

one person (the priest) was ever directed or known to use it upon another, for this symbolical or sacramental purpose, was by *sprinkling* or *pouring* it on, NEVER by dipping him into it. The priest's *plunging* a person, in order to his separation or cleansing, is a ceremony quite strange, and absolutely unheard of, through all the sacred records. Persons were, indeed, on some occasions directed to [wash, or] bathe themselves; but that one man should take another, and *plunge* him *under* water, is a thing utterly uncommanded, unprecedented, and unknown, throughout the whole constitution and history of the Jewish church. It may therefore strongly be presumed, not to have been the practice either of John or of Jesus Christ, when the Christian church was set up. For John being of the *priestly race*; and beginning his ministrations agreeably to their law, at thirty years old; and using, like them, an application of water to the body, as an emblem of moral purity; it is left to any impartial judgment, whether he is, most naturally, supposed to have plunged men under water, (a thing unpracticed amongst them) or, whether he only sprinkled or poured water on them,—a rite *divinely instituted*, and every day familiarly practiced in that church.”*

Hitherto, I have chiefly used the *shield*; I may now be allowed for a while to assume the *sword*—I mean of course ‘the sword of the Spirit,’ which though two-edged is imbued with no blood, and formed for the destruction of nothing but sin, and error. Claiming this privilege, I shall call the attention of the reader to a few of those cases of Baptism written for our learning, which present difficulties of rather a serious nature to immersion. I do not intend to lay much stress on the indelicacy of the ordinance as administered to females. Those who are persuaded that the rite was originally practiced by immersion, are not to be condemned for deviating a little from the suggestions of conventional decency; and most certainly they are rather to be commended, than blamed, for the invention of *leads* and *dresses* to diminish as much as possible the indelicacy to which we allude; though I am not aware that any of our opponents have as yet attempted to prove from sacred, or ancient ecclesiastical history, that such precautions were resorted to by John the Baptist, the Apostles, or the fathers of the first ages of Christianity. Making all due allowance, however, for the refinement of modern times, when compared to the days of the first commissioned administrators of the ordinance in ques-

*Towgood on Baptism, p. 191. Fourth Ed.