ordinance that ought to be regarded; but also many instances of persons who have submitted to it, are therein recorded, and those attended with such circumstances, as manifestly show, to unprejudiced minds, in what manner it was performed.

1. The baptism of Christ administered by John deserves to be mentioned, and considered first: This was performed in the river Jordan (Matthew 3:6, 13), and the circumstance of his coming up out of the water, as soon as it was done, recorded verse 16 is a full demonstration that he was in it; now that he should go into the river Jordan, to have water poured, or sprinkled on him, is intolerable, and ridiculous to suppose. Mr. M. in his debate, page 6 tells us, that the words

"only signify, that he went up from the water;"

to which I replied, that the preposition *απο* signifies out of, and is justly rendered so here. I gave him an instance of it, which he has not thought fit to except against; yet still he says, the

"criticism delivers us from a necessity of concluding, that Christ was in the water:"

though it has been entirely baffled; neither has he attempted to defend it. And, because I say, that

"we do not infer plunging, merely from Christ's going down into, and coming up out of the water;"

therefore he would have the argument from hence, as well as from the same circumstances attending the baptism of the Eunuch, wholly laid aside; which I do not wonder at, because it presses him hard. He seems to triumph, because I have not, in his positive and dogmatical way, asserted those circumstances, to be demonstrative proofs of immersion; as though they were entirely given up as such; but he is more ready to receive, than I am to give. This is a manifest indication, I will not say, of a wounded cause only, but of a

dying one, which makes him catch at every thing to support himself under, or, free himself from those pressures, which lie hard upon him. We insist upon it, that those proofs are demonstrative, so far as proofs from circumstances can be so; and challenge him to give the like in favor of pouring or sprinkling. Is it not a wretched thing, to use our author's words; that not one text of scripture can be produced, which will vindicate the practice of sprinkling in baptism; and that among all the instances of the performance of the ordinance, which are recorded in scripture; not one single circumstance can render it so much as probable?

2. We not only read of many others baptized by *John*, but also the places which he chose to administer it in, which will lead any thinking, and considering mind to conclude, that it was performed by immersion: Now, one of those places, where John baptized a considerable number, and among the rest Christ Jesus, was the river *Jordan* (Matthew 3:6; Mark 1:5, 9), the latter of which texts Mr. M. says, page 12

"leads us to *no* other thought, than that Jesus was baptized of *John* at *Jordan*; as the preposition ἐν, he says, is sometimes translated;"

though he gives us no one instance of it. Now in his debate, page 7 he says,

"that the holy Ghost himself tells us, that nothing else is intended by it than baptizing *in* Jordan;"

and yet this man takes a liberty to differ from him. What will he be at next? to such straits are men driven, who oppose the plain words of the Holy Ghost, as he is pleased to say in another case.

*Ænon* was another of those places, which *John* chose to baptize in; and the reason of his making choice of it was, *because there was much water there* (John 3:23), which was proper and necessary, for the baptizing of persons by immersion. Mr. M. says, page 19

"that the holy Ghost does not say that they were baptized there, because there was much water; but that *John* was also baptizing in *Ænon* because there was much water there;"

but what difference is there? Why only between *John's* administering the ordinance, and the persons to whom it was administered. He says, page 21 that I have granted that the words, he means ὕδατα πολλὰ, literally denote, "many rivulets or streams;" which is notoriously false; for I do in express



words utterly deny it; and have proved from the use of the phrase in the New Testament, and in the Septuagint version of the Old, as well as from *Nonnus's* paraphrase of the text, that it signifies "large waters, or abundance of them:" I do assure him, that neither of the editions of *Nonnus*, which he has the vanity to mention, was made use of by me; but if there had been any material difference in them, from what I have made use of, I suppose he would have observed it to me, if he has consulted them; and I would also inform him, that *Nonnus* has not always a Latin version printed along with it, as he wrongly asserts.

I have consulted *Calvin* upon the place directed to by him: the text says, that *Jesus and his disciples came into the land of Judea*; and *Calvin* upon it says, that

"he came into that part of the country which was nigh to *Ænon*;"

but neither the text, nor *Calvin* upon it, say that they were both at *Ænon*, as our author insinuates; so that from hence there appears no necessity of concluding that choice was made of this place for the accommodation of the large number of people which attended, either upon the ministry of Christ or *John*; that so both they and their cattle might be refreshed, as he ridiculously enough suggests. As to the account he has given of the land of *Canaan*, it is manifest, notwithstanding all his shifts and cavils, that he did represent it in general as a land that wanted water, especially a great part of it; now whatever little spots (for the land itself was not very large) might not be so well watered, yet it is certain, that in general it was; and is therefore called *a land of brooks of water*, etc. But since he acknowledges there was plenty of water at *Ænon*, where *John* was baptizing, which is sufficient for our purpose, we need not further inquire about the land.

**3.** Another remarkable instance of baptism is that of the Eunuch's, in Acts 8:38 which is attended with such circumstances, as would leave any person, that is seriously inquiring after truth, without any scruple or hesitation, in what manner it was performed. In verse 36 we are told, that *they came unto a certain water*, where the Eunuch desiring baptism, and *Philip* agreeing to it, after he had made a confession of his faith, it is said, verse 38 that *they went down both into the water*; they first came *to* it, and then went *into* it; which leaves that observation without any real foundation, which supposes that their going down into the water signifies no more than the descent which led to the

rivers for they were come thither before, as appears from verse 36 where a phrase is made use of different from this in verse 38. Now though I had observed to our author, that it was not *to*, but *into* the water they went, to which he has not thought fit to reply; yet he still produces his impertinent instance *of going down to the sea in ships*; which is all that can be obtained from him, to set aside the force of this evidence; which, how weak and ridiculous it is, will easily appear to every judicious reader.

Now if persons will but diligently consider those plain instances of baptism, in an humble and hearty search after truth, they will find that they amount to little less than a full demonstration that it was performed in those early times of *John*, Christ, and his apostles, by an immersion or plunging of the whole body under water, as has been fully acknowledged by many great and excellent divines,

But now let us consider Mr. M's demonstrative proofs for pouring or sprinkling water in baptism, produced by him, page 14.

1. He says,

"pouring water in baptism, is a true representation of the donation of the Spirit; being, according to God's word, instituted for that end" (Isa. 44:3; Ezek. 36:25; Matthew 3:11; 1 Cor.12:13).

But the word of God no where expresses, or gives the least intimation, that baptism was instituted for any such end; it is true, the donation of the Spirit is sometimes called a *baptism*, and so are the sufferings of Christ; but do we make use of such mediums as there to prove the representation of them to be the end of this ordinance? though it would with equal strength conclude the one as the other: Besides, he might as well argue, that the end of baptism is to represent the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, because that is called a *baptism* also. But how does pouring of water in baptism, according to the practice of our modern Paedobaptists, represent the donation of the Spirit, when they only let fall a few drops of water upon the face? But the Spirit's grace is expressed by pouring *floods of water* upon his people in Isaiah 44:3 one of the texts referred to by our author. Though I have acknowledged, and still do, that the ordinary donation of the Spirit is sometimes expressed by pouring, and sometimes by sprinkling, yet that it was the extraordinary one which the disciples received on the day of Pentecost, that is particularly called *the baptism of the Spirit and of fire*, by

*John* and Christ. Now says Mr. M. page 17 if this was by pouring, then you are undone: perhaps not. But what does he think will undo us? why the prophecy of *Joel*, cited in Acts 2:16, 17. *I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh*. To which I reply, that though this extraordinary instance of the Spirit's grace is expressed, as well as the more ordinary ones are, by pouring, under the Old-Testament-dispensation, in allusion to those frequent libations, or drink-offerings, which were then used; yet it need not seem strange, that when this prophecy was nearer accomplishing, and there was a greater display of divine grace, that another word should be used which more largely expressed the abundance of it: It is no wonder that it should be more abundant in the exhibition than in the prophecy; besides this text, and all others in the Old Testament, which express the Spirit's grace in this, or any other form of language whatever, can never be looked upon as sufficient proofs of the manner in which a New-Testament ordinance is to be administered, which was never instituted with a view to represent it.

2. He says, *it*, that is, "pouring water in baptism," exactly answers to John's "baptism he said that *he baptized with water*" (Luke 3:15). But it seems, according to him in page 15 that the phrase of baptizing *with* water, regards the strength of the administrator's arms, *wherewith* he performs, and not the mode of baptizing; so that he can pretty easily tell us *wherein* and *wherewith* a person may be plunged, though he still says plunging *with* water is an expression without sense; but he cannot yet inform us how a man can be plunged *in* it, without being plunged *with* it. I urged that in all the evangelists the words are, εν υδατι, "in water," excepting Luke 3:16 where the preposition is omitted, which has occasioned some to think it redundant in the other Evangelists, which I observe no ways hurts our sense and reading of the words; now he wonders that this should make for our reading, or be of any use to us; when all that I observe is, that it does not make against us; if it does, let him make it appear. *John* baptized *in* water, persons were baptized by him *in* the river *Jordan*, and not *with* it.

3. Another demonstrative proof of

"pouring water in baptism, is, that it is exactly agreeable to the signification of the word, as the Lord gives it to us in the New Testament" (1 Cor. 10:2).

Which place I shall more fully consider hereafter, and make it appear, that it

is there to be understood in the sense of dipping or plunging.

4. His last proof is, "that it directly answers the promise of what Christ should do (Isa. 53:15), so *shall he sprinkle many nations*;" to this text he says, page 43 the commission in Matthew 28:19 refers, which if it does, though I cannot see it can without a very large stretch, it must be only in that part of it which concerns the *teaching* of the Gentiles by the ministry of the apostles, and not that which respects the *baptizing* of them; for the word here rendered *sprinkle*, is ענין דבור expressive of *speaking*, as *Kimchi* on the place observes; and the meaning is, that Christ shall speak to the Gentiles in the ministry of the gospel by the apostles, with so much power, majesty, and authority, that *Kings themselves shall shut their mouths at him*; that is, shall silently submit to the scepter of his grace, and to the doctrines of his gospel; *for that which had not been told them, shall they see; and that which they had not heard, shall they consider*. Moreover, who, in the world, could ever imagine, that the ordinance of water baptism, with the mode of its administration, should be intended here? a man must have his imagination prodigiously heated indeed, and his mind captivated with a mere jingle of words, that can look upon such proofs as there, fetcht out of the Old Testament, as demonstrative ones of the true mode of baptizing under the New. Thus we have had a *taste*, as he calls it, of his *demonstrations* of pouring or sprinkling water in baptism.

## CHAPTER 3

### *A vindication of Erasmus, and of his version of (Acts 10:47).*

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The author of the debate in page 22 urges the impropriety of *Peter's* speech in *Cornelius' house*, when he talked of *forbidding water* in baptism, if plunging was the right mode of its administration; to which I replied, that if there was any impropriety in the text, it was not to be charged, either upon the words or sense of the holy Ghost, but upon our translation; and urged, that the word *water* should be put in construction with the word *to be baptized*, and not with the word *forbid*, and the whole text be rendered thus, *Can any man forbid that these should be baptized in water, which have received the holy Ghost as well as we?* and produced the testimony of *Erasmus* to confirm it. Now let us attend to Mr. M's animadversions upon it. And,

1. Within the compass of four or five lines, he tells two palpable and notorious untruths; for first, he affirms that I say that the words in Acts 10:47 are not good sense, when it is he that insinuates an impropriety in *Peter's* manner of speaking, supposing plunging to be the mode of baptism; what I say, is, that if there is any impropriety in it, it is not to be charged upon the words or sense of the holy Ghost, but upon our translation;" and yet he would have it, that I assert that the words are not good sense; where do I say so? It is true, I think the words are better rendered according to *Erasmus' version*; and, for what I can yet see to the contrary, I shall abide by it. Again, he says, that I think there is something wanting in the original. With what face can he say so? Or have I attempted a supplement to any part of it? How unfair is this? Yet this is the man that complains of rank injustice, wresting of words and wracking of sentences in polemical writings. He says, he fears God; I hope he does; but he has given but very little evidence of it, in his management of this controversy.

2. He next falls foul upon *Erasmus*, calling him *old Erasmus*; and represents him as disapproved of by the learned; when almost every body knows how much the learned world owes to that great man, and what deference is always paid to him; but why *old Erasmus*, and *great Beza*? Not that I would go about to diminish the praise of *Beza*, yet I cannot but be of opinion, that to let *Erasmus* upon a level with him, in respect of learning, can be no lessening of

him; but it seems to me, that the reason of those different epithets which Mr. M. has given to those excellent men, is only because the version of the one removes the foundation of his impertinent cavil, and the note of the other, as he imagines, secures it to him.

3. He proceeds, in the next place, to find fault with my translation of *Erasmus*' version; but if he had had that candor which he would have the world believe he shews in the management of this controversy, he would have easily overlooked this, which he thinks is so much blame-worthy; especially when he could not but observe, that in the very same page, this text is rendered according to the transposition of *Erasmus*, without the negative particle, which hurts the sense: so that he might easily have perceived that this did not arise from a want of knowledge in translating, but from an inadvertency in writing.

4. As to what *Beza* says of this trajection, that it is *dura ac plane insolens*; I shall only say *cum pace tanti viri*, that the trajections in scripture, which he himself approves of, for which see his notes on John 8:25 and Acts 1:2 are not more easy or more usual.

5. The sense of the text requires such a transposition of the words; for the meaning is not, as if *Peter* thought that any person would go about to hinder them of water convenient for the administration of the ordinance of baptism; for such a sense of the words would be trifling and jejune, and yet this our version seems to incline to; but that there might be some who would be displeased with, and to their utmost oppose, the baptizing of those Gentiles. Hence *Peter* says, *Who can forbid that these should be baptized in water?* Therefore, and what will further confirm this sense and reading of the words, he commands them in the next verse to be baptized: he does not order water to be brought unto them, but that they *be baptized in the name of the Lord*. To all which,

6. Might be added, that this transposition of the words has not its confirmation only from the authority, judgment and learning of *Erasmus*, which is not inconsiderable, but also from others; for, as *Cornelius a Lapide* has observed, both the *Tigurine* version, and that of *Pagnine's*, read the words the same way: so that however *Erasmus* may be disapproved of by the learned, as our author asserts, yet it seems this version is regarded by them.



## CHAPTER 4

### *The end of the institution of the ordinance of Baptism, considered.*

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As the ordinance of water-baptism derives its authority from Christ, so it was instituted by him for some end or other, which may make for his own glory, as well as for the comfort, edification, and increase of faith in his people; and what that end is, we shall now inquire.

Mr. M. page 33 says, "the manifest end of it is a representation of the donation of the Spirit to us in the new covenant" (Isa. 44:3; Matthew 3:11; 1 Cor. 12:13). As for the former of these proofs, I need only say, that an Old-Testament-text can never be a proof or evidence of what is the end of the institution of a New-Testament-ordinance: Besides, if it could be thought to have any reference to the affair of baptism, it would only regard the mode, and not the end of this ordinance, for which he has cited it already, and to what purpose has been also shown. As for the two latter texts here produced by him, they only inform us, that the Spirit's grace is called *a baptism*, and so are the sufferings of Christ (Luke 12:50), the representation of which he will not own to be the end of baptism, though every body will see that this may be as strongly concluded from hence, as what he contends for; besides, the martyrdom of the saints is called *a Baptism* (Matthew 20:23), as also the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea (1 Cor. 10:2), yet no body ever thought that the design of baptism was to represent either of these. Now these are what he calls the plain proofs of the manifest end of baptism, without any force upon scripture. What sort of readers does Mr. M. expect to have, that will be imposed upon by such proofs as these? But there are manifest proofs which fully discover to us, that the end of this ordinance is to represent the sufferings, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ Jesus.

Christ has particularly instituted two ordinances, *Baptism* and the *Lord's-Supper*, to be observed by his people; and the end of the one is no less evident than that of the other. It is said of the Lord's-Supper, *As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come* (1 Cor. 11:26). It is also said of Baptism, *That so many of us, as were baptized into Christ, were baptized into his death* (Rom. 6:3). Did Christ say in the celebration of the Ordinance of the Supper? *This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins* (Matthew 26:28).

His disciples in his name have also said, *Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins* (Acts 2:38): that is, that their faith in that ordinance might be led to the blood of Christ, by which remission of sins was procured; to the grave of Christ, where they were left; and to a risen Savior, where they have a full discharge from them; all which, in a *very* lively manner, is represented in this ordinance of baptism. There are many other texts, besides theirs, which would lead any truly serious and inquiring mind to observe this to be the true end of baptism, as Romans 6:4, Colossians 2:12, 1 Peter 3:21, and 1 Corinthians 15:29 but because those texts are excepted against by Mr. M. it will be proper more particularly to consider them, and what he is pleased to advance against the commonly received sense of them.

*Ist*, "Romans 6:4, Colossians 2:12" he says,

"are not to be understood of water-baptism, but of the baptism of Christ's sufferings, in which his people were considered in him, and with him, as their head and representative."

I firmly believe the doctrine of Christ's being a common head, representative, and surety of all the elect of God; for which reason, in my reply, I acknowledged his sense of those texts to be agreeable to the analogy of faith; on the account of which he triumphs, as if it shone *with an unconquerable evidence*, as his expression is, page 34 when I never owned it to be the true sense of the words; for a sense may be given of a text that is agreeable to the analogy of faith, which is foreign enough to the mind of the holy Ghost therein; as for instance, if of Genesis 1:1. *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*; a man should give such a sense as this, that God chose a certain number of men in Christ unto salvation, before he created the heaven and the earth: This is a sense that is agreeable enough to the analogy of faith, but none will say that it is the sense of the text. But let us a little consider the exposition of those texts, so much boasted of, and see how well it will bear. As for Romans 6:4, it does not say, that *we are buried with him in baptism*, but *by baptism into death*: So that according to Mr. M's exposition, it runs thus, "*We are buried with Christ representatively in the grave, by his sufferings on the cross, into that death he there submitted to;*" in which, how oddly things hang together, every judicious reader will observe. As to Colossians 2:12. though we are hid to be *buried with him in baptism*, yet it is



added, *Wherein also you are risen with him*; but how we can be said to be risen with him in the baptism of his sufferings, will, I believe, not be very easy, to account for. It is better therefore to understand those texts, in the more generally received sense both of ancient and modern divines, who unanimously interpret them of water baptism; in which the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ are very evidently represented, when performed by immersion.

**2dly**, He says, 1 Peter 3:21 is not meant of water baptism, but of the blood of Christ sprinkled upon the conscience. That the blood of Christ, as sprinkled upon a believer's conscience, is ever called a *Baptism*, I never met with; and, I will venture to say, can never be proved. Besides, the baptism that *Peter* speaks of was a *figure*, *αντιτυπον*, "an antitype" of *Noah's* ark, and of the deliverance of him and his family by water; which was a kind of resurrection from the dead, and did well prefigure our salvation by the resurrection of Christ, represented to us in the ordinance of water baptism.

**3dly**, The sense of 1 Corinthians 15:29. given by me, is also objected against by Mr. M. page 32. and another substituted in its room. Let the readers of the controversy between us judge which is most agreeable. The text is difficult, and has employed the thoughts and pens of the most able and learned men in all ages: Both the senses have their defenders. I shall only refer the reader to the learned notes of Sir *Norton Knatchbull*, on 1 Peter 3:21 where both those texts are considered by him; and where he has sufficiently proved, from scripture, fathers, schoolmen, and modern interpreters, that the ordinance of baptism is a true figure, and just representation of the resurrection of Christ, and of ours by him.

## CHAPTER 5

*A consideration of the signification of the Greek word βαπτίζω, (baptizo) and particularly, the use of it in Mark 7:4, Luke 11:38, and Hebrews 9:10.*

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That the proper, primary, common, and natural sense of the Greek word βαπτίζω, is to *dip* or *plunge*, has been acknowledged by the greatest masters of that language; and it is a rule which should be carefully attended to, that the first, natural, and common sense of a word ought to be used in the interpretation of scripture, unless some very good reason can be given why it should be used in a remote, improper, and consequential one. Now though the nature, end, and circumstances of the ordinance of baptism, manifestly shew that immersion is the right mode of administering it, and do abundantly confirm the sense of the Greek word, directing us to the proper and primary use thereof; yet some have endeavored to confine it to a more low and remote sense, but none have attempted to do it with more positiveness and confidence than our author. But what method does he take to effect it, and how does he succeed therein?

Why, *1st*, he will exclude all the testimonies of the use of the word among Greek authors uninspired, especially Heathens; which is unreasonable. If our translators had confined themselves to this rule, they would have made but poor work in their version of some part of the Bible, where a word is but once used, or at least but very rarely in that sense in which it is to be taken. Now if a controversy concerning the use of a Greek word in scripture arises, which cannot be determined by it, though I do not say this is the case in hand, what methods must be taken? Will it not be very proper to consult Greek authors, either Christian or Heathen, and produce their testimonies, especially the latter? who cannot be suspected of perverting the use of a word, having never been concerned in our religious controversies. But it seems, if we will make use of them, we must be said under an obligation to prove that: "they were delivered under the immediate inspiration of the holy Ghost" was ever such an unreasonable demand made in this world before? Or was the inspiration of the holy Spirit ever thought necessary to fix and determine the sense of a word? But I am willing to lay aside those testimonies in this controversy. And,

**2dly**, Be confined, as he would have me, to the use of the word in the New Testament; but then I must, it seems, be confined to the use of it, as applied to the ordinance of baptism, which is also unreasonable: He says the word, whenever applied to the ordinance, signifies *pouring* or *sprinkling* only; which is a shameful begging of the question; and if I should say it only signifies *dipping* or *plunging*, whenever applied to it, how must the controversy be decided? Must we not refer the decision of it to other texts of scripture? It is true, the circumstances, which attend the administration of the ordinance are sufficient to determine the true sense of the word, and I am willing to put it upon that issue; but I know he will not stand to it: Besides, why has he himself brought other texts of scripture into the controversy, where the ordinance or baptism is not concerned? As Mark 7:4, Hebrews 9:10, and 1 Corinthians 10:2 as also the Septuagint version in Daniel 4:33 why may not others take the same liberty? And what miserable replies has he made to my instances out of the latter? that in 2 Kings 5:14 he says, discovers that they, that is, the Septuagint, understood no more by it than, **λουω**. *No more than λουω!* Is not that enough? is not **λουω** a word that includes in it all kinds of washing, especially bathing of the whole body; and is always used by the Septuagint to express the Jewish bathings, which were always performed by immersion; and that *Naaman* understood the prophet of such a kind of washing, is manifest from his use of it; he *dipped* himself in *Jordan*, **κατα το ρημα Ελισαιε**, *according to the word of Elisha*.

As for the other in Isaiah 21:4 he says,

"it is no wonder they made use of the word, for they knew very well that sin procures showers of divine displeasure to be poured upon a person, people, and nation."

I desire the next time he pretends to baptize an infant, that he would *pour showers* of water upon it, if he thinks proper, according to this sense of the word **βαπτίζω**, which he allows of. But however, though those testimonies must be laid aside, yet,

**3dly**, I hope Lexicons may be made use of to direct us in the sense of the word, if it is only as it is used in the New Testament. Yes, that will be allowed of; for Mr. M. himself consults Lexicons, though he does well to let us know so; for one would have thought, by his positiveness, that he had never looked into one in all his life. Well, but what do the Lexicons say? How do they

render the word βαπτίζω? Why by *mergo, immergo*, to *dip* or *plunge into*; and this they give, as the first, and primary sense of the word; but do they make use of no other words to express it by? Yes, they also use *abluo, lavo*, to wash; and they mean such a washing as is by dipping, but Mr. M. page 38 asks, where do they tell us so? I answer in their Lexicons. Let *Scapula* be consulted, who thus renders the word βαπτίζω, *mergo seu immergo: Ut quae tingendi aut abluendi gratia aquae immergimus*. But,

**4thly**, Let us now consider those texts where the word is used in the New Testament; I am willing to be confined to those which Mr. M. himself has fixed upon, and we will begin,

**First**, With Mark 7:4 *and when they come from the market, except they wash or baptize (themselves) they eat not*; which may be understood either,

**1.** Of the things they bought in the market, which they did not eat until they were washed: Thus the *Syriac* version reads the words; *and what they buy in the market, unless it be washed, they eat not*: The same way read all the oriental versions, the *Arabic, Ethiopic, and Persic*. Now this must be understood of those things that may be, and are proper to be washed, as herbs, etc. And nobody will question, but that the manner of the washing there was by putting them into water. But,

**2.** If the words design the washing of persons, they must be understood, either of the washing of their whole bodies, or else of some part only; as their hands or feet: It seems most likely, that the washing of the whole body is intended, as *Grotius*,<sup>[1]</sup> *Vatablus*, *Drufius*,<sup>[2]</sup> and others think; because washing of hands is mentioned in the preceding verse. Besides, to understand it thus, better expresses the outward, affected sanctity of the more superstitious part of the people. All the Jews washed their hands and feet before eating; but those who pretended to a greater degree of holiness, washed their whole bodies, especially when they came from a market; and of this total ablution of the body is Luke 11:38 to be understood. And here I cannot forbear mentioning, a passage of the great *Scaliger*<sup>[3]</sup> to this purpose.

"The more superstitious part of the Jews, says he, not only washed their feet, but their whole body. Hence they were called *Hemerobaptists*, who every day washed their bodies before they sat down to food; wherefore, the Pharisee, which had invited Jesus to dine with him, wondered that he sat down to meat before he had

washed his whole body, Luke 11. But those that were more free from superstition, were contented with washing of their feet, instead of that universal immersion. Witness the Lord himself, who being entertained at dinner by another Pharisee, objected to him, when he was sat down to meat, that he had given him no water for his feet, Luke 7."

3. If, by this washing, we understand only the washing of their hands when they came from market; then it will be proper to inquire in what manner this was performed: And it must be observed, that whatever was the manner which they used, it was not used as a national custom, or as it was according to the word of God; but what was most agreeable to the traditions of the elders, as is manifest from the text itself. Now this tradition is delivered in their *Misna* in these words;

"They washed their hands before they eat common food, by an elevation of them; but before they eat the tithes, the offering, and the holy flesh, they washed by immersion."<sup>[4]</sup>

It is reported in the same tract, that *Johanan Ben Gud-Gada*, who, they say, was one of the most religious in the priesthood, "always eat his common food after the manner of purification for eating of the holy flesh;" that is, he always used immersion before eating; and it is highly reasonable to suppose, that the Pharisees, especially the more superstitious part, who pretended to a greater strictness in religion than others, used the same method. It deserves also to be remarked, that this tradition, which some of the Jews have been so tenacious of, that they would rather die than break it, is by them said to be founded on Leviticus 15:11 *and hath not rinsed his hands in water*; where the Hebrew word שטף is used, which signifies a washing by immersion: and so *Buxtorf* renders it. Moreover, in the above said *Misna*<sup>[5]</sup> we are told many things concerning this tradition, as the quantity and quality of the water they used, the vessels they washed in, as well as how far this washing reached, which was עד פרק, by which they meant, either the *back of the hand* or the wrist or else the *elbow*, as *Theopylact* observes on Mark 7:3 who in this is followed by *Capellus*.<sup>[6]</sup> Now some one of these, the word πύγμν intends, which we translate *oft*. As to their manner of washing, it was either by taking water in one hand and pouring it upon the other, and then lifting it up,<sup>[7]</sup> that the water might run down to the aforesaid parts, that so it might not return

and defile them; or else it was performed by an immersion of them into water; which latter was accounted the moot effectual way, and used by the more superstitious part of the Jews. Now those who contend the most for a washing of hands, and not the whole body, as *Pocock*<sup>[8]</sup> and *Lightfoot*, yet frankly acknowledge that it must be understood of washing of them by immersion. *Lightfoot's* words are these,

"The Jews used, says he, גטילת ידים "a washing of hands;"<sup>[9]</sup>

that is, by lifting them up in the manner before described; and טבלת ידים an immersion of the hands; and the word *νιψονται*, used by our Evangelist, seems to answer to the former, and *βαπτίζονται*, to the latter." So that from the whole, suppose washing of hands is here intended; yet the sense of the Greek word, *βαπτίζω* contended for, is nevertheless effectually secured: Nor need we be much concerned at 2 Kings 3:11 being thrown in our way by Mr. M. page 41. For,

1. The text does not say that *Elisha* poured water upon the hands of *Elijah*, to wash his hands withal: and if he asks what did he then do it for; suppose I should answer, I cannot tell, how will he help himself? It lies upon him to prove that he did it for that end, which he will not find very easy to do.

2. Some of the Jewish writers think,<sup>[10]</sup> that washing of hands, is not intended, but some very great miracle, which followed upon *Elisha's* pouring water on *Elijah's* hands, and is therefore mentioned as a thing known, and what would serve to recommend him to the kings of *Judah*, *Israel*, and *Edom*. But taken in the other sense, the recommendation would be but very inconsiderable; besides, they were now in a very great strait for water, ver. 9 and they might expect, from his former performance, some miracle would be now wrought by him for their relief, as was verses 17, 20. But,

3. Suppose washing of hands is intended, and that this phrase is expressive of *Elisha's* being *Elijah's* ministering servant, and that it was his usual method to wash his master's hands by pouring water upon them; it makes nothing against the sense of the word in Mark 7:4 since that regards the superstitious washing of hands, as has been observed, which was performed by an immersion of them, and is there justly reprehended by our Lord.

**Secondly,** The other text produced by Mr. M. in page 41 is Hebrews 9:10 where the apostle speaks of *divers washings* or *baptisms*, which I have



asserted to be performed always by bathing or dipping, and never by pouring or sprinkling. And I still abide by my assertion, the instances produced by him being insufficient to disprove, it

1. He mentions Hebrews 9:19 where the apostle speaks *of Moses's* sprinkling the book and people with blood; but does he say that they were washed therewith? or was ever this instance of sprinkling reckoned among the ceremonial ablutions? When only a few drops of blood or water are sprinkled upon persons or things, can they be said, in any just propriety of speech, to be washed therewith?

2. He instances in Exodus 29:4. which speaks of the washing of *Aaron* and his sons, but not a word either of sprinkling or pouring, so that it makes nothing for his purpose: Besides, the Septuagint here use the word *λουω*, by which they always express the Jewish bathings, which were performed by a total immersion of the body in water.

3. His next instance is Numbers 8:6, 7. Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them; and thus shalt thou do unto them to cleanse them; sprinkle water of purifying upon them. But why did not he read on? and let them shave all their flesh, and wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean; that is, by bathing their whole bodies, which was done, as the *Targum of Jonathan* upon the place says, *in forty measures of water*. Now, it was thus the Levites were washed. Sprinkling the water of purification, was indeed a ceremony used preparatory to this bathing, but was itself no part of it, as will more fully appear from,

4. His other instance in Numbers 19:18. where it is said, that *tents, vessels*, or persons, that *touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave*, were to be *sprinkled*; but why did not he transcribe the 19th verse? where his readers would have been informed, that as this sprinkling was to be done on the *third* and *seventh days*, so after that, on the seventh day, the unclean person was to purify himself, *and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water*: So that all those aspersions before, were but so many preparations to the general washing or bathing himself all over in water, on the seventh day. I shall therefore still abide by it, that none of the ceremonial washings were performed by sprinkling; and indeed, to talk of washing by sprinkling, deserves rather to be laughed at, than to have a serious answer; it being no more reconcilable to good sense, than it is to the just propriety of language,

or universal customs of nations. From the whole it appears, that *Maimonides* was not mistaken in his observation; and that the word in Hebrews 9:10 properly signifies *bathings* or *dippings*. And now,

**Thirdly**, We are come, as he says, to that great text, 1 Corinthians 10:2. which he directs to, as the poor man and woman's Lexicon; and it is pity but that they should know how to make use of it. Here the children of *Israel* are said to be *baptized in the cloud, and in the sea*. But since the word is here used in a figurative sense, it is not very fair in our antagonists to urge us with it, nor, indeed, any other place where it is so used; yet we are not: afraid of engaging with them in the consideration of those places, and particularly this; wherein there is enough to justify the apostle in the use of the word, and at the same time secure its sense on our side. When we consider, that the cloud in which they are said to be baptized, passed over them, so that they were covered therewith; and if it let down, at the same time, a shower of rain upon them, it makes it still look more like a baptism; which also is aptly resembled by their passage through the sea, the waters standing up on both sides, so that they seemed to be buried in them. Which things being considered, justifies the apostle, I say, in the use of the word, which strictly and properly signifies dipping or plunging. Words, when used in a figurative sense, though what is expressed by them is not literally true; yet the literal sense is not lost thereby: For instance, in the word *dipage* When a person has been in a large shower of rain, so that his clothes and body are exceeding wet, we often say of such an one, *he is finely dipt*; the meaning of which is, that he is as wet as if he had been dipt all over in a brook or river. So likewise of a person that has just looked into a book, controversy, art, or science; we say, that he has just *dip't into it*; whereby we mean, that he has arrived but to a small acquaintance with, or knowledge in those things. Now would it not be a vain thing for a man, from hence, to attempt to prove, that the word *dip* is not to be understood in its native, common, and literal sense, in which we mostly use it. This observation will serve to vindicate my way of accounting for the use of the word in the present text, as well as for βαπτω in Daniel 4:33. In fine, from the whole, we may well conclude that Baptism ought to be performed by immersion, plunging, or dipping in water, according to the practice of *John*, Christ, and his apostles, the nature and end of the ordinance, and the true and native signification of the word; which mode of baptizing has been used in all ages of the world, and I doubt not but will be, notwithstanding all



opposition made against it.

As to the endangering of health by immersion, I referred the reader to Sir *John Floyer's History of Cold-bathing*. Mr. M. insinuates that I have misrepresented him. I only intimate to the reader, that Sir *John* gives a relation of several cures performed by cold-bathing: And I could easily fill up several pages with a catalogue of diseases for which he says it is useful, together with instances of cures performed by it. He asks,

"Why I do not inform *my* reader in how many cases Sir J. F. and Dr. B. thought cold-bathing inconvenient and dangerous?"

I could, indeed, soon acquaint the reader, that Sir *John Floyer* thought it not proper to be used when persons were hot and sweating, nor after excessive eating or drinking; as also, that they should not stay in it too long, until they were chilled; and that if any danger came by it, it was usually in such cases: But this will do his cause no service, nor affect ours. I could also have told my reader, that he thinks cold-bathing to be useful in Consumptions, Catarrhs, *etc.* the cases which Mr. M. instances in; who cites Dr. *Cheyne's Essay on Health*, page 108. where the Doctor says,

"that Cold-bathing should never be used under a fit of a chronical distemper, with a quick pulse, or with a headache, or by those that have weak lungs."

But why does he not acquaint his reader that the Doctor in the very same paragraph, says,

"that cold-bathing is of great advantage to health — It promotes perspiration, enlarges the circulation, and prevents the danger of catching cold."

So that every body will easily see, as all experience testifies, that there is no force in the argument, taken from the endangering of health by immersion. By this time the reader will be capable of judging whether Mr. Gill is fairly answered or no, as Mr. M. has expressed in his title-page; though it would have been as well to have left it for another to have made the remark, and so took the advice of the wise man, Let another praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips (Prov. 27:2).

***But before I conclude, I shall take liberty to ask Mr. M. four or five questions.***

1. Why does he not tell the world who that servant of Christ is, whose words he uses; he says, I am mistaken in saying that they are the words of Ruffen; but I still aver, that they are used by him; but whether Ruffen took them from his servant of Christ, or his servant of Christ from Ruffen, I cannot tell; for that two men, without the knowledge of one another's words, should fall into the same odd, and awkward way of speaking, and commit the very same blunders, is not reasonable to suppose; but however, let him be who he will, Mr. Stennett's reply to Ruffen, which I have transcribed, fully detects the sin and folly of those indecent expressions. As to what Mr. M. says, page 44 "that he is very willing that both Stennett and Ruffen should lie dormant;" I believe it, for as the latter will never be of any service to his cause, so the former would give a considerable blow to it, was his book more diligently perused.

2. What does he mean by the *word of the Lord*, he so often mentions, when speaking of the sense of the Greek word? Does he mean the original text of the New Testament? That uses a word in the account it gives of this ordinance, which, as has been made appear, always signifies to *dip* or *plunge*. Or, by *the word of the Lord*, does he mean our translation; which uses the word *baptize*, thereby leaving the sense of the Greek word undetermined, had not the circumstances, attending the accounts we have of the administration of this ordinance, sufficiently explained it; as will clearly appear to every one who considers them: Had this rendered it *dip*, as some other versions have done, none, one would think, would have been at a loss about the right mode of administering this ordinance; though in *Holland*, where they use no other word but *dipping* to express baptism by, yet they nevertheless use sprinkling; nay, as I am informed, the minister when he only sprinkles or pours water upon the face of the infant, says, "I dip thee in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the holy Ghost." Such a force have prejudice and custom on the minds of men, that it puts them on doing what is contrary to the plain and manifest sense of words.

3. Why has he dropped his new found name of *Plungers*, which he seemed to be so fond of in his former performance, and thought so exceeding proper for us, and revived the old name of *Anabaptists*? which we cannot be, neither according to his principles, nor our own; not according to ours, because we deny pouring or sprinkling to be baptism; not according to his, because he denies dipping or plunging to be baptism.

4. Why are Dr *Owen's* arguments for Infants-baptism published at the end of his book? How impertinent is this? When the controversy between us, is not about the subjects, but the mode of baptism: Perhaps his bookseller did this, seeing Mr. M. says nothing of them himself, nor recommends them to others; but if he thinks fit to shew his talent in this part of the controversy, he may expect attendance thereto, if what he shall offer deserves it.

5. Why has he not defended his wise reasons for mixed communion, and made some learned strictures upon those arguments of mine, which he has been pleased to call *frivolous*, without making any further reply to them? He has very much disappointed many of his friends, who promised both me and themselves an answer, to that part of my book especially; but perhaps a more elaborate performance may be expected from him, upon that subject, or some other learned hand. However, at present, I shall take my leave of him; but not with Proverbs 26:4 which he has been ashamed to transcribe at length, lest his readers should compare the beginning and end of his book together; whereby they would discover, how much he deserves the character of a Gentleman, a Scholar, or a Christian; as also, how well this suits the whining insinuations, with which he begins his performance. I shall add no more, but conclude with the words of *Job*, Teach me, and I will hold my tongue; and cause me to understand wherein I have erred. How forcible are right words? But what doth your arguing reprove?

## FOOTNOTES:

[1] In loc.

[2] De tribus Sect. Jud. lib. a. c. 15.

[3] Judaei vero superstitiosiores non pedes tantum, sed & corpus totum intingebant. Hinc ἡμερόβαπτίζαι, dicti, qui quodidie, ante discubitus, corpus intingebant. Quare Phariseus ille, qui Iesum ad coenam invitaverat, mirabatur eum, antequam totum corpus ablisset, discubuisse: οτι ου πρωτον εβαπτιοθη προ του αρισου, Luc. 11. Puriores vero a superstitione, pro universali illa βαπτίζεω contenti erant ποδονιπτω, hoc est, pedilavio. Testis dominus ipse, qui alii Phariseo, a quo coena exceptus fuerat, objicit, sibi discubituro aquam ad pedes datam non suiffe. Luc. 7. υδωρ επι του ποδα μουκ εδωκα. Scaliger de Emend. Temp. lib. 6 p. 571.

[4] Trad. Chagigah, c. 2. §. 5.

[5] Tract. Yadaim. c. 1 p. 1-3. etc. 2 § 3.

[6] Spicileg. in Mar. 7:3.

[7] Buxtorf. Synag. Jud. c. 8. & Lex. Talm. p. 1335. Pocock not. misc. p. 375. 376, 393, Scaliger. Elenchus Tritaeres. Serrar. c. 7.

[8] Pocock. not. misc. p. 397, 398.

[9] Adhibuerunt Judaei מבילת ידים lotionem manuum, & מבילת ידים immersionem manuum & videtur vocabulum νυπονται, apud Evangelistam nostram, priori respondere, & βαπτίζονται posteriori. Lightfoot. Hot. Hebrews in Mar. 7:4.

[10] Vid. R. David Kimchi & R. Sol. Jarchi in loc.