

A Contrastive Survey of James Dale's Theory of *Baptizō* and Baptism

Introduction

Scores of books have been written on the controversial issue of the proper mode of Christian water baptism, especially in the last two centuries. Much of the debate revolves around the meaning of the Greek verb for *baptize*: βαπτίζω (*baptizō*). Among the offerings in this particular realm of the question, a series by Dr.¹ James Wilkinson Dale (1812–81; American Presbyterian) would seem to warrant special consideration. There are several reasons for this.

First, Dale produced what is surely the largest body of material ever written on the topic. Ultimately five volumes were compiled—totaling more than 1800 pages—with the final two being combined for publication. These partitions examined *baptizō* in its *Classic* (1867), *Judaic* (1869), *Johannic* (1871), and *Christic and Patristic* contexts (1874).

Further, examining Dale's work presents both an interesting and instructive venue in which to consider some of the more technical aspects of the seemingly perpetual debate over the meaning of *baptizō*. In that Dale championed and in certain cases pioneered some of the basic ideas commonly found in many modern non-immersionist² presentations, the comparative format of this survey provides a means of contrasting these points with their historical treatment and comprehension. Although it will not be possible to consider every part of Dale's theory even in this relatively lengthy review, some of the foundational aspects of his rationale and methodology will be examined, along with the main conclusions they produced.

Finally, even 150 years after its debut, a fair number of non-immersionists still treat Dale's work as a virtual *fait accompli* when it comes to determining the “real” meaning of *baptizō*. As such, it continues to be republished, enthusiastically referenced, and is sometimes put forward as a virtual trump card in discussions on the topic. I have personally seen this daunting move employed with considerable effect against those not adequately familiar with Dale's writings.

Prior to the release of his first book, Dale appears to have been relatively unknown outside of the local mid-Atlantic Presbyterian community, although he had gained some broader recognition as a New School Presbyterian active in the temperance movement.³ However, his innovative ideas concerning the ongoing debate over the proper mode of baptism—which was especially intense at the time⁴—soon thrust Dale into the center of that arena. Dale's first volume was quickly endorsed by many leading non-immersionists of his day,⁵ including his fellow

¹ Dale's earned doctorate was in medicine, though he practiced as a physician for only a very short time. He then turned to religious studies and entered the pastorate. Dale ultimately received honorary D.D.s from Hampden Sidney College (Virginia) and his alma mater, the University of Pennsylvania. (See: James Roberts, *A Memorial of the Rev. James W. Dale*, [Philadelphia: 1886], 94f.)

² I use the term *non-immersionist* in general reference to those who would not deem immersion a necessary, preferable, or desirable mode of Christian water baptism. Nothing pejorative is meant.

³ J. Roberts, *A Memorial of the Rev. James W. Dale*, 74ff.

⁴ A roughly eighty-year timespan from about 1820 to 1900 saw some of the most polemical and in many cases belligerent works produced by both sides of the baptism debate, including:

- 1) *Rhantism vs. Baptism; or, Infant Sprinkling Against Christian Immersion* (Seacome Ellison; 1835);
- 2) *Sprinkling not Christian Baptism* (William Barnes; 1851);
- 3) *Modern Immersion Not Scripture Baptism* (William Thorn; 1831);
- 4) *Bible Baptism: or, the Immerser Instructed*. (James E. Quaw, 1841)
- 5) *Immersion Proved not to be a Scriptural Mode of Baptism but a Romish Invention*, (William MacKay; 1880).

⁵ The entire collection of endorsements can be viewed in, *An Inquiry into the Usage of βαπτίζω, and the Nature of Christic and Patristic Baptism, as Exhibited in the Holy Scriptures and Patristic Writings*, (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1874), 636ff. {hereafter, *Christic and Patristic Baptism*}

Presbyterians Charles Hodge⁶ (1797–1878), William Plummer (1802–80), Edward Humphrey (1809–87) and James Moffat (1811–90). Some supporters, such as Theodore Wylie (1818–98), went so far as to confidently pronounce Dale’s work “unanswerable.”⁷ Yet the fact is, as will be shown, Dale’s theories have evoked an imposing array of credible critics, including some distinguished scholars among his non-immersionist peers.⁸

This survey will generally, though not entirely focus on sources and scholarship that preceded or would have been contemporaneous with Dale. While in certain respects this may seem anachronistic, it serves to show what Dale’s theory was directly contending against. In terms of relating this topic to the current state of scholarship, it is always expedient to become familiar with the historical witnesses that have gone before. Of right and responsibility, any credible query must first carefully consider trails previously blazed, and contemplate maps of the surrounding terrain already drawn. In our case, the research historically conducted toward ascertaining the meaning of *baptizō* is truly epic. As such, the bar to validate significant deviations from the established consensus is necessarily high, with a heavy burden of proof resting squarely on the shoulders of the innovator.

Nevertheless, Dale was irrepressible in his attempt to accomplish just such a formidable feat. Each attentive reader must then consider and judge his methodology and conclusions for themselves. It is to such an end that this survey is presented.⁹

⁶ Given Dale’s insistence to the contrary (e.g., see texts for notes 12, 13, 82), it is interesting to observe that several years later Hodge would write:

“It is not denied that *baptizein* means *to immerse*, or that it is frequently so used by the fathers as by the classic authors.” (*Systematic Theology*, [London: T. Nelson & Sons, 1873], 3:537.)

⁷ Ralph E. Bass (Presbyterian) has similarly written: “These [Dale’s] four volumes have proven to be unanswerable by immersionists as to the meaning of the word ‘baptism.’”

(*What about Baptism?*, [Naples, FL: Nicene Press, 1999], 33.)

Dr. Jay E. Adams (1929–2020; Presbyterian) has likewise opined: “...Dale for all time has settled the question of the extra-biblical usage of *baptizō*.”

(*The Meaning and Mode of Baptism*, [Phillipsburg: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co., 1975], 2.)

⁸ I will primarily, though not exclusively, cite scholarship from non-immersionist parties or reputable neutral sources that either directly or effectively pertain to Dale’s theory. This is done in emulation of the French Reformed apologist Jean Claude (1619–87), although his writing concerned an infinitely more significant matter:

“I will say little myself, but rather make authors that are not deemed suspect [by those holding the opposing view] to speak, whose writings I will faithfully relate...”

(*La Défense de la Réformation*; French: “*Je ne dirai rien de moi-même, je ferai parler des auteurs non suspects dont je rapporterai fidelement les passages...*” [Paris: Jean Lucas, 1673], 90.)

I also realize that I am not skilled in the art of exclusion—hence my propensity to research and provide a broad range of lingual, historical, biographical, topical and even peripheral information relative to the sources that I, and they in turn, cite. I would venture to say that the detail of this review is probably both its greatest strength and weakness. Yet, also consider this thought from Thomas Sherlock (1678–1761; *Anglican; Bishop of London*):

“Objections built on popular notions and prejudices are easily conveyed to the mind in few words; and so conveyed, make strong impressions. But whoever answers the objections must encounter all the notions to which they are allied, and to which they owe their strength: and it is well if with many words he can find admittance.” (*The Tryal of the Witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus* {1729}, [Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1843], 66.)

⁹ In an effort to accommodate a broad readership, I have generally transliterated Greek spellings in my citations of Dale, as I do with other authors in the main body of this review. Most Roman numerals have been converted into Arabic, and various abbreviated terms filled out. Where applicable, the original iterations are retained in the footnotes.

Unaccredited translations throughout this survey are mine. I freely acknowledge that the only language I have formal training in is English, and these translations are based on my personal study, various language and translation aids and, whenever possible, in consultation with published translations by qualified scholars. My renderings can be evaluated via the original language texts, which are invariably provided and sourced.

Chapter 1 - The Primary Meanings of *Baptō* and *Baptizō*

In terms of semantic boundaries, Dale gave these summary statements of what he believed the defining characteristics of *baptizō* (βαπτίζω) and its root *baptō* (βάπτω) to be:

1a) *Baptō* in primary use expresses “a definite act” characterized by limitations—to *dip*.

1b) In secondary use “dip” expresses “a limited mental force” and “a limited effect.” The Greek language does not furnish us, so far as I am aware, with exemplifications of this [*baptō*’s] secondary (metaphorical) use; but it is found in connection with the corresponding words in the Latin [*tingo*] and English [*dip*; *plunge*] languages.

2a) *Baptizō* in primary use expresses “condition” characterized by complete intusposition,¹⁰ without expressing and with absolute indifference to the form of the act by which such intusposition may be effected, as also without other limitations—to *merse*.

2b) In secondary use it [*baptizō*] expresses “condition,” the result of “complete influence,” effected by any possible means and in any conceivable way.¹¹

Dale was equally explicit regarding the necessarily opposite facet of his theory:

3) ...The Greek word [*baptizō*] is devoid of all power to inform us as to the form or the character of the act by which any “baptism” is effected.¹²

4) If anything in language can be proved, it has been proved that *baptizō* does not express any definite form of act, and, therefore, does not express the definite act “to dip.”¹³

Dale’s last two statements are largely antithetical to what the vast majority of Greek and biblical scholars have deduced throughout history. The overwhelming consensus has clearly been that the native and ordinary meaning of the verb *baptizō* is indeed *to dip/immerse*. In light of Dale’s staunch denial, it seems important to establish the impressive extent to which this has held true, and thus a good number of examples will be shown:

¹⁰ The only English dictionary I have found containing the word *intusposition* is a relatively late edition of the voluminous *Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia*, which states: “Situation within; the state or condition of being within, or surrounded on all sides, as by an enveloping space or element.” Dale is actually cited as the primary source for both its use and meaning (William D. Whitney, ed., [New York: The Century Co., 1889], 11:3167).

While Dale may have brought the term to greater notice, it seems he likely requisitioned it from Greville Ewing (1767–1841), a Scottish Congregationalist who employed it in his work, *An Essay on Baptism* (Glasgow: The University Press, 1824; see esp. pp.232–240). Dale does occasionally refer to Ewing’s book throughout his series.

The Baptist chaplain Joseph Wightman (1828–82) lodged this complaint against Dale’s constant use of the exotic *intusposition*:

“Surely, is it not reasonable to expect to find in a work of that magnitude, written for the single purpose to tell what ‘baptism’ is, one clear definition of it in intelligible English? If our dear mother tongue is inadequate to express in word or phrase what baptism is, it is something for scholars to appreciate to be told what it is in that nameless dialect to which ‘intusposition’ belongs!” (“*A Review of Ford’s Baptismal Studies*”; J. R. Baumes, ed., *The Baptist Quarterly Review*, [Cincinnati: J. R. Baumes, 1879], 1:605.)

¹¹ James W. Dale, *Classic Baptism: An Inquiry into the Meaning of the Word βαπτίζω, as Determined by the Usage of Classical Greek Writers*, (Philadelphia: Perkenpine & Higgins, 1867), 31. {hereafter, *Classic Baptism*}

¹² James W. Dale, *An Inquiry into the Usage of βαπτίζω, and the Nature of Johanneic Baptism, as Exhibited in the Holy Scriptures*, (Philadelphia: William Rutter & Co., 1871), 51. {hereafter, *Johanneic Baptism*}

¹³ J. Dale, *Classic Baptism*, 274.

1) Magnus of Sens (d. 818; *French Roman Catholic*): Baptism, from the Greek, means *to dip*...

And therefore the infant is immersed three times in the sacred font, that the three plungings may mystically show forth the three days' burial of Christ, and that the lifting up from the waters may be a likeness of Christ rising from the tomb.¹⁴

2) Martin Luther (1483–1546; *Father of the Protestant Reformation*): The second part of baptism is the sign...which is that immersion in water from which it derives its name, for the Greek *baptizō* means “I immerse,” and *baptisma* means “immersion.”¹⁵

3) John Calvin (1509–64; *French-Swiss Reformed*): ...It is evident [Latin: *constat*—certain] the term “baptize” means to immerse, and that this was the form [mode] used in the primitive church.¹⁶

4) Theodore Beza (1519–1605; *French/Swiss Reformed*): Christ commanded us to be baptized, by which word it is certain immersion is signified.¹⁷

...Nor does *baptizein* signify to wash, except by consequence; for it properly signifies to immerse for the sake of dyeing.¹⁸

5) Isaac Casaubon (1559–1614; *Swiss Reformed; Professor of Greek at the Genevan Academy, 1581–96*): For [in apostolic times] the rite of baptizing was performed by immersion in water: which the word *baptizein* sufficiently declares; nor does this word have the same signification as *dunein*, which means “to sink to the bottom and perish.”

It is, moreover, certainly not the same as *epipolazein*, [“swim” or “float” on the surface]. For these three words, *epipolazein*, *baptizein*, and *dunein*, have distinct meanings. Hence we understand it was not without reason that the ancients contended for an immersion of the entire body in the ceremony of baptism, for they emphasized the meaning of *baptizein*.¹⁹

¹⁴ *Baptismum*; cited in: Henry Sweetser Burrage, *The Act of Baptism in the History of the Christian Church*, (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1879), 98.

Latin: *Baptismum Graece, Latine tinctio interpretatur... infans ter mergitur in sacro fonte ut sepulturam triduanam Christi trina demersio mystice designaret, et ab aquis elevatio Christi resurgentis similitudo est de sepulcro.* (*Revue Benedictine*, [Namur: Abbaye de Maredsous, 1986], 96:91.)

¹⁵ *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church; Martin Luther, Three Treatises*,., (A. T. W. Steinhauser, trans. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1970), 186.

Latin: *Alterum, quod ad baptismum pertinet, est signum...quod est ipsa mersio in aquam, unclē et nomen habet. Nam baptisio graece, mergo latine, et ‘baptisma’ ‘mersio’ est.;* (*D. Martini Lutheri; Opera Latina varii Argumenti ad Reformationis Historiam Imprimis Pertinentia*, [Frankfurt: Sumptibus Heyderi, 1868], 5:60.)

¹⁶ *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 4.15.19; Henry Beveridge, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, by John Calvin; *A New Translation*, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1863), 2:524.

Latin: *Ipsium baptizandi verbum mergere significat, et mergendi ritum veteri ecclesiae observatum fuisse constat.* (Guilielmus Baum, Eduardus Cunitz, Eduardus Reuss, eds., *Ionnes Calvini Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia*, [Brunswick & Berlin: Carl August Schwetschke, 1866], 2:974.)

¹⁷ *Epistola ii ad Thomam Tilium*; (Abraham Booth, *Paedobaptism Examined*, [London: E. Palmer, 1829], 1:42.)

Latin: *Jussit Christus nos baptizari, quo verbo certum est significari immersionem;* (Herman de Vries de Heekelingen, *Geneve Pepiniere du Calvinisme Hollandais I-II*, [Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1980], 176.)

¹⁸ Annotation on Mark 7:4; (A. Booth, *Paedobaptism Examined*, 1:42);

Latin: *Neq̄ vero τὸ βαπτίζεῖν significat lavare nisi a consueti. Na proprie declarat tingendi causa immergere;* (*Novum D. N. Iesu Christi Testamentum; a Theodoro Beza Versum*, [Basil: Thomas Barbier, 1559], 133.)

¹⁹ *Issaci Casauboni in Novi Testamenti Libros Notae* [1587], on Matthew 3:5–6;

Latin: *Hic enim suit baptizandi ritus ut in aqua immergerentur, quod vel ipso vox βαπτίζεῖν declarat satis; quae ut non significat δύνεῖν, quod est ‘fundum petere cum sua pernicie’, ita profecto non est ἐπιπολάζεῖν. Differunt enim haec tria ἐπιπολάζεῖν, βαπτίζεῖν, δύνεῖν. Unde intelligimus non esse abs re quod jam pridem nonnulli disputarunt de toto corpore immergendo in ceremonia baptismi: vocem enim βαπτίζεῖν urgebant.* (*Criticorum Sacrorum Tomus Sextus, Exhibens Annotata in Quatuor*, [Amsterdam: Guilielmun Water, 1698], 97.)

6) **Francis Gomarus** (1563–1641; *Dutch Reformed; prominent leader at the Synod of Dort*): *Baptismis...baptisma...* [Both words indicate] the act of baptizing: that is, either immersion alone, or a dipping and the consequent washing.²⁰

7) **Francis Turretin** (1623–87; *Swiss Reformed*): The word “baptism” is of Greek origin, derived from the verb *baptō*, which means “to dip” and “to imbue”; *baptizein*, “to dip in” and “to immerse.”²¹

8) **Hermann Witsius** (1636–1708; *Dutch Reformed*): It cannot be denied but the native signification of *baptēin* and *baptizein* is to plunge or dip.²²

9) **George Campbell** (1719–96), *Scottish Presbyterian*): *Baptizein*, both in sacred authors and in classical, signifies to dip, to plunge, to immerse, and was rendered by Tertullian, the oldest of the Latin Fathers, *tingere*, the term used for dyeing cloth, which was by immersion. It is always construed suitably to this meaning.²³

10) **Charles Anthon** (1797–1867; *Episcopalian; Professor of Greek & Latin at Columbia University [NY]*): The primary meaning of the word [*baptizō*] is to “dip,” or “immerse”; and its secondary meanings, if it ever had any, all refer, in some way or other, to the same leading idea. ...Sprinkling, etc., are entirely out of the question.²⁴

11) **Adolph von Harnack** (1851–1930; *German Lutheran*): *Baptizein* undoubtedly signifies immersion. No proof can be found that it signifies anything else in the New Testament, and in the most ancient Christian literature. ...There is no passage in the New Testament which suggests...that any New Testament author attached to the word *baptizein* any other sense than “immersion.”²⁵

12) **Henry Dosker** (1855–1926; *American Dutch-Reformed*): Every candid historian will have to admit that the Baptists have, both philologically and historically, the better of the argument, as to the early prevailing mode of baptism. The word *baptizō* means “immersion,” both in classical and biblical Greek, except where it is manifestly used in a tropical [figurative or metaphorical] sense.²⁶

Equally significant is that all mainstream lexicons whether published before, during or after Dale’s series appeared, and regardless of the academic basis or religious affiliation of their creators, likewise conclude that to *dip/immerse* is residually the principle meaning of *baptizō*.

²⁰ *Disputationes Theologicae*, 32.5 (*De Baptismo*);

Latin: βαπτισμῖς...βάπτισμα...*quae baptizandi actum, hoc est, vel mersionem solum: vel intictionem atquae ablutionem consequentem*; (Francis Gomarus, *Opera Theologica Omnia; Maximam Partem Posthuma, Suprema Authoris Voluntate a Discipulis Edita*, [Amsterdami: Joannis Janssonii, 1664], 2:103.)

²¹ *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 19.11.3; George Musgrave, James T. Dennison, Jr., *Francis Turretin: Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing, 1997), 3:378.

Latin: *Baptismus vox est origine Graeca quae a verbo βάπτω deducitur, quod est tingere, et imbuere, βαπτίζειν, tingere et immergere*. (Benedict Pictet, ed., *Francisco Turretino: Institutio Theologiae Elencticae*, [Edinburgh: John D. Lowe, 1847], 3:323.)

²² Herman Witsius; William Crookshank [1712–69; Scottish Presbyterian], trans., *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man* [4.16.13], (Edinburgh: John Turnbull, 1803), 2:426;

Latin: *Negari non potest, quin nativis significatus vocis βάπτειν & βαπτίζειν sit mergere, tingere*. (Hermanii Witsii; *De Eaconomia Feaderum Dei cum Hominibus*, [Basil: Johanni Rudolphum, 1739], 719.)

²³ George Campbell, *The Four Gospels, Translated from the Greek, with Preliminary Dissertations, and Notes Critical and Explanatory*, (New York: Gould & Newman, 1837), 2:20.

²⁴ *The Baptist Review*, J. R. Baumes, ed., (Cincinnati: J. R. Baumes, 1879), 1:596.

²⁵ Cited in: Philip Schaff, *The Oldest Church Manual called “The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles”*, (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1886), 50.

²⁶ Henry Elias Dosker, *The Dutch Anabaptists*, (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1921), 176.

1) *Thesaurus of Greek Words* (1480 {dates denote first editions}; Crestone²⁷)

Baptō...*The action of dipping.*

Baptizō...*The action of immersing.*²⁸

2) *Thesaurus of the Greek Language* (1572; Stephanus, Scapula²⁹)

Baptō... *To dip, immerse; to dye something* (as such is done by immersion).

Baptizō... *To dip or immerse; as in things that are immersed in order to dye them or wash them in water...To sink; submerge...Also, to wash; bathe: Mark 7:4.*³⁰

3) *Greek-Latin Lexicon of the New Testament* (1620; Pasor³¹)

Baptō... *To dip, immerse; to dye something* (as such is done by immersion).

Baptizō... *To immerse, to wash, to baptize.*³²

4) *An English-Greek Lexicon* (1658; Cokayne³³)

Baptō... *To dip, plunge, or drown.*

Baptizō... *To plunge, to overwhelm, to wash, of or away, to Baptize, to dip...in the passive voice... to be plunged, to be Baptized or dipped.*³⁴

²⁷ Giovanni Crestone (or, Crastone; c.1420–97; Roman Catholic) was an Italian monk whose Greek lexicon (*Lexicon Graeco-Latinum*; 1476) was the first to give definitions in the language of the Western academy, Latin. Crestone also produced several other incunabular Greek-Latin references, such as the thesaurus cited above.

²⁸ Giovanni Crestoni, *Dictionum Graecarum Thesaurus Copiosus*, ([no publication marks], 1510), 31;

Latin: Βαπτω...*tingo** *actiu*...Βαπτίζω...*mergo actiu*; (Ibid.)

*“*Dip...express by mergo, tingo.*” (Sir William Smith, Theophilus D. Hall, eds., *A Copious and Critical English-Latin Dictionary*, [New York: American Book Co., 1871], 210.)

²⁹ Henri Stephanus (a.k.a. Henri Estienne; 1528–98; French Reformed) was a highly regarded classicist. His *magnus opus* was this multi-volume Greek dictionary, which remains one of the most comprehensive lexical works ever produced. It was widely regarded as the foremost authority on Greek for the following two centuries.

In 1580 a condensed version of this work was published by Johannes Scapula (1540–1600; Swiss Reformed). Due to its smaller size and affordability, it was one of the most widely used lexicons up through the 18th century. Its nearly identical entry for *baptizō* reads: “Βαπτίζω, *mergo seu immergo: ut quae tingedi aut abluendi gratia aquae immergimus...Item mergo, submerge ...Ite abluo, lavo, Marci 7, & Luc. 11;* (Johannis Scapulae, *Lexicon Graeco-Latinum*, [Basil: Sebastianum Henricpetri], 1580), 254.)

³⁰ Henrico Stephano, *Thesaurus Graecae Linguae*, (Paris: Excud. Henr. Stephanus, 1572), 1:719;

Latin: Βαπτω—*mergo, immergo...item tingo (quod sit immergendo)... Βαπτίζω—mergo seu immergo (ut quae tingedi aut abluo di gratia aquae immergimus)...mergor, submergor...Ite abluo, lavo, Marc. 7, v.4;* (Ibid.)

³¹ George Pasor (1570–1637; German-Dutch Reformed) was professor of Hebrew at the Reformed university in Herborn, Germany, and later professor of Greek at the Reformed university in Franeker, the Netherlands.

³² Georgio Pasore, *Lexicon Graeco-Latinum in Novum Domini Nostri Jesu Christi Testamentum*, (Herbornae Nassoviorum: Georgii Corvini, 1626), 150f;

Latin: Βαπτω *mergo, immergo. item tingo, quod sit immergendo... Βαπτίζω immergo, abluo, baptizo.* (Ibid.)

³³ Thomas Cokayne (1587–1638) was a relatively obscure Anglican scholar. Published posthumously, this work is historically notable as the first conventional Greek lexicon to give definitions in English. (See, Leslie Stephen, ed., *Dictionary of National Biography*, [London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1887], 11:227.) John Parkhurst claimed it was an unaccredited translation of Pasor (*Lexicon*, 1804; iv), though this is not evident in the entries for *baptō* or *baptizō*.

A second printing of this work (1661) was commissioned by a consortium of independent English ministers with a shared interest in providing “a further help to those who desire the Knowledge of the Tongue.” Notable within this group were Joseph Caryl (1602–73; Congregationalist and Westminster divine), William Dell (1607–69—colleague of John Bunyan), Matthew Meade (1630–99—colleague of John Owen), Henry Jessey (1603–63; early Particular Baptist), and Thomas Cokayne’s grandson, George Cokayne (1619–91; Congregationalist).

³⁴ *An English-Greek Lexicon, Containing the Derivations, and various Significations of all the Words in the New Testament*, (London: Lodowick Lloyd, 1661), 45.

5) *Ecclesiastical Thesaurus of the Greek Fathers* (1682; Suicer³⁵)

Baptō...signifies to immerse; to dye...Hence one is said to baptō the bucket when water is drawn from a well or stream, which cannot be done unless the bucket is wholly submerged under the water.

Baptizō properly has the same meaning [as baptō]. Hence the optimal rendering of baptizō is immerse ...From the proper meaning of the verb baptizō, baptisma or baptismos also properly mean to immerse into, to dip into. For this reason, baptisma is the equivalent of katadusis [to plunge].³⁶

6) *Greek-Latin Lexicon of the New Testament* (1728; Mintert³⁷)

Baptō: to dip, to dye, plunge, immerse in water.

Baptizō: properly, it undoubtedly means to plunge, to immerse, to dip into water; yet because it is common to plunge or dip a thing that it may be washed, it also signifies to wash, to wash off...³⁸

7) *A Greek and English Lexicon to the New Testament* (1769; Parkhurst³⁹)

Baptō: perhaps from Hebrew tabal, to dip...To dip, plunge, immerse.

Baptizō: from baptō to dip... 1. To dip, immerse, or plunge in water... 2. to wash oneself, be washed, wash... 3. to baptize, to immerse in, or wash with water...⁴⁰

8) *A Greek-English Lexicon* {LSJ} (1843, {1996}; Passow, Liddell, Scott, Jones⁴¹)

Baptō... 1) Immerse in a liquid... 2) Color by immersion, dye... 3) Dip a vessel in order to draw water... 4) Baptize...

Baptizō... 1) Dip, plunge...to be drowned...of ships, sink or disable them. Metaph.; ...overwhelm, flood...to be drenched... 2) draw wine by dipping the cup in the bowl...Plut. Alex. 67... (3) baptize...dip oneself...get oneself baptized...perform ablutions [cultic bathings, or washings]...⁴²

³⁵ Johann Suicer (or, Schweitzer; 1620–84; Swiss Reformed) was Professor of Greek and Hebrew at the University of Zurich. His lexicon focused on the works of the early church fathers who wrote in Greek.

³⁶ Johann Kaspar Suicer, *Thesaurus Ecclesiasticus e Patribus Graecis*, (Amsterdam: Henricum Wetstenium, 1682), 1:622f; Latin: Βαπτω significat mergo, tingo...Dicitur, qui aquam e puteo vel flumine haurit; quod none potest fieri, nisi tota sub aqua mergatur situla. Eandem proprie significationem habet Βαπτίζω. Optimae glossae Βαπτίζω mergo...A propria verbi Βαπτίζω significatione, Βαπτίσμα vel βαπτισμός notat proprie immersionem, intinctionem. Hinc Βαπτίσμα idem quod καταδυσίς; (Ibid.)

³⁷ Peter Mintert (1650–1728) was a Dutch Reformed minister and scholar.

³⁸ Petrus Mintert, *Lexicon Graeco-Latinum in Novum D. N. Jesu Christi Testamentum*, (Frankfort: Wolffgangi Christophori Multzii, 1728), vol. 1, in locs. cit.; Latin: Βαπτω, tingo intingo, mergo, immergo in aquam...Βαπτίζω, proprie quidem mergere, immergere, intingeret in aquam notat; sed quia saepe aliquid mergi aut tingi solet ur lavetur, hinc etiam pro lavare, abluere, sumitur...

³⁹ John Parkhurst (1727–97) was an Anglican minister and Cambridge educated lexicographer.

⁴⁰ John Parkhurst, *A Greek and English Lexicon to the New Testament*, (London: T. Davison, 1804), 104f.

⁴¹ Published in 1843 by two Oxford scholars, Henry George Liddell (1811–98; Anglican) and Robert Scott (1811–87; Anglican), this work was based on a classical Greek-German lexicon by Franz Passow (1786–1833; German Lutheran). It was significantly enlarged in the early 1900’s under the supervision of Sir Henry Stuart Jones (1867–1939). It has since undergone several expansions, with a major supplement being added in 1996. These ongoing updates have continued to uphold its general reputation as the leading authority on classical Greek. Due to its high stature and copious size the full edition is sometimes referred to as the “Great Scott” or the “Big Liddell”.

Interestingly, in Passow’s lexicon, after stating that baptizō typically means “to immerse, to submerge” (German: “eintauchen, untertauchen”), it adds that it can also mean “to pour upon” (“begiessen”; *Handwörterbuch der Griechischen Sprache*, [Leipzig: F.C.W. Vogel, 1828], 1:274). This was carried over into the first edition of Liddell and Scott’s work (1843). However, when prompted to show a specific citation from a primary source where such a meaning was evident, they could not, and the definition was withdrawn from subsequent editions (2nd–9th; 1845–1940). (See: George Purefoy, *A History of the Sandy Creek Baptists*, [New York: Sheldon & Co., 1859], 21f.)

9) *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek* (1866; Cremer⁴³)

Baptō, to immerse ...to make wet by immersion ...to dye by dipping.

Baptizō ...to immerse, to submerge...The peculiar New Testament and Christian use of the word to denote immersion, submersion for a religious purpose = to baptize.⁴⁴

10) *A Greek Lexicon of the Roman & Byzantine Periods* (1870; Sophocles⁴⁵)

Baptō ...To dip...to dye...to baptize...to plunge.

Baptizō ...1) To dip, to immerse, to sink... 2) ...to perform ablution, to bathe... 3) to plunge.

...There is no evidence that Luke, and Paul, and the other writers of the New Testament put upon this verb meanings not recognized by the Greeks.⁴⁶

11) *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (1886; Grimm, Wilke, Thayer⁴⁷)

Baptō ...To dip, dip in, immerse...to dip into dye, to dye, to color.

Baptizō ...1) Properly, to dip repeatedly, to immerge, submerge... 2) To cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water... 3) Metaphorically, to overwhelm.⁴⁸

12) *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (1933; Kittel, Friedrich, Oepke, Bromiley⁴⁹)

Baptō ...To dip in or under ...to dye ...dyed materials ...dyed or colored clothes.

The intensified **Baptizō** occurs in the sense of to immerse (transitive) from the time of Hippocrates, in Plato [both 4th century BC] and especially in later writers...to sink the ship...to sink.⁵⁰

⁴² Henry G. Liddell, Robert Scott, Sir Henry Stuart Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon: with 1996 Supplement*; [electronic], (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1996), 305f.

⁴³ Hermann Cremer (1834–1903) was a German-Lutheran linguist and theologian.

⁴⁴ Hermann Cremer, William Urwick, trans., *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek*, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1878), 126.

German: βαπτω, eintauchen...durch eintauchen benetzen...durch eintauchen färben...βαπτίζω...eintauchen, untertauchen...Der eigenüml. neutestamentl. u. christl. gebrauch zur bz. einer eintauchung, untertauchung zu religiosem zwecke = taufen; (Hermann Cremer, *Biblich-Theologisches Wörterbuch der Neutestamentlichen Gracitat*, [Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Berthes, 1866], 86.)

⁴⁵ Evangelinus Sophocles (1807–83; Greek Orthodox) was Professor of Greek at Harvard University.

⁴⁶ Evangelinus Apostolidis Sophocles, *A Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods; From B.C. 146 to A.D. 1100*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900), 1:297f.

⁴⁷ This was an expansion of a lexicon originally created by the German philologist Dr. Karl Ludwig Willibald Grimm (1807–91). Grimm had in turn based his work on that of another German linguist, Dr. Christian Gottlob Wilke (1786–1854). In 1886, Dr. Joseph Henry Thayer (1828–1901; Congregationalist) of Harvard Divinity School, produced an expanded and updated version of Grimm's lexicon—the extended title of which then became: *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament; Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti, Translated, Revised, and Enlarged by Joseph Henry Thayer, D.D.* Thayer released a second edition of this work in 1889.

⁴⁸ Joseph H. Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, (New York: American Book Co., 1889), 94f.

⁴⁹ Using Hermann Cremer's work as a foundation, the first four volumes of this massive lexicon-dictionary were edited by Gerhard Kittel (1888–1948; German Lutheran). Gerhard Friedrich (1908–86; German Lutheran) edited a further six volumes. The articles on βαπτω, βαπτίζω, and βαπτισμός were written by the evangelical Lutheran Albrecht Oepke (1881–1955). The series was translated into English by Geoffrey Bromiley (1915–2009; Anglican).

⁵⁰ Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich; Geoffrey William Bromiley, trans., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), 1:529f.

German: βαπτω...untertachen...färben...gefärbter Stoff...gefärbte Kleider... Das Intensivum βαπτίζω kommt in der Bdtg eintauchen (trans) set Hippokrates, bei Platon und besonders Späteren vor. a. eigtl...das Schiff versenken...versinken. (Gerhard Kittel, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, [Stuttgart: Verlag von W.Kohlhammer, 1953], 1:527)

13) *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (1952; Vine, Unger, White⁵¹)

Baptō ...*To immerse, dip* (derived from a root signifying 'deep'), also...*to dye*...

Baptizō ...*To baptize*, primarily a frequentative form of *baptō*, 'to dip'...⁵²

14) *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament & Other Early Christian Literature* {BDAG} (1957; Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich⁵³)

Baptō ...*To dip something in a liquid, dip, dip in*...

Baptizō ...*In Greek literature generally to put or go under water in a variety of senses, also figuratively, e.g., soak*...

1) Wash ceremonially for purpose of purification, *wash, purify*...

2) To use water in a rite for purpose of renewing or establishing a relationship with God, *plunge, dip, wash, baptize*...

3) To cause someone to have an extraordinary experience akin to an initiatory water-rite, *to plunge, baptize*.⁵⁴

15) *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (1992; Zodhiates⁵⁵)

Baptō ...*To immerse, dip... to dye by dipping... to dip in*...

Baptizō ...*From baptō, 'to dip.' Immerse, submerge for a religious purpose, to overwhelm, saturate, baptize*...⁵⁶

16) *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* (2001; Strong, Thayer⁵⁷)

(911) **Baptō** ...*A primary verb...1) to dip, dip in, immerse. 2) to dip into dye, to dye, color*...

(907) **Baptizō** ...*From a derivative of 911... 1) to dip repeatedly, to immerse, to submerge (of vessels sunk). 2) to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water, to wash one's self, bathe. 3) to overwhelm*.⁵⁸

⁵¹ Originally created by William Edwy Vine (1873–1949; English Open Brethren [credobaptist]), and expanded by Merrill Fredrick Unger (1909–80; evangelical) and William White, Jr. (b. 1934; evangelical).

⁵² William E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, William White, Jr., *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996), 2:50, 170.

⁵³ This lexicon is commonly denominated *BDAG*, derived from the names of its four primary contributors: Walter Bauer (1877–1960; German Lutheran), Fredrick W. Danker (1920–2012; American Lutheran), William F. Arndt (1880–1957; American Lutheran) and Felix W. Gingrich (1901–93; Evangelical United Brethren). With many ongoing updates being made by select scholars, *BDAG* is widely regarded as the standard academic reference for New Testament and patristic Greek.

⁵⁴ Walter Bauer, Fredrick W. Danker, William F. Arndt, Felix W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* [3rd ed.], (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p.164f; electronic edition, Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 2000).

⁵⁵ Spiro Zodhiates (1922–2009) was a Greek Baptist linguist and biblical scholar.

⁵⁶ Spiro Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* [electronic edition]; (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 2000), G907, G908.

⁵⁷ Dr. James Strong (1822–94; Methodist) was a Professor of Exegetical Theology at Drew Theological Seminary (Madison, NJ). Strong originally attached only a limited Greek dictionary to his concordance (1890), in which *baptizō* was simply defined "to make whelmed (i.e. fully wet)."

The more contemporary *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* combines information from *Strong's Dictionary of Greek and Hebrew Words*, *Thayer's Greek Lexicon*, and *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Editorial information for this work is somewhat obscure, but its copyright is currently held by Woodside Bible Fellowship, an independent Protestant church in Elmira, Ontario.

⁵⁸ James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, (Elmira: Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1996).

In fairness, and as some of Dale's supporters have emphasized, it should be noted that sometime between 1867 and 1871 the aforementioned lexicographer Joseph Thayer made some highly complementary remarks with regard to Dale's first volume:

If I were to utter my first impressions, I should break out in unfeigned admiration. That one, occupied with the ordinary duties of the pastorate, should have the leisure, patience, and mental energy for an inquiry seldom surpassed as respects thorough research, is a marvel. I can give emphatic testimony to the analytic power and acuteness which the treatise exhibits, as well as to its marked perspicuity and directness of statement...

The theory that *baptizō* expresses "a definite act, mode and nothing but mode"⁵⁹—is shown to be pitifully helpless when applied to "all Greek literature."⁶⁰

Noticeably, the only lingual concern Thayer specifically addressed was his belief Dale had shown *baptizō* has a range of meaning which can include relating information beyond merely that of mode. Also notable is Thayer's remark that he was giving his "first impression" of Dale's work, knowing that when Thayer later released his own lexicon (1886, revised 1889) he obviously chose to retain the basic definitions historically attributed to *baptō* and *baptizō* as the above citation of that work shows. This, despite there having been ample opportunity for him to adopt, or to at least incorporate Dale's unconventional conclusions.

Also, while in his extended remarks on *baptizō* Thayer referred his readers to Dale's series as a study resource, he also recommended the works of two Baptist scholars whose conclusions were in opposition to Dale's.⁶¹ Moreover, in a personal letter to the Restorationist minister John Briney (1839–1927), dated November 18, 1889, Thayer stated:

As to the meaning of *baptizō*, to which your subsequent questions relate, all reputable lexicographers are now agreed that its primary meaning is "to immerse," etc.; see, for example, Liddell & Scott's *Greek Lexicon*, 7th ed., 1883. ...An inspection of them [i.e., "all the instances of the word's occurrence in extant Greek literature"] will enable you to judge conclusively for yourself respecting the inherent and ordinary meaning of the word.⁶²

⁵⁹ Here, as non-immersionists writers like Dale frequently have, Thayer was citing a controversial position held by some Baptists, here expressed by one of its leading proponents, Dr. Alexander Carson (1776–1844; Northern-Irish Presbyterian turned Reformed Baptist):

"*Baptō*, the root, I have shown to possess two meanings, and two only, 'to dip' ... 'to dye.' *Baptizō*, I have asserted, has but one signification. It has been formed on the idea of the primary meaning of the root, and has never admitted the secondary... My position is, that it [*baptizō*] always signifies 'to dip'; never expressing anything but mode.

"Now, as I have all the lexicographers and commentators against me in this opinion, it will be necessary to say a word or two with respect to the authority of lexicons. ...I admit that lexicons are an authority, but they are not an ultimate authority... Indeed with respect to the primary meaning of common words I can think of no instance in which lexicons are to be suspected. ...It is in giving secondary meanings, in which the lines are not so easily discovered, that the vision of the lexicographers are to be suspected.

"Nor is it with respect to real secondary meanings that they are likely to be mistaken. Their peculiar error is in giving, as secondary meanings, what are not properly 'meanings' at all... I admit that the meaning [e.g. 'wash'] which they take out of the word [*baptizō*], is always implied in the passage where the word occurs. But I deny that this meaning is expressed by the word. It is always made out by implication, or in some other way." (Alexander Carson, *Baptism in Its Mode and Subjects*, (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1860), 55f.)

⁶⁰ J. Dale, *Christic and Patristic Baptism*, 633.

⁶¹ I.e.: Thomas Jefferson Conant, *The Meaning and Use of Baptizein, Philologically and Historically Investigated*, (New York: American Bible Union, 1861); David Barnes Ford, *Studies on the Baptismal Question; Including a Review of Dr. Dale's "Inquiry into the Usage of Baptizō"*, (Boston: H. A. Young & Co., 1879); see: H. Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* [2nd ed.], 94.

⁶² John Benton Briney, *The Form of Baptism*, (St. Louis: Christian Publishing Co., 1892), 40.

Greek Orthodox statements on the meaning of *Baptizō*

Another testament to consider is how *baptizō* has been understood within the Greek Orthodox community, which has continuously utilized the Greek language throughout its history.⁶³

Eastern churches hold baptism paramount among the sacraments, and are well-known for their disdain of baptism by means other than immersion, excepting only rare cases of necessity. The force with which this contempt is expressed varies, seemingly relative to the ecclesial and even political climate of a given era. A *horos* (a *boundary*; ecclesiastically, a *decree*) issued by the three foremost Eastern prelates of the mid-18th century demonstrates just how dogmatic Orthodox churches can in fact be with regard to proper baptism, and the integral role mode plays in their definition of such—going so far as to, in effect, de-Christianize all non-immersionists.

HOROS of the Holy and Great Church of Christ on the Baptism of Converts from the West

There are many means by which we are made worthy of attaining to our salvation, and some of these are interconnected and form a sequence with each other in a ladder like manner, so to speak, all aiming at one and the same end. First of all, then, is the Baptism [*baptisma*], which God delivered to the sacred Apostles, such being the case that without it the rest are ineffectual.

...And just as he [Jesus] was placed in the tomb and on the third day returned to life, so likewise they who believe, going under the water instead of under the earth, in three immersions [*trisi katadusesi*] depict in themselves the three-day grace of the resurrection.

The water... cleanses those who are thus baptized [*baptizomenous*] and makes them worthy of adoption as sons. Not so, however, with those who are initiated in a different manner. Instead of cleansing and adoption, it renders them impure and sons of darkness.

Just three years ago, the question arose: When heretics [i.e., Westerners – as in Roman Catholics and Protestants] come over to us, are their baptisms acceptable, given that these are administered contrary to the tradition of the holy Apostles and divine Fathers, and contrary to the custom and ordinance of the Catholic and Apostolic Church?

We, who by divine mercy were raised in the Orthodox Church and who adhere to the canons of the sacred Apostles and divine Fathers, recognize only one Church, our holy catholic and apostolic Church. It is her sacraments, and consequently her Baptism, that we accept. On the other hand, we abhor, by common resolve, all rites not administered as the Holy Spirit commanded the sacred Apostles, and as the Church of Christ performs to this day. For they are the inventions of depraved men, and we regard them as strange and foreign to the whole apostolic tradition.

Therefore, we receive those who come over to us from them as unholy and unbaptized [*abaptistous*]. In this we follow our Lord Jesus Christ who commanded his own disciples to baptize [*baptizein*], “in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit” [Matt. 28:19]; we follow the sacred and divine Apostles who order us to baptize aspirants with three immersions and emersions [*trisi katadusesi kai anadusesi*], and in each immersion [*kataduseōn*] to say one name of the Holy Trinity.⁶⁴

...And we follow the Second and Penthekte holy Ecumenical Councils,⁶⁵ which order us to receive as unbaptized those aspirants to Orthodoxy who were not baptized [*mē baptizomenous*] with

⁶³ “Ascertain the *usus loquendi*, or notion affixed to a word by the persons in general, by whom the language either is now or formerly was spoken, and especially in the particular connection in which such notion is affixed.”

(Thomas H. Horne, *An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures*, [Philadelphia: J. Whetham & Son, 1840], 1:325.)

⁶⁴ This is in reference to the *Apostolic Canons* (c. 4th century; see text for note 644).

⁶⁵ Canon 7 of the First Council of Constantinople (381 AD—a.k.a. the Second Ecumenical Council) dealt with the baptism of heretics, including those performed by only a single immersion.

“But Eunomians, who are baptized with only one immersion, and Montanists, who are here called Phrygians, and Sabellians, who teach the identity of Father and Son...all these, when they desire to turn to orthodoxy, we receive as heathen. ... [an extended sequence of remedial actions follows] ... then we baptize them.” (NPNF2 14:185); ⇒

three emersions and immersions [*treis anaduseis kai kataduseis*], and in each immersion [*kataduseōn*] did not clearly invoke one of the divine hypostaseis, but were baptized in some other fashion.

...We receive those who come over to the Orthodox faith, who were baptized without being baptized, as being unbaptized [*abaptistōs baptizomenous ōs abaptistous*], and without danger we baptize [*baptizomen*] them in accordance with the Apostolic and synodical Canons, upon which Christ's holy and apostolic and catholic Church, the common Mother of us all, firmly relies.

Together with this joint resolve and declaration of ours, we seal this our Horos, being as it is in agreement with the Apostolic and Synodical dictates, and we certify it by our signatures.

In the year of salvation 1755,

† CYRIL [V; d.1775], by the mercy of God Archbishop of Constantinople–New Rome, and Ecumenical Patriarch

† MATTHEW [Psaltis; d.1766], by the mercy of God Pope and Patriarch of the great city of Alexandria and Universal Judge

† PARTHENIOS [d.1766], by the mercy of God Patriarch of the holy City of Jerusalem and all Palestine.⁶⁶

Greek: *Εὐνομιανοὺς μέντοι, τοὺς εἰς μίαν κατάδυσιν βαπτιζομένους, καὶ Μοντανιστάς, τοὺς ἐνταῦθα λεγομένους Φρύγας, καὶ Σαβελλιανούς, τοὺς υἰοπατορίαν δοξάζοντας...πάντας τοὺς ἀπ' αὐτῶν θέλοντας προστίθεσθαι τῇ ὀρθοδοξίᾳ, ὡς Ἑλληνας δεχόμεθα...καὶ τότε αὐτοὺς βαπτίζομεν.*

(William Bright, *The Canons of the First Four General Councils of Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus and Chalcedon: With Notes*, [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892], xxiv.)

This ruling was reaffirmed verbatim in Canon 95 of the Penthekte Council (a.k.a. the Quinisext or Trullan Council), an Eastern synod held in 692, at Constantinople. (See: Vladimir Nikolaevič Benešević, *Syntagma XIV Titulorum Sine Scholiis; Secunum Versionem Palaeo-Slovenicam, Adjecto Textu Graeco*, [Petropoli.: Acadamiae Scientiarum Imperialis Petropolitanae, 1906], 1:101.)

⁶⁶ George D. Metallinos, Priestmonk Seraphim, trans., *I Confess One Baptism...; Interpretation and Application of Canon VII of the Second Ecumenical Council by the Kollyvades and Constantine Oikonomos (a Contribution to the Historico-canonical Evaluation of the Problem of the Validity of Western Baptism)*, (Athens: Holy Mountain: St. Paul's Monastery, 1994), 133f; I have made a few minor grammatical changes to the translation.

Greek: *Ὅρος τῆς Ἁγίας τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἐκκλησίας περὶ τοῦ βαπτίσματος τῶν Δυτικῶν*

Πολλῶν ὄντων τῶν μέσων, δι' ὧν τῆς σωτηρίας ἡμῶν ἀξιούμεθα καὶ τούτων, ὡς εἰπεῖν, κλιμακῆδόν ἀλληλενδέτων καὶ ἀλληλουχομένων ὄντων, ἀτε διὰ πάντων πρὸς τὸ αὐτὸ τέλος ἀφορώντων, πρῶτον ἐστὶ τὸ τοῖς ἱεροῖς Ἀποστόλοις θεοπαράδοτον βάπτισμα, οἷα διὰ τῶν λοιπῶν τούτου χωρὶς ἀπρακτούντων.

...καὶ ὡς περ ἐκεῖνος μετὰ τὴν ἐν τάφῳ κατάθεσιν τριταῖος ἐπὶ τὴν ζωὴν ἀνεφοίτησεν, οὕτως οἱ πιστεύοντες, ἀντὶ τῆς γῆς, τὸ ὕδωρ υποδυόμενοι, ἐν τρισὶ καταδύσει τὴν τριήμερον εαυτοὺς χάριν τῆς Ἀναστάσεως ἐξεικονίζουσιν...

Τοῦ ὕδατος...καθαίρων μὲν καὶ υἰοθεσίας ἀξιούν τοὺς οὕτω βαπτιζομένους, τοὺς δὲ ἄλλως πῶς τελουμένους, ἀντὶ καθάρσεως καὶ υἰοθεσίας ἀκαθάρτους καὶ σκότους υἰοὺς ἀποφαίνον.

Ἐπειδὴ τοιγαρὸν πρὸ χρόνων ἤδη τριῶν ζήτημα ἀνεφύη, εἰ τα παρὰ τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν ἁγίων Ἀποστόλων καὶ θείων Πατέρων καὶ παρὰ τὴν συνήθειαν καὶ διαταγὴν τῆς Καθολικῆς καὶ Ἀποστολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἐπιτελούμενα βαπτίσματα τῶν αἰρετικῶν δεκτὰ ἐστὶ, προσερχομένων ἡμῖν, ἡμεῖς, ἀτε θεῷ ἐλέει τῆ ὀρθοδόξῳ Ἐκκλησίᾳ ἐντραφέντες, καὶ τοῖς κανόσι τῶν ἱερῶν Ἀποστόλων καὶ θείων Πατέρων ἐπόμενοι, καὶ μίαν μόνην γινώσκοντες τὴν ἡμετέραν ἁγίαν καθολικὴν καὶ ἀποστολικὴν Ἐκκλησίαν, καὶ ταύτης τὰ μυστήρια, ἐπομένως καὶ τὸ θεῖον βάπτισμα, ἀποδεχόμενοι, τὰ δὲ ὑπὸ τῶν αἰρετικῶν, ὅσα μὴ ὡς τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τοῖς ἱεροῖς Ἀποστόλοις διετάξατο καὶ ἡ Ἐκκλησία τοῦ Χριστοῦ μέχρι τῆς σήμερον ποιεῖ, ἐπιτελούμενα, ἐφευρέματα ἀνθρώπων διεφθαρμένων ὄντα, ὡς ἀλλόκοτα καὶ τῆς ἀποστολικῆς ὅλης παραδόσεως ἀλλότρια γινώσκοντες, ἀοστρεφόμεθα κοινῇ διαγνώσει.

Καὶ τοὺς ἐξ αὐτῶν ἡμῖν προσερχομένους ὡς ἀνιέρους καὶ ἀβαπτίστους δεχόμεθα, ἐπόμενοι τῷ Κυρίῳ ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ, τῷ τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ ἐντειλαμένῳ βαπτίζειν «εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τῶν Πατρῶς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος» τοῖς τε ἱεροῖς καὶ θείοις Ἀποστόλοις, διαταττομένοις ἐν τρισὶ καταδύσει καὶ ἀναδύσει τοὺς προσερχομένους βαπτίζειν καὶ ἐν ἐκάστη τῶν καταδύσεων ἐν ὀνόματι ἐπιλέγειν τῆς ἁγίας Τριάδος.

...τῆ τε δευτέρᾳ καὶ πενθέκτῃ ἁγίαις Οἰκουμενικαῖς Συνόδοις, διαταττομέναις τοὺς μὴ βαπτιζομένους εἰς τρεῖς ἀναδύσεις καὶ καταδύσεις καὶ ἐν ἐκάστη τῶν καταδύσεων μίαν ἐπίκλησιν τῶν θείων ὑποστάσεων μὴ ἐπιβοώντας, ἀλλ' ἄλλως πῶς βαπτιζομένους, ὡς ἀβαπτίστους προσδέχεσθαι τῇ Ὄρθοδοξίᾳ προσιόντας. ⇒

As most directly concerns our survey, the essential meaning of *baptizō* is in fact a prominent factor in these Eastern churches' insistence on baptism by immersion. This is especially seen in polemical writings that address the topic. Here is one such account by Alexandre de Stourdza (1791–1854), best known as a European diplomat (hence his writings are mostly in French), but whom also remained a vigorous advocate of his maternally native Greek Orthodoxy:

1) The distinctive characteristic of the institution of baptism is immersion, *Baptisma*, which cannot be omitted without destroying the mysterious sense of the sacrament, and contradicting at the same time the etymological signification of the word, which serves to designate it. The church of the West has, then, departed from the example of Jesus Christ; she has obliterated the whole sublimity of the exterior sign; in short, she commits an abuse of words and of ideas, in practicing *baptism by aspersion* [sprinkling], this very term being, in itself, a derisive contradiction.

The verb *baptizō*, *immergo*, in fact has but a single accepted meaning. It signifies, literally and always *to plunge*. [Stourdza fn.: see all lexicographers, the fables of Aesop, the most modern writers, the Fathers of the Church.] Baptism and immersion are, therefore, identical, and to say 'baptism by aspersion' is as if one should say 'immersion by aspersion,' or any other absurdity of the same nature.⁶⁷

Perhaps the most authoritative Orthodox proclamations on this specific philological point was made in an official statement on baptism issued by a synod held in Constantinople, in 1829:

2) ... “*Baptizing them [baptizontas autous]*”, said the Lord [Matt. 28:19], not “*sprinkling upon them [epirantizontas]*”, or “*pouring over them [epicheontas]*”. The essential meaning of the verb *baptizō* is established—there being no other meaning—thus indicating those who are *baptized [baptizomenon]* are thrust into the water [*emballein tois hydasi*]; to use more common speech, they are dipped [*boutōn*]⁶⁸, so as to be completely covered in the water [*kaluptein oloklēron tois hydasi*]. ...

...Τους δ' ἐξ αὐτῶν αβαπτίστως βαπτίζομένους ὡς αβαπτίστους ἀποδεχόμεθα, προσερχομένους τῇ ὀρθοδόξῳ πίστει, καὶ ἀκινδύνως αὐτοὺς βαπτίζομεν, κατὰ τοὺς ἀποστολικούς καὶ συνοδικούς κανόνας, οἱς ἀραρότως ἐπιστηρίζεται ἡ ἀγία τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἀποστολικὴ καὶ καθολικὴ Ἐκκλησία, ἡ κοινὴ μήτηρ πάντων ἡμῶν.

Καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ κοινῇ ἡμῶν διαγνώσει καὶ ἀποφάνσει σφραγίζομεν τὸν Ὅρον ἡμῶν τοῦτο, ταῖς ἀποστολικαῖς καὶ συνοδικαῖς διαταγαῖς συνάδοντα, διαβεβαιούντες αὐτὸν δι' ἡμετέρων ὑπογραφῶν. Ἐν ἔτει σωτηρίου ἀμνη'.

† Κύριλλος ἐλέω Θεοῦ ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Κωνσταντινουπόλεως Νέας Ρώμης καὶ οἰκουμενικὸς πατριάρχης.

† Ματθαῖος ἐλέω Θεοῦ πάπας καὶ πατριάρχης τῆς μεγάλης πόλεως Ἀλεξανδρείας καὶ κριτῆς τῆς Οἰκουμένης.

† Παρθένιος ἐλέω Θεοῦ πατριάρχης τῆς ἀγίας πόλεως Ἱερουσαλήμ καὶ πάσης Παλαιστίνης.

(Μανουὴλ Ἰω. Γεδεών, *Κανονικαὶ διατάξεις: Ἐπιστολαί, λύσεις, θεσπίσματα τῶν ἁγιωτάτων πατριαρχῶν Κωνσταντινουπόλεως*, [Canonical Provisions: Letters, Remedies and Ordinances of the Holy Patriarchs of Constantinople], [Κωνσταντινουπόλει: Ἐκ τοῦ Πατριαρχικοῦ Τυπογραφείου, 1888], 1:252f.)

⁶⁷ Cited in T. Conant, *The Meaning and Use of Baptizein*, 150f.

French: *Le caractère distinctif de l'institution du baptême est l'immersion, βάπτισμα, qu'on ne saurait omettre, sans détruire le sens mystérieux du sacrement, et sans contredire en même temps la signification étymologique du mot, qui sert à le désigner. L'église d'Occident s'est donc écartée de l'imitation de Jésus Christ, elle a fait disparaître toute la sublimité du signe extérieur enfin elle commet un abus de mots et d'idées, en pratiquant le baptême par aspersion, dont le seul énoncé est déjà une contradiction dérisoire.*

En effet le verbe βαπτίζω—immergo—n'a qu'une seule acception. Il signifie littéralement et perpétuellement plonger. [fn: Voyez tous les lexicographes, les fables d'Esop, les écrivains plus modernes, les pères de l'Eglise.] Baptême et immersion sont donc identiques, et dire: baptême par aspersion, c'est comme si l'on disait: immersion par aspersion, ou tout autre contresens de la même nature;

(Alexandre de Stourdza, *Considérations sur la Doctrine et l'Esprit de l'Église Orthodoxe*, [Stuttgart, J. G. Cotta, 1816], 87.)

⁶⁸ The synonymic *Βουτώ/βυπτῶ* (alongside conjugative and dialectal variants such as *βουτών*, *Βούτμα*, *βουτιέται*, *βυπτέω*, etc.) have largely displaced *βάπτω/Βαπτίζω* as the most common words for *dipping/immersing* in modern Greek. (See comments in text for notes 74 and 76; also: Nikolaos Kontopoulos, *Lexikon Hellēnoanglikon kai Angloellēnikon*, [London: Trübner & Co., 1868], 1:86f.; on the general evolution of modern Greek, see: Peter Bien, John Rassius, Chrysanthi Yiannakou-Bien, *Demotic Greek*, [Hanover: Univ. Press of New England, 1972].)

- † AGATHANGELOS [d. 1832], by the mercy of God Archbishop of Constantinople–New Rome, and Ecumenical Patriarch, so decrees;
 † The Patriarch of Jerusalem, ATHANASIOS [V; d. 1844], so decrees;
 † The [Metropolitan of] Chalcedon, ZACHARIAS [d. 1834], so decrees;
 † The [Metropolitan of] Derkon, NIKIFORUS [d. 1834], so decrees.⁶⁹

A few years later, Anthimos Komnenos (d.1842), an outspoken Greek Orthodox theologian and bishop, restated the synod’s basis of proof, if in unique and quite colorful fashion.⁷⁰

- 3) From where has the Pope derived his practice [of pouring or sprinkling]?
 Where has the Church of the West found it, to declare it right?
 Did she learn it from the Lord’s baptism [*baptisma*]? —Let Jordan testify;
 Let it be the leading witness with its sinkings [*duseis*] and risings [*anaduseis*]!
 Was it from the words of our Lord? —Hear them rightly:
 “Disciple the nations and baptize [*baptizete*] them”, he said,
 Not “anoint [*chriete*] them” or “sprinkle [*rantizete*] them”;
 What he plainly commissioned his Apostles to do is baptize [*baptizein*].
 And the word *baptizō* [*baptizō*], rightly defined, is a dipping [*boutuma*],
 We say again: a complete and proper dipping [*boutuma*].
 For something baptized [*baptizomenon*] is made wholly hidden [*kruptetai olotelōs*].
 This is the very meaning of the word *baptizō* [*baptizō*].
 Did then the Pope learn it from the Apostles, or from the word expressed?
 Or from the Church in all her splendid antiquity?
 Nowhere did such a practice occur, nor can a passage be found,
 That affords shelter to these precepts of the West.⁷¹

Also of notable stature within this ecclesial domain is the Greek Orthodox scholar Theoklitos Pharmakidis (1784–1860), a professor of theology and philosophy at the University of Athens who

⁶⁹ Greek: Βαπτίζοντας αυτούς εἶπεν ὁ Κύριος οὐχὶ ἐπιραντίζοντες ἢ ἐπιχέοντες. Ἡ γὰρ κυρίως σημασία καὶ ἐννοία τοῦ ῥήματος Βαπτίζω οὐδὲν ἄλλον σημαίνουσα ἐστίν, ἐμὴ ἐμβάλλειν τοῖς ὕδασι τὸ βαπτιζόμενον καὶ κοινότερον εἰπεῖν, βουτῶν αὐτὸ καλύπτειν ὀλόκληρον ἐν τοῖς ὕδασι. ...

† Ἀγαθᾶγγελος ἐλέω θεοῦ Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Κωνσταντινουπόλεως Νέας Ρώμης Οἰκουμηνικός Πατριάρχης ἀποφαίνεται.

† Ὁ Πατριάρχης Ἱεροσολύμων Ἀθανάσιος ἀποφαίνεται.

† Ὁ Χαλκηδόνος Ζαχαρίας ἀποφαίνεται.

† Ὁ Δέρκων Νικηφόρος ἀποφαίνεται.

(Ioanne Baptista Martin, R.P. Ludovico Petit, eds., *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et Amplissima Collectio cuius Johannes Dominicus Mansi*, [Parisii: Expensis Huberti Welter, Bibliopolae, 1909], 40:141.)

⁷⁰ This extract is from a lengthy polemical work written in verse, aimed at instructing young Greeks being educated abroad, who were thus deemed at risk of imbibing the views of non-Orthodox churches. Given the sharp, non-prosaic style of Komnenos’ writing there are doubtless nuances not captured in my translation.

⁷¹ Anthimos Komnenos, *Orthodox Teaching*;

- Greek: 1] Πόθεν ἔλαβεν ὁ Πάπας; ποῦ τὸ εἶδεν οὕτως;
 Δύσεως ἢ Ἐκκλησία, καὶ ὀρθὸν τοῦτο φησί;
 Ἀπὸ Βάπτισμα Κυρίου; Ὑορδάνης μαρτυρεῖ,
 δύοσις τε καὶ ἀναδύσεισιν οὗτος πρῶτιστος ἔρεϊ.
 2] Ἀπὸ λόγους τοῦ Κυρίου; ἄκουσον τοὺς ἀληθεῖς,
 μαθητεύσατε τὰ Ἔθνη, καὶ Βαπτίζετε εὐθύς·
 Ὅχι χρίετε, δὲν λέγει, ἢ ῥαντίζετε αὐτοῖς,
 ἀλλὰ τὸ Βαπτίζειν μόνον, Ἀποστόλοις ἐκλεκτοῖς·
 3] Τὸ Βαπτίζω ἐξηγεῖται, Βούτμα παναληθῶ,
 καὶ τὸ Βούτμα εἶν' ἄλλιν τελειότατον ὀρθῶς,
 Βαπτιζόμενον ῥᾶν, ὅ,τι κρύπτεται ὀλοτελῶς,
 τότε λέξις τὸ Βαπτίζω, ἐξηγεῖται ἐντελῶς·
 4] Ἦπατὰ τῶν Ἀποστολων; ἀπὸ λέξιν καὶ φωνήν;
 ἢ ἀπὸ τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν; τὴν ἀρχαίαν καὶ κλεινήν;
 Οὐδαμοῦ τοιαύτη χρῆσις, ἢ τοιοῦτον γραφικόν,
 ὅπως οὖν ἵνα καλύπτῃ δόγμα τὸ τῶν Δυτικῶν.

(Ἀνθίμου Κομνηνοῦ, *Ορθόδοξος Διδασκαλία*, [Ἀθηναίς: Πέτρου Μαντζαρακη, 1837], 184f.)

authored a multi-volume textbook on the Greek language.⁷² Writing in his capacity as General Secretary of the Greek Orthodox Church (1837–39), Pharmakidis again stressed the same theme:

4) The *BAPTIZŌ* contained in the command of our Lord Jesus Christ to perform baptism [*baptismatos*], “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, *baptizing* [*baptizontes*] them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” (Matt. 28:19), indicates nothing other than what this Greek verb properly means [*ellēnikon auto rēma kyriōs sēmainei*].

This is made evident from the baptism of our Lord, who, when he was baptized [*baptistheis*], *went up* [*anebē*] *out of the water* (Matt. 3:16). And he that comes up out of the water must of course first go down [*katabainei*] into the water, whereupon all of him is *baptized* in it [*baptizetai olos en autō*].

We are thereby taught a single manner of baptizing [*ena loipon tropon tou baptizein...diathēkēs*] from the New Testament, namely, plunging [*kataduseis*]; and, of course, plunging [*kataduseis*] *in water results in nothing other than a complete covering* [*olikē...kalypsis*] *with or in the water*.⁷³

Constantine Oikonomos (1780–1857), a prominent 19th century Greek Orthodox scholar, gave this brief synopsis of the philological development and traits of *baptizō*.

5a) Here we note the following: 1) The word *baptizō* comes from *baptō* [*dip; dye*] (as do *búptō* [*plunge; penetrate; dip*] and the now more common *bouttō*, *buptō*, and *bupteō*), and it is also related to *bathos* [*depth*], *buthos* [*deep*], *buthizō* [*sink; submerge*]; as such, it at once and always indicates *a sinking* [*buthizine*]; *plunging into water* [*kataduein eis hydor*] (or other fluids); *dipping entirely into water* [*olonti embaptein eis hydor*]; *making go under the surface* [*hypobruchion poiein*].⁷⁴

Oikonomos also gave a number of reasons why he deemed it subversive to say pouring can convey the concept of a burial (per Rom. 6:4) just as well as immersion, one of which was:

5b) ... 3) Because doing so deceptively suppresses [*katapseudetai*] the fundamental meaning of *baptizō* [*kurias sēmasias tou baptizō*]. Baptizing [*baptizein*] distinctly, and unlike pouring [*epicheein*], entails a plunging beneath the surface of the water [*kataduein hypobruchion eis to hydor*], which is quite different than being superficially wetted with water [*to hydati epibrechein*] while standing on dry ground.⁷⁵

⁷² Θεοκλήτου Φαρμακίδου, *Στοιχεία της Ελληνικής Γλώσσης εις χρήσιν των Σχολείων της Ελλάδος* [*Elements of the Greek Language for Use in the Schools of Greece*], (Αθήναι: Αγγέλου Αγγελίδου, 1815–19), 4 vols.

⁷³ *To Pseudonymous Germanos*; all emphases Pharmakidis'; This was a reply to a religious treatise written under the pseudonym Germanos. The quoted section is a rebuttal of Germanos' tacit defense of some Russian Orthodox churchmen that had begun admitting converts who had been baptized by means other than immersion.

Greek: *Τό ΒΑΠΤΙΖΩ ἐν τῇ περὶ τοῦ βαπτίσματος διαταγῇ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ « πορευθέντες μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς, καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ, καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος » Ματθ. ΚΗ, 19. ἄλλο δὲν σημαίνει εἰμὴ ὅ, τι κυρίως σημαίνει τὸ ἑλληνικὸν αὐτὸ ρῆμα,*

καὶ τοῦτο δῆλον καὶ ἐκ τοῦ βαπτίσματος αὐτὸν τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν, ὅστις βαπτισθεὶς ἀνεβῆ εὐθύς ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕδατος, Ματθ. Γ', 16. ἄλλ' ὅστις ἀναβαίνει ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕδατος, καταβαίνει πρότερον ἐν τῷ ὕδατι, ὃ ἐξὶ βαπτίζεται ὅλος ἐν αὐτῷ.

Ἐνα λοιπὸν τρόπον τοῦ βαπτίζειν μανθάνομεν ἐκ τῆς καινῆς διαθήκης, τὸν διὰ τῆς καταδύσεως, καὶ κατάδυσις ἄλλο δὲν εἶναι εἰμὴ ὀλικὴ δι' ὕδατος ἢ ἐν τῷ ὕδατι κάλυψις.

(Θεοκλήτου Φαρμακίδου, *Ὁ Ψευδώνυμος Γερμανός*, [Αθήναι: Τυπογραφίας Α. Αγγελίδου, 1838], 36.)

⁷⁴ Κωνσταντίνος Οικονόμος, *Τα σωζόμενα Εκκλησιαστικά συγγράμματα Κωνσταντίνου Πρεσβυτέρου καὶ Οικονόμου του ἐξ Οικονόμων* [*The extant Ecclesiastical writings of Constantine, Presbyter and Steward of the Stewards*], (Αθήνησι: Σοφοκλέους Κ. του ἐξ Οικονόμων, 1862), 1:402;

Greek: *Πρὸς ταῦτα σημειοῦμεν τὰ ἐξῆς. 1) Τὸ βαπτίζω ἐκ τοῦ βάπτω (καὶ αἰολεκ. βύπτω, ἐξ οὗ καὶ τὸ τῆς συνηθείας βουπτῶ, ἐκ τοῦ βυπτῶ, βυπτέω) συγγενὲς ἐστὶ τοῦ βάθος, βύθος, βυθίζω, καὶ πρώτην καὶ κυρίαν ἔχει σημασίαν τοῦ βυθίζειν, καταδύειν εἰς ὕδωρ (καὶ ἀπλῶς εἰς ὑγρὸν), ὅλοντι ἐμβάπτειν εἰς ὕδωρ, ὑποβρύχιον ποιεῖν.*

⁷⁵ (Ibid., 1:482 fn.)

Greek: *...γ') Διότι καταψεύδεται καὶ αὐτῆς τῆς κυρίας σημασίας τοῦ βαπτίζω. Ἄλλο τὸ βαπτίζειν, καὶ ἄλλο τὸ ἐπιχέειν, ὡς καὶ τὸ καταδύειν ὑποβρύχιον εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ διάφορον τοῦ ὕδατι ἐπιβρεχειν τὸν ἐπ' ἐδάφους ἐστῶτα)*

As already seen, Orthodox credo maintains that the modal trait of immersion necessarily remains an integral part of the Christianized noun *baptisma*. This point was forcefully argued by the leading Orthodox theologian of the 18th century, Eustratios Argentis (1687–1757). Having spent a decade circulating among the academies and lecture halls of Western Europe, several Orthodox patriarchs employed him to explicate their views and proclamations. Following the contentious *horos* of 1755, as earlier shown, Cyril V enlisted Argentis to write a treatise defending the hardline Orthodox position on baptism. In the resultant work, Argentis stated:

6) First of all, due regard for the very term and name *baptisma* [*baptismatos*] must be maintained, as words are the means by which the things they represent are rightly discerned.

It is well-known that the word *baptisma* carries the same meaning as the vulgar *boutēma*, particularly as the latter pertains to the process of dyeing [*bapheōs*], which all further know is done by dipping [*baptē*]. *Baptō* and *baptizō* are likewise related. Even in Latin *baptō* [*baptein*] is called *tingere*, meaning to color, and the Latins themselves render *baptizō* [*baptizein*] *immergere*, which expresses submersion and complete envelopment [*katabaptizein kai enapokluzein*]. So, *baptō* and *baptizō* each convey plunging something into a liquid [*kataduseōs eis to ugron*], whereby it is buried [*taphēs*] in it.

Consequently, the practice of the West does not correspond with the term *baptisma* [*baptismatos*]. They speak fictitiously [*pseudontai legontes*] concerning the import of *baptizō* [*baptizein*], and in the process falsify the name [*pseudōnumon*] *baptisma*. Therefore, they are justly said to be unbaptized [*abaptizein*] according to the force and meaning [*dunamin*] of the name *baptisma* [*baptismatos*].⁷⁶

More recently, Dr. Georgio Metallinos (1940–2019), an Orthodox priest and Professor of Theology and Byzantine History at the University of Athens, wrote:

7) With particular regard to the Sacrament of Baptism [*Baptismatos*], in accordance with Eph. 4:5 and the [Nicene] Creed, there exists one and only one baptism [*baptisma*], the Baptism [*Baptisma*] of the One Church, namely, the Orthodox Church. Ours' is literally a "baptism" [*kuriolektikōs "baptisma"*], being performed by three immersions and emersions [*triōn kataduseōn kai anaduseōn*], because the term *baptism* [*oros "baptisma"*] means just that and nothing else [*touto kai monon mporei na sēmaine*].⁷⁷

One of the most widely used catechetical works in modern Eastern Orthodoxy, written by a popular priest and theologian named Athanasios Frangopoulos (1907–77), states:

8) At this point we should point out that the Latins and Protestants don't baptize [*baptizoun*] infants; rather, they sprinkle [*rantizoun*] them with water. This they call baptism [*baptisma*]. "Baptism,"

⁷⁶ Έυστράτιος Αργέντης, *Ἐγχειρίδιον περὶ βαπτισματος καλουμενον χειραγωγία πλανωμενων* [*A Handbook on Baptism: A Summons to False Guides and the Decieved*], (Κωνσταντινουπόλει: Η Βρετανική βιβλιοθήκη, 1756), 7f.

Greek: *καὶ πρῶτον μὲν πρέπει νά σοχαθῶμεν τήν λέξιν, καί τό ὄνομα τοῦ βαπτίσματος, αἱ γάρ λέξεις διά τοῦτο ἐπενοήθησαν, ἵνα ὁ ἀκοίων διακρίνη διά τοῦ λόγού τά πράγματα.*

γνωσόν δέ τοῖς πάσιν ἔσιν, ὅτι ἡ λέξις αὕτη βάπτισμα, δηλοῖ τό ἰδιωτικῶς λεγόμενον βούτημα, καί μάλισα τήν πράξιν τοῦ βαφέως, ὅταν βάπτη κανένα. ἀπό γάρ τοῦ βάπτω παράγεται, καί τό βαπτίζω. καί τό μὲν βαπτειν Λατινισί τίνγερε λέγεται, ὁ σημαίνει τό χρωματίζειν, τό δέ βαπτίζειν οἱ Λατινοὶ ἰμμέργερε λέγουσι, δηλοῖ δέ αὐτοῖς τό καταβαπτίζειν, καί ἔναποκλύζειν. ἐκάτερον δέ, τό, τε βαπτειν, καί τό βαπτίζειν διά καταδύσεως εἰς τό ὕγρῶν γίνεται, καί οἰοεῖ διά τῆς ἐν τό ὕγρῶ ταφῆς τοῦ πράγματος.

ἠδέ τῶν δυτικῶν πράξις κατ' οὐδένα τρόπον δυναται τό ὄνομα τέ βαπτίσματος, ὅθεν καί ψεύδονται λέγοντες βαπτίζειν, καί ψευδόνυμον ἀρα ἐσί τό κατ' αὐτούς βάπτισμα. ὅθεν δικαίως λέγονταί ἀβάπτισοι ὡς πρός τήν δυναμιν τῆς ὀνομασίας τοῦ βαπτίσματος.

⁷⁷ Γεωργίου Μεταλληνου, *Ὁμολογῶ Ἐν Βαπτισμα* [*I Confess One Baptism*], (Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις ΤΗΝΟΣ, 1996), 37.

Greek: *Εἰδικότερα, ὡς πρὸς τό Μυστήριον τοῦ Βαπτίσματος, κατὰ τό Εφεσ. 4, 5 καί τό ἱερό Σύμβολο, ἕνα καί μόνον βάπτισμα ὑπάρχει, τό Βάπτισμα τῆς Μιας Ἐκκλησίας, ἤτοι τῆς Ὀρθοδόξου. Ἐκεῖνο δε εἶναι κυριολεκτικῶς "βάπτισμα" που τελεῖται δια τριῶν καταδύσεων καί αναδύσεων, καθ' ὅσον ὁ ὀρος "βάπτισμα", τοῦτο καί μόνον μπορεῖ νά σημαίνει.*

[*baptisma*] however, does not mean sprinkling [*rantisma*]. It means “immersion in water” [*boutēgma mesa sto vero*]. He who is baptized [*baptizomenos*] must be immersed entirely into the water of the font [*chōthei*—put into; enter—*olos mesa sto vero tēs columbēthras*], from head to toe. This triple immersion [*trittē kataddusē*] is the most important part of the Sacrament of Baptism [*baptismatos*].

Here then we have a great difference with the Papists and the Protestants. And this difference constitutes an innovation which separates us because our Lord commanded that we be baptized [*baptizomaste*] and not sprinkled [*rantizomaste*].

During Holy Baptism [*baptisma*] a death and resurrection take place, a birth, or rather, a rebirth. First a death takes place, that’s why he who is to be baptized [*baptizomenos*] must be totally immersed in the water [*boutietai olos...sto vero*] of the font, because this immersion [*boutēgma*] symbolizes death. What death? The death of the old sinful man.⁷⁸

With further regard to catechizing, but returning to the word *baptizō*, the Orthodox Church in America (OCA), which branched off from the Russian Orthodox Church in 1963, uses a book entitled *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, that succinctly states:

9) The comparison of Baptism with a washing by water, with the grave, and other such things indicates that this Mystery is to be performed through immersion. The Greek word *baptizō* itself signifies “to immerse.”⁷⁹

In terms of contemporary secular Greek lexicons, here are the principal meanings for *baptizō* given by two of the most comprehensive, one with definitions in Greek, the other English:

10) a] *buthizō eis hydōr* [sink; submerge - into water]; b] *kataduo* [plunge; dive; submerge.]⁸⁰

11) a] *to plunge into...* b] *to baptize, to christen...*⁸¹

Observably, insofar as the verb *baptizō* is still used in modern Greek—and in conspicuous contrast to Dale’s theory—both Greek-speaking religious leaders and standard Greek language references continue to assign it the primary role of conveying a particular physical action.

⁷⁸ This work has undergone at least 14 editions in Greek, and been translated into many other languages. The English version cited here is taken from:

Carl S. Tynah, ed., *Orthodox Christianity: Overview and Bibliography*, (New York: Nova Publishers, 2003), 103f.

Greek: *Εδώ πρέπει να πούμε πως οι Λατίνοι και οι προτεστάντες δεν βαπτίζουν τα παιδιά, αλλά τα ραντίζουν με νερό και αυτό το λένε βάπτισμα. Βάπτισμα όμως δεν θα πει ράντισμα. Θα πει βούτηγμα μέσα στο νερό, ώστε ο βαπτιζόμενος να χωθεί όλος μέσα στο νερό της κολυμβήθρας, από το κεφάλι μέχρι τα πόδια. Αυτή η τριττή κατάδυση, όπως επίσημα λέγεται, είναι το σπουδαιότερο μέρος του μυστηρίου του βαπτίσματος.*

Εδώ λοιπόν έχουμε διαφορά μεγάλη με τους παπικούς και προτεστάντες. Και η διαφορά μας αυτή αποτελεί καινοτομία που μας χωρίζει, διότι ο Κύριος είπε να βαπτιζόμαστε και όχι να ραντιζόμαστε.

Στο άγιο Βάπτισμα λαμβάνει χώρα ένας θάνατος και μία ανάσταση, μία γέννηση, αναγέννηση. Θάνατος πρώτα, γι’ αυτό και πρέπει να βουτιέται όλος ο βαπτιζόμενος στο νερό της κολυμβήθρας, διότι το βούτηγμα αυτό συμβολίζει το θάνατο. Ποιο θάνατο; Το θάνατο του παλαιού ανθρώπου της αμαρτίας.

(Αθανάσιος Φραγκόπουλος, *Η Ορθόδοξη Χριστιανική Πίστη μας* [*Our Orthodox Christian Faith*], [Αθήνα: Αδελφότης Θεολόγων “Ο Σωτήρ”, 2006], 128.)

⁷⁹ *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology: A Concise Exposition by Protopresbyter Michael Pomazansky*, (Platina, CA: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood Press, 2008), 126.

Russian: *Сравнение крещения с баней водной или гробом указывают, что это таинство должно совершаться посредством погружения. Само греческое слово baprizo значит "погружаю".* (Μιχαήλ Πομαζανσκί, *Πравославное Догматическое Богословие*, [Κλιν: Фонд Христиан. жизнь, 2001], 160.)

⁸⁰ Demetrios Demetrakou, ed., *Mega Lexikon oles tes Hellenikes Glosses*, (Athenai: Demetrakos, 1958), 2:1332;

Greek: *Βαπτίζω, βυθίζω εἰς ὕδωρ· καταδύω...* (Ibid.)

⁸¹ William Crighton, ed., *Mega Helleno-Anglikon Lexikon* (Athens: Ekdotis G.K. Eleutheroudakes, 1960), 204.

Chapter 2 - The Etymology of *Baptō*/*Baptizō*

With regard to the etymological aspect of Dale's theory, one of its foundational claims was that *baptizō* was actually derived from a secondary meaning of *baptō*, rather than its primary:

There is no evidence that *baptizō* does ever give expression "to dip" in its specific character. There is no evidence that it expresses modal act of any kind. There is no conclusive evidence that this word has been formed on the primary meaning of the root. There is, I think, conclusive evidence to the contrary.

...The general characteristics of the secondary meaning of the root appear in the boldest relief through all the history of the word. I say the general characteristics, for, of course, it can have nothing to do with the specialty of *baptō second* in the direction of *dyeing, staining, coloring*, etc.

But this being laid aside, we have an object placed within an enveloping medium, by an unexpressed act, without limitation of time as to its continuance, for the purpose of developing the quality of the encompassing element by its penetrating, pervading, and assimilating the object to itself alike in *baptizō* and in *baptō second*.

...*Baptizō* is an extension of *baptō second* (its preoccupied dye-tub excluded), with all its rights and privileges as to freedom of act and rejection of envelopment, and advancing to give full development to characteristic qualities, powers, and influences over appropriate objects.⁸²

Dale invoked the following rationale as an essential reason why *baptizō* could not have been derived from *baptō*'s primary meaning:

That *baptizō* is but a reappearance of *baptō* "in a little longer coat" is an error. That any language should give birth to a word which was but a bald repetition of one already in existence is a marvel that may be believed when proved.⁸³

Even though, as can be seen in the previous excerpts, Greek lexicons regularly treat *baptizō* as being derived from *baptō*-first (by virtue of attributing the meaning "dip," but not "dye" to both), the Presbyterian scholar Dr. Willis Beecher (1838–1912) defended Dale's reasoning:

Dr. Dale sustains his opinion, first, from the presumption that the Greek language, having already the word *baptō* to express the act of momentary intusposition, would not gratuitously form another word from the same root for exactly the same use. This presumption is certainly very strong.

...It is extremely improbable, then, at the outset, that the difference between *baptō* and *baptizō* was either originally so slight, or has so vanished from view, as to leave the two words with practically the same use and signification.⁸⁴

On the other hand, Dr. Hezekiah Harvey (1821–93; Baptist) gave this response to the idea that *baptizō* must have developed from *baptō*-second:

The chief argument offered is the alleged presumption that a derivative would not take the principal meaning of the parent word. ...But in assuming this Dr. Dale is plainly in error; for, as a matter of fact, derivative words in Greek often take the main signification of the parent word, because the derivative has a stronger form, and is on that account preferred. Cremer's *Lexicon* will furnish any Greek scholar with numerous examples of this.

⁸² J. Dale, *Johannic Baptism*, 64f.

⁸³ J. Dale, *Classic Baptism*, 350.

⁸⁴ Beecher, William J., "Dale on Baptism" [3]; Lyman H. Atwater, James M. Sherwood, eds., *The Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review*, (New York: J. M. Sherwood, 1877), 6:42.

Thus, *katharizō*, derived from *kathairō*, “to cleanse”; *rantizō*, from *rainō*, “to sprinkle”; *methuskō*, from *methuō*, “to be drunk”—these are all derivatives which, in whole or in part, displaced the parent words, but which retained, as their most common meaning, precisely the signification of the radical form. These are only a few instances of many that might be adduced.⁸⁵

Dr. Moses Stuart (1780–1852; Congregationalist), a diverse linguist⁸⁶ and Professor of Sacred Literature at Andover Theological Seminary (Harvard)—whom, a little ironically, Dale once studied under⁸⁷—corroborated Harvey’s observation that different forms of many Greek words are in fact used to express the same idea, even though, as with *baptō/baptizō*, one variant may also come to possess a further meaning that remains particular to it. Here is a listing of additional words that Stuart provided, each which displays such characteristics and specifically share the same suffixes as *baptō* and *baptizō*:

Bluō, to bubble up, to gush forth, has a kindred verb *bluzō*, of the same meaning; *orkoō*, to bind by oath, to adjure, and *orkizō* the same; *alegō*, to take care of, to attend to, *alegizō* the same, with the exception that *alegō* is not only employed in this sense, but also in the sense of *reckoning up*, *computing*; shades of meaning which do not appear to be attached to *alegizō*.

In like manner *ethō*, to be accustomed, to be wont, and *ethizō* in the same sense; *ētheō*, to sift, to strain, and *ēthizō* the same; *kanacheō*, to ring, to resound, *kanachizō* the same.⁸⁸

Notably, similar to the etymological development normally attributed to *baptō/baptizō*, in the case of *alegō/alegizō* it was again the simpler root that took on a secondary meaning, while the intensified form only conveyed the original idea.

One of the earliest etymological Greek dictionaries was produced by an unknown Byzantine scholar (or scholars) in the 12th century. It gives some useful information on *baptō*, as well as cites an example of the metaphorical usage of the uniquely Christian noun *baptisma*:

Baptō is derived from *bō*, by way of *baino* [to go; to step], and carries the sense of *going into* [*embainein*]. Accordingly, it was used to describe wine vessels that were dyed by subjecting them to [i.e., “putting them into”] a [liquid] colorant.⁸⁹

Baptisma, may be used for being *thrust* [*balletai*] (that is to say, *fall* [*piptei*]) into distress.^{90 91}

⁸⁵ Hezekiah Harvey, *The Church: Its Polity and Ordinances*, (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1879), 166; cf. *Judaic Baptism*, 21.

⁸⁶ Stuart was proficient in Hebrew, Greek, French and German. Among his scholarship was a Greek textbook used at Harvard and elsewhere (*A Grammar of the New Testament Dialect*, [Andover: Allen & Morrill, 1841]).

⁸⁷ J. Roberts, *A Memorial of the Rev. James W. Dale*, 21;

⁸⁸ Moses Stuart, *Is the Mode of Christian Baptism Prescribed in the New Testament?*, (Nashville: Graves Marks & Rutland, 1856), 47; underlining added.

⁸⁹ This is a reference to the following passage from the Greek-Egyptian grammarian Athenaeus of Naucratis (c.3rd century AD): “Very exquisitely wrought [ceramic] wine cups are made at Naucratis, the native place of our companion Athenaeus...And they are dyed [*baptontai*] in such a manner as to appear like silver.” (*Banquet of the Learned*, 11.61; Charles D. Yonge, *The Deipnosophists of Athenaeus*, [London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854], 2:526.)

Greek: *διάφοροι δὲ κύλικες γίνονται καὶ ἐν τῇ τοῦ συσσίτου ἡμῶν Ἀθηναίου πατρίδι Ναυκράτει...καὶ βάπτονται εἰς τὸ δοκεῖν εἶναι ἀργυραί;*

(August Meineke, *Athenaei Deipnosophistae*, (Lipsiae: B.G. Teubneri, 1858), 2:378.)

⁹⁰ Since the given definition here involves the noun *baptisma*, it is most likely a reference to Jesus’ baptism of anguish (e.g., Mark 10:38; see discussion on pages 120–124).

⁹¹ *Etymologikon Magnum*, 187.50ff; underlining added.

Greek: *Βάπτο], παρὰ τὸ βῶ, τὸ βαίνο, παράγωγον βάπτο, οἶον εμβαινεῖν ποιῶ. τρόπον γάρ τινα βαίνει κατὰ τοῦ ὑποκειμένου τὸ δευσοπιόν χρώμα...Βάπτισμα, ἐν ᾧ βάλλεται (ἡγουν πίπτει) τὸ πταίσμα;*

(Gottfried Heinrich Schafer, *Etymologikon To Mega*, [Lipsiae: J. A. G. Weigel, 1816], 1:170).

Another early etymological lexicon was produced by John Harmar (or, Harmer—c.1594–1670; Anglican), Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford University. He offered this somewhat more developed, yet for all practical purposes, congruent theory on the origins of *baptō/baptizō*:

Baptō (*bapsō*, *baphō*), to dip, to dye: from *baō* [relative of *bō/baino*] and *piptō* [fall; plunge], to go down. Whereby those who are immersed in water descend into it.

Hence, *baptizein*, to dip in water. English, *baptize*; that is, *lightly immerse*.⁹²

Dr. Francis Valpy (1797–1882; Anglican), a Greek scholar at Cambridge University, came to a comparable conclusion:

Baptō, *baptizō*, to dip, dye, bathe, drench, *baptize*...from *baō*; for [the compound derivatives] *kata-bibazō*, *em-bibazō* mean to make to go down or in, plunge (properly).⁹³

Professor Stuart proffered a relatively detailed account of the etymological relationship between *baptō* and *baptizō* that is essentially polar opposite Dale's thesis:

...The original etymological root of the verbs *baptizō*, *baptō*, as also of the nouns *baptisis*, *baptisma*, *baptismos*, *baptisterion*, *baptistes*, *baptria*, *baphe*, *baphus*, *bapheion*, *baphike*, *bapsimos*, *bapsi*, and in like manner of the adjectives or verbals *baptōs*, *baphikos*, *bapsimos*—appears plainly to be the monosyllable *BAP*. In all the words derived from this root, there is a similarity of meaning which shows an intimate connection between them.

...The leading and original meaning of *BAP* seems to have been *dipping*, *plunging*, *immersing*, *soaking*, or *drenching* in some liquid substance. As kindred to this meaning, and closely united with it, i.e., as an effect resulting from such a cause, the idea of *dyeing*, *coloring*, *tingeing*, seems also to have been associated with the original root, and to have passed into many of its derivatives.

...I have supposed the original and literal meaning of the root *BAP* to be that of *dipping* or *plunging*...Still some...may perhaps maintain, that the idea of *BAP* was to *tinge*, *dye*, or *color*; and that the idea of *plunging* or *dipping* was derived from this, because, in order to accomplish the work of dyeing, the act of plunging or dipping was necessary. But as the idea of *immersing* or *plunging* is common to both the words *baptō* and *baptizō*, while that of *dyeing* or *coloring* belongs only to *baptō*, it would seem altogether probable, that the former signification is the more usual and natural one, and therefore more probably the original one.

...The reader is desired particularly to notice what has been stated, viz., that while most of the nouns derived from *BAP* have a twofold sense, that of *immersion* and that of *dyeing*, yet some of them are employed only in one sense exclusively, either that of *immersion*, or that of *dyeing*. We shall see, in the sequel, that the verbs *baptō* and *baptizō* have distinctions in meaning analogous to these—distinctions that are never confounded by usage; while they both agree in one common and original meaning, viz., that of *immersion* or *plunging*.

...It were easy to enlarge this list of testimonies to usage; but the reader will not desire it. It is impossible to doubt that the words *baptō* and *baptizō* have, in the Greek classical writers, the sense of *dip*, *plunge*, *immerge*, *sink*, etc.

...There are variations from this usual and prevailing signification; i.e., shades of meaning kindred to this. ...*Baptizō* means to *overwhelm*, literally and figuratively, in a variety of ways.

⁹² Joanne Harmaro, *Lexicon Etymologicum Linguae Graecum*; appended to, Johannes Scapula, *Lexicon Graeco-Latinum*, (Amsterdam: Ioannem Blaeuw, 1652); underlining added.

Latin: Βαπτω, ψω, φω, *mergo*, *tingo*: ἄ βάω & πίπτω, *cado*. *Qui mergitur in aquam cadendo. Hinc Βαπτίζειν, aqua tingere, Angl baptize, id est, leviter immergere.* (Ibid, pt. 2, 261.)

⁹³ Francis Edward Jackson Valpy, *The Etymology of the Words of the Greek Language*, (London: Longman, Green, Longman, & Roberts, 1860), 23; underlining added.

...[Both] *baptō* and *baptizō* mean to *dip, plunge, or immerge*, into anything liquid. All lexicographers and critics of any note are agreed in this. ...The verb *baptō* only (and its derivatives in point of form), [can also] signifies to *tinge, dye, or color*.⁹⁴

For some reason some of the most prominent recent works on Greek etymology do not have entries for *baptizō*, and give only limited information for its root *baptō*.⁹⁵

Dale also advanced another proposal regarding *baptizō*'s phonemic development, suggesting the word *baptos* had played an important intermediate role:

Few, I think, can look at the usage of *baptō* first [dip], and *baptō* second [dye], and doubt where the immediate relationship of *baptizō* is to be found [i.e., *baptō* second]. This view harmonizes with that of Grammarians who derive *baptizō* from *baptos*, a derivative from *baptō* second.⁹⁶

Dale did not identify any grammarians who may have espoused such a theory, nor have I encountered any during the course of my research. In any event, *baptos* is actually a verbal adjective that occurs relatively rarely in classical Greek, and never in scripture. Liddell and Scott's voluminous lexicon is the only one among those previously cited that treats it separately from the common root *baptō*. Even then, the range of definitions it assigns does not accord with Dale's assertion that *baptos* is a direct derivative of *baptō*-second ("to dye").

Baptos...dipped, dyed, bright-colored...of water drawn by dipping vessels.⁹⁷

Obviously, according to this variety of traits *baptos* can carry the meaning of either *baptō*-first or *baptō*-second in an adjectival role. A clear example of *baptos* being used to transmit the meaning of *baptō*-first is seen in a work by the Greek poet Nicander of Colophon (2nd century BC), where the unique compound word *ali*-[sea-water]-*bapton* is used in reference to a mythical prince named Melicerta, when he is said to have "plunged into the sea."⁹⁸

The concluding definition given above by Liddell and Scott is taken from the Greek tragedian Euripides (c.480–406 BC), who, as indicated, plainly used *baptos* in the most basic sense of *baptō*-first:

There is a certain rock (from Ocean,⁹⁹ they say, its waters distill), which sends forth from its crannies a flowing stream in which pitchers can be dipped [*bapton* (*baptos*)].¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ Moses Stuart, *Is the Mode of Christian Baptism Prescribed in the New Testament?*, 41ff; Greek words have been transliterated; underlining added.

⁹⁵ For example, Johann B. Hofmann's widely used *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Griechischen* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1949–74) contains an entry for the word *baptō*, but actually provides very limited information beyond the fact that it is related to other Greek words in the *βάπ* family, including "baptizein."

Despite its impressive overall size, Robert Beekes' recent *Etymological Dictionary of Greek* (Leiden & Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2010; 2 vols.) contains no entries at all for words beginning in *Βαπ*.

⁹⁶ J. Dale, *Johannic Baptism*, 65.

⁹⁷ H. Liddell, R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 305.

⁹⁸ *Alexipharmaca*, 618: see, H. Liddell, R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 65; Greek: *άλίβαπτον Μελικέρτην*; (Johann Gottlob Schneider, *Nicandri Alexipharmaca*, [Halle: Impensis Orphanotropei, 1792], 26.)

For more examples, see: Henrico Stephano; C.B. Hase, G. Dindorfius, eds., *Thesaurus Graecae Linguae*, (Parisii: Ambrosius Firmin-Didot, 1830), 1:1466. The given Latin definition is, "mari immersus, submerses."

⁹⁹ "Ocean" was the name of a river in Greek mythology that was said to span the entire earth.

¹⁰⁰ *Hippolytus*, 123; Moses Hadas, John McLean, *The Plays of Euripides*, (New York: The Dial Press, 1923), 111. Greek: *Ωκεανού τις ὕδωρ στάζουσα πέτρα λέγεται, βαπτὰν κάλπισι παγὰν ῥυτὰν προειῖσα κρημνῶν*; (Frederick Paley, *The Hippolytus of Euripides*, [Cambridge: Deighton, Bell, & Co., 1876], 14.)

Chapter 3 - Verbal Function Relative to *Baptizō*

Dale's view of *baptō/baptizō* was further laid out in the following series of propositions:

1) Active transitive verbs¹⁰¹ admit of numerous subdivisions, possessed of characteristics by no means unimportant. Among the divisions will be found: 1. Words which directly express *action*. 2. Words which directly express *condition*.

2) ...These two classes of words differ from each other essentially. They are not interchanged, or interchangeable normally, much less identical.

3) ...The words examined [e.g., *baptō/tingo/dip*; *baptizō/mergo/baptize*] clearly belong to two distinct classes. Each has its own deeply marked and broadly distinguishing characteristics. And may we not affirm as a point beyond controversy that no word can belong to both these classes?

4a) ...*Baptō*, *Tingo* [Latin], and *Dip*, are words, which, in their respective languages, represent, for the most part, the same identical ideas.

4b) ...*Baptizō*, *Mergo* [Latin], and *Merse*, are words, which, in their respective languages, represent, for the most part, the same identical ideas.

5) ...No word can by any possibility mean distinctively *to immerse* and also mean distinctively *to dip*, because these words do not belong to the same class; the one makes demand for condition to be effected in any way and without limitation as to the time of its continuance, the other makes demand for an act definite in character and limited in duration.¹⁰²

6) ...While “dip,” *tingo*, and *baptō* are joined in the closest bonds, “immerse” is, by nature, widely disjoined from them all.¹⁰³

Here is another instance in which Dale categorically stated what, according to these stringent rules, the word *baptizō* can and cannot express:

7) *Baptizō*, which word does never express form of action, but does always express condition.¹⁰⁴

In summarizing and defending this second pillar of Dale's system, Dr. Beecher wrote:

Dr. Dale further argues from the analogy of the use of two distinct classes of words in various languages. One class, like *baptō*, call attention to the “act” by which a given condition is secured. The other class, like *baptizō*, call attention to the securing of the “condition,” without reference to the form of the act by which it is secured.

...Since the word *baptō* evidently belongs to the first of these two classes, and is, by the laws of language, confined to the first, it leaves a clear field for its intensive, *baptizō*, to occupy, in representing the same line of thought in the second. And a word of this meaning in the second class is imperatively needed.

...And since *baptizō* is thus essentially a word which expresses condition rather than the act by which the condition was arrived at, it is likely to share the peculiarity of its class in persistently

¹⁰¹ A transitive verb is a verb that contains or accepts one or more objects.

¹⁰² J. Dale, *Classic Baptism*, 25, 212, 234, 352ff; I have reorganized the order of these quotes so as to convey greater continuity of thought.

¹⁰³ J. Dale, *Christic and Patristic Baptism*, 210.

¹⁰⁴ J. Dale, *Johannic Baptism*, 105.

retaining its own proper character, and refusing to denote a definite act performed in a certain prescribed mode.¹⁰⁵

In reaction to this strict partitioning of verbs and their supposed disparate functions, William Whitsitt (1841–1911; Baptist) raised a rather elementary, yet substantive objection:

Is it true that *baptō* never expresses condition? Is it true that *tingo* never expresses condition? Is it true that *dip* and *plunge* always express a definite act, and never express condition? This would be true if these verbs were everywhere used in the active voice. But they are all employed in the passive voice as well, and do frequently, when thus employed, express condition, and not action.

...Once remove the principle which enounces these two classes of verbs, and everything topples in a moment. Those words ought to be inscribed on a great memorial stone, and set up for the warning of all who may come after us: THERE IS AN ACTIVE VOICE, THERE IS A PASSIVE VOICE.

...[Dale's] Proposition 3. "*Baptizō* in primary use expresses condition, characterized by complete intusposition, without expressing, and with absolute indifference to the form of act, by which such intusposition may be effected, as also without other limitations—to *merse*."

...Here a course is adopted exactly contrary to that pursued in the case of *baptō*. There Dr. Dale overlooked or forgot the passive voice, thereby assigning *baptō* to that class of verbs which express action, and nothing but action. But the active voice of the verb *baptizō* is overlooked or forgotten, by which means that word is assigned to a class of verbs expressing condition and nothing but condition.

...Once more we may insist—*there is an active voice, and there is a passive voice*. It must be comparatively easy to invent unique and unheard-of classes of active transitive verbs where one consents to leave such a fundamental fact out of the account. Just this is what Dr. Dale has accomplished throughout his four volumes. Active transitive verbs in the active voice, in all cases *where they are used transitively*, express action, and not condition.

There is no reason at all why *baptizō* should be claimed as an exception to this rule. That an active transitive verb in the active voice used transitively (and *baptizō* seems hardly ever to be used intransitively) should express condition, would indeed be an anomaly.¹⁰⁶

The Presbyterian grammarian Dr. Peter Bullions (1791–1864; Scottish-American) explained how specifically in the case of Greek the characteristic in question is substantially affected by the *voice* in which a verb is used:

Voice is a particular form of the verb, which shows the *relation* in which the subject stands to the action expressed by the verb. The transitive verb, in Greek, has three voices: *Active*, *Middle*, and *Passive*. In all voices the *act* expressed by the transitive verb is the same, and in all, except sometimes the middle, is equally transitive; but in each, the act is differently related to the subject of the verb, as follows:

—The *Active Voice* represents the subject of the verb as acting on some object; as, *tupto se*, "I strike you."

—The *Middle Voice* represents the action of the verb primarily as terminating in the subject; as, *pauomai*, "I cause myself to cease," "I cease"; secondarily, as performed for the subject, and terminating in it indirectly; as, *eblapsamen ton poda*, "I hurt the foot for myself" = "I hurt my foot"; *onesamen hippon*, "I bought me a horse."

—The *Passive Voice* represents the subject of the verb as acted upon; as, *tuptomai*, "I am struck"; *o pous eblafkse*, "the foot was hurt."¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ W. Beecher, *The Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review*, 6:43f.

¹⁰⁶ William Heth Whitsitt, Henry Weston, ed., *The Baptist Quarterly*, (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1877), 11:180f; all emphases Whitsitt's.

¹⁰⁷ Peter Bullions, *The Principles of Greek Grammar*, (New York: Sheldon & Co., 1872), 119f.

A basic examination of the way *baptō* and *baptizō* are used in the New Testament effectively confirms that both words can indeed express either *action* or *condition*—the latter quality essentially being the resultant state of something which has been so *acted upon* (i.e., it exists in the condition as a consequence of having undergone the action). Here are some examples where each verb, used transitively, functions in both capacities:

Active Voice (directly expressing an *action* performed by the subject)

[ESV¹⁰⁸] *John 13:26*: **Jesus** [SUBJECT] **answered**, “**It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped** [*bapso* (*baptō*)—ACTIVE VOICE] **it.**” **So when he had dipped** [*bapsas*—ACTIVE VOICE] **the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.**¹⁰⁹

1 Corinthians 1:16: **I** [SUBJECT— i.e. Paul, from verse 1] **did baptize** 5 **also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized** [*ebaptisa*] **anyone else.**¹¹⁰

Passive Voice (expressing a *condition* that the acted upon subject has been put into)

Revelation 19:13: **He is clothed in a robe** [SUBJECT] **dipped in blood** [*bebammenon* (*baptō*)—PASSIVE VOICE » *aimati*—blood], **and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.**¹¹¹

Romans 6:3: **Do you not know that all** [SUBJECT] **of us who have been baptized** [*ebaptisthēmen* (*baptizō*)—PASSIVE VOICE] **into** [*eis*] **Christ Jesus were** [i.e., “have been?”] **baptized** [*ebaptisthēmen*] **into** [*eis*] **his death?**¹¹²

An otherwise sympathetic editorial in a Presbyterian theological journal remarked that by and large the examples Dale cited as proof against *baptizō* meaning *to immerse* in his second volume, actually help explain the philological basis for historical immersionism:

We would bring this review to a close by giving a brief expression to a few thoughts which a careful and, we think, impartial examination of the work [*Judaic Baptism*] fully justifies. In the first place, in view of the instances adduced in this book, it is to us less surprising than it formerly was, that the idea of immersion or “envelopment,” as essentially involved in this term [*baptizō*], has taken such a strong hold upon the minds of such a large number of able and learned critics.

No one, we think, can thoughtfully read the numerous extracts which he will find in this book without being struck with the fact, that as a general rule, they do afford at least apparent ground for

¹⁰⁸ Unless otherwise indicated, all Bible quotations in this review are from the *English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Good News Publishers, 2001).

New Testament Greek definitions and transliterations, and Greek-English associations are from, John Schwandt, C. John Collins, *The ESV English-Greek Reverse Interlinear New Testament*, (Bellingham: Logos Research Systems, &, Wheaton: Crossway Bibles, 2006).

¹⁰⁹ Greek: ἀποκρίνεται [ὁ] Ἰησοῦς· ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν ᾧ ἐγὼ βάψω τὸ ψωμίον καὶ δώσω αὐτῷ. βάψας οὖν τὸ ψωμίον [λαμβάνει καὶ] δίδωσιν Ἰούδα Σίμωνος Ἰσκαριώτου; (Eberhart Nestle, Erwin Nestle, Kurt Aland, Barbara Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo Martini, Bruce Metzger, eds., *Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece, 27th Edition* [NA27/UBS4*], (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993), *in loc. cit.*; unless otherwise indicated, the Greek text shown for all New Testament passages are from this reference.

* In essence the Greek text of NA27 and the 4th edition of the United Bible Society’s Greek text (UBS4) are the same, with both being developed by the same scholars though tailored for specific academic disciplines. The result is some minor variations in spelling, casing, punctuation, formatting and critical apparatuses.

¹¹⁰ Greek: ἐβάπτισα δὲ καὶ τὸν Στεφανᾶ οἶκον, λοιπὸν οὐκ οἶδα εἶ τινα ἄλλον ἐβάπτισα.

¹¹¹ Greek: καὶ περιβεβλημένος ἱμάτιον βεβαμμένον αἵματι, καὶ κέκληται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ.

¹¹² Greek: ἢ ἀγνοεῖτε ὅτι, ὅσοι ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ ἐβαπτίσθημεν.

the idea of intusposition of some sort. It is, at all events, a remarkable fact, that there are so few cases brought forward which have not been, with some degree of plausibility, contended for as either literally involving that idea or as having a reference to it. The following remark of the author in this connection is worthy of special notice as showing that this remark is not without foundation...

If it be asked, Is there not ‘envelopment’ in baptism? I answer, Yes, in every primary baptism; but that does not carry envelopment into a comparison. Envelopment may be the end of a baptism, as when I put a stone within water, or it may be only a means to an end, as when Aristobulus is put in water by assassins. When, therefore, I use baptism as a comparison, I may use simply the idea of envelopment, or I may reject entirely the envelopment, or limit the comparison to the result of envelopment. [*Judaic Baptism*, 75]

The remark of the author, as to rejecting the envelopment and limiting the person to the result of envelopment, may be, and we think is, well founded and in accordance with usage and the laws of language. Still, the admission that in every primary “baptism” there is envelopment, is a plain admission that baptism by sprinkling or pouring is a departure from its primary meaning. If this be so, it is not to be wondered at, that as water is the appointed element or agency, the idea of intusposition has been so tenaciously adhered to.¹¹³

¹¹³ “*Judaic Baptism*”; Joseph T. Cooper, William W. Barr, eds., *The Evangelical Repository and United Presbyterian Review*, (Philadelphia: William S. Young, 1869), 8:587f.

Chapter 4 - Disparity between *Baptō*/Dip and *Baptizō*/Immerse

The enormous degree of disparity Dale attempted to impose between the proper usage and meaning of *baptō* and *baptizō* is, quite simply, untenable. Likewise, it is plainly incorrect to say that these words are not “interchanged, or interchangeable normally,” but rather are “widely disjoined.” Consider the following cases:

1) The ancient Greek scholar Homer wrote (c. 9th century BC—about when what is designated Ancient Greek, as opposed to the more primitive Mycenaean Greek, originated):

A blacksmith, to make hard broad axe or adze [a large woodworking tool], in the cold water flood dips [*baptē* (*baptō*)] it with hissing scream, for that makes good the strength of iron, tempering it.¹¹⁴

Yet in specifically recalling this very passage from Homer’s work, the Greek philosopher Heraclitus of Ephesus (c. 1st century BC) employed the word *baptizō*:

When the mass of iron, drawn red-hot from the furnace, is immersed [*baptizetai* (*baptizō*)] in water, its fiery glow, being quenched with water, is extinguished.¹¹⁵

Obviously, the much later use of *baptizō* in the strictly identical context continued to convey the meaning of so-called *baptō*-first.

2) Very similarly, while the Septuagint¹¹⁶ (3rd century BC) described the Levitical action of dipping a hyssop branch into a water and ash mixture as a *baptō*, the 1st century Jewish historian Josephus synonymously used *baptizō* in his description of that physical process.¹¹⁷

[**Septuagint**] *Numbers 19:18a*: And a clean man shall take hyssop and dip it [LXX: *bapsei* (*baptō*) <> Hebrew: *tabal*—dip; plunge] into the water [*eis to hydōr*], and sprinkle [*perirranei* (*rainō*) <> *nazah*] it upon the house and the furnishings, and upon the souls, as many as are there...¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ *Odyssey*, 9.391f; John W. Mackail, *The Odyssey*, (London: John Murray, 1905), 2:23.

Greek: *ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἀνὴρ χαλκεὺς πέλεκυν μέγαν ἢ σέπαρνον εἰν ὕδατι ψυχρῷ βαπτὴ μεγάλη ἰάχοντα φαρμάσσω;* (B. Perrin, T. Seymour, *Eight Books of Homer's Odyssey*, [London: Ginn & Co., 1897], 88.)

¹¹⁵ *Homeric Allegories*, 9; cited in: T. Conant, *The Meaning and Use of Baptizein*, 34.

Greek: *Επειδήπερ ἐκ τῶν βαναύσων διάπυρος ὁ τοῦ σιδήρου μύδρος ἐλκυσθεῖς ὕδατι βαπτίζεται, καὶ τό φλογώδες ὑπό τὴν ἰδίαν φύσεως ὕδατι κατασβεσθὲν ἀναπαύεται;* (Ibid.)

¹¹⁶ The Septuagint is the standard early Greek translation of the Old Testament from the original Hebrew. Its name comes from the Latin *septuaginta*, “seventy,” as contracted from its full Greek title *Ἡ τῶν Ἑβδομήκοντα μετάφρασις*—“*The Translation of the Seventy*”. This appellation is in turn derived from the seventy (or seventy-two) Jewish translators traditionally said to have been involved in the original effort, and accounts for the common Roman numerical abbreviation LXX (often hereafter so referenced). Beginning with the Pentateuch, the Septuagint was translated in stages during the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC, and is frequently quoted in the New Testament, particularly by the Apostle Paul, as well as by many of the Greek speaking early Church Fathers. (See: Karen H. Jobes, Moisés Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint*, [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005].)

¹¹⁷ It is notable that Josephus also used the intensified *raintizō* (sprinkle) in place of the simpler *rainō*.

¹¹⁸ Albert Pietersma, Benjamin G. Wright, *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 127.

Greek: *καὶ λήμψεται ὕσσωπον καὶ βάψει εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ ἀνὴρ καθαρὸς καὶ περιρρανεῖ ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ σκεῦη καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς ψυχάς, ὅσαι ἐὰν ᾖσιν ἐκεῖ...;* (Emanuel Tov, *The Parallel Aligned Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Texts of Jewish Scripture*, [Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 2003], *in loc cit.*;

Hebrew: ... וְלָקַח אֲזֹב בְּמִים אִישׁ טְהוֹרָה וְהִגָּה עַל-הָאֵהָלָה וְעַל-כָּל-הַבָּיִת וְעַל-הַנְּפֹשׁוֹת אֲשֶׁר הֵיוּ שָׁם; (Ibid.)

[Josephus] Then they threw a little of the ashes into a spring [translator’s fn. “i.e., running water”] and, dipping [*baptisantes* [*baptizō*]] hyssop, they sprinkled [*errainon* (*raintizō*)] [the unclean] ...¹¹⁹

3) We find another occurrence where *baptō* in the Septuagint is replaced by *baptizō* in a later Jewish-Greek translation of the Old Testament, written by Aquila of Sinope (c.138 AD). It is noteworthy that this is generally considered to be one of the most literal of all such translations, and that the Hebrew word being translated is again *tabal* (*dip; plunge*):

Job 9:31: ...Yet you will plunge [Hebrew: *tabal* — LXX: *ebapsas* (*baptō*) — Aquila: *baptiseis* (*baptizō*)] **me into a pit, and my own clothes will abhor me.**¹²⁰

4) *Baptō* and *baptizō* were used interchangeably in ancient Greek poetry and mythology as well. For example, in lyrically describing a sunset over the ocean the poet Aratus (c.315–240 BC) used the former verb, while a pseudo-Orpheus (c. 4th century AD) employed the latter (with the general concept in view being akin to the way English speakers might describe the same event as the sun “sinking beneath the horizon”).

[Aratus] But if without a cloud he [i.e., the sun] dips [*baptē* (*baptō*)] in the western ocean, and as he is sinking [*katerchomenou*—going down; descending], or still when he is gone, the clouds stand near him blushing red...¹²¹

[Orpheus] But when the Titan [in this case Helios = the sun] had sunk [*baptizeto* (*baptizō*)] himself in the ocean flood, and the new-moon darkly led out the star-robed night, then went forth the column of warriors that dwelt in the mountains.¹²²

Interestingly, in another allusion to this classical expression of the setting sun, a 2nd century Christian bishop of Sardis (Asia Minor) named Melito referred to the ocean as the “bathing-pool” or “baptistry” (*baptistērion*) of the sun.¹²³

5) Despite Dale’s unyielding insistence to the contrary,¹²⁴ both pagan and early Christian authors sometimes used *baptō* and *baptizō* interchangeably within the course of a single passage. The following account occurs in an ancient Greek medical writing sometimes, although somewhat questionably attributed to the physician Hippocrates (c.460–370 BC):

¹¹⁹ *The Antiquities of the Jews*, 4.4.6 (81): Louis H. Feldman, *Flavius Josephus; Judean Antiquities 1–4*, (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2004), 357; bracketing “[the unclean]” is Feldman’s.

Greek: *τῆς τέφρας ὀλίγον εἰς πηγὴν ἐνιέντες καὶ ὕσσωπον βαπτίσαντες, ἐρραϊνον...*; (Immanuel Bekker, *Flavii Iosephi Opera Omnia*, [Leipzig: Sumptibus et Typis, 1855], 1:196.)

¹²⁰ LXX: *ἰκανῶς ἐν ῥύπτῳ με ἔβαψας ἐβδελύξατο δέ με ἡ στολή;*

(Frederick Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum quae Supersunt; sive, Veterum Interpretum Graecorum in Totum Vetus Testamentum Fragmenta*, [Oxford: E Typographeo Clarendoniano, 1875], 2:19.)

Aquila: *καὶ τότε ἐν διαφθορᾷ βαπτίσεις με καὶ βδελύζεται ἡ στολή;* (Ibid.)

Hebrew: (for source of Hebrew text see footnote 354.)

אִז בַּשֶּׁחַת תִּטְבַּלְנִי וְתִיבְּנִי שְׁלִמְוֹתַי:

¹²¹ *Phaenomena*, 858f; Gilbert Mair, *Callimachus, Lycophron, Aratus*, (London: William Heinemann, 1921), 447.

Greek: *Εἰ δ' ὁ μὲν ἀνέφελος βάπτῃ ῥόου ἐσπερίοιο, ταὶ δὲ κατερχομένον νεφέλαι καὶ οἰχομένοιο πλησίαι ἐστήκωσιν ἐρευθέες;* (Douglas Kidd, *Phaenomena Aratus*, [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004], 134f.)

¹²² *Argonautica*, 514f;

Greek: *‘Ἄλλ' ὅτε γ' Ὀκεανοῖο ροοῦ βαπτίζετο Τιτάν, μῆνη δ' ἀστροχίτων ἔπαγεν μελαναυγέα ὄρφνην, τῆμος ἀρφηματοὶ κίον ἄνερες, οἱ ρα νέμοντο Ἀρκτώοις ἐν ὄρεσσι;* (Johann Gottlob Schneider, *Orphei quae Vulgo dicuntur Argonautica*, [Janae: Fried. Frommann, 1803], 21.)

¹²³ Greek: *βαπτιστήριον;* (Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009], 245.)

¹²⁴ “All Greek writers refuse to interchange *baptizō* and *baptō*.” (J. Dale, *Classic Baptism*, 98.)

Then dipping [*bapsas* (*baptō*)] it [a gynecological device called a *pessary*] in rose oil or Egyptian oil, apply it during the day; and when it begins to sting, remove it, and immerse it again [*baptizein* (*baptizō*) *palin*—again; once more], this time in breast-milk and Egyptian ointment.¹²⁵

Here the conjunctive role of the adverb *palin* (“again”) plainly indicates both the synonymous capabilities and usage of *baptō* and *baptizō*.¹²⁶

6) In drawing a theological analogy from the same metallurgic process referred to by Homer and Heraclitus, the aforementioned Melito wrote:

Are not gold, copper, silver, and iron, after being fired, baptized [*baptizetai* (*baptizō*)] with water? One, in order that it may be brightened [*phaidrunthē*—brighten; clean] in appearance; another in order that it may be strengthened [*tonōthē*—strengthen; intensify] by the dipping [*bapsēs* (*baptō*)].¹²⁷

No matter how *baptō* and *baptizō* are translated here, Melito clearly referred to the same aspect of the physical act in view using both verbs, while the intention and condition produced by the ordinance were denoted with two other terms (*phaidrunthē* and *tonōthē*).

7) Another passage where *baptō* and *baptizō* are essentially synonymous comes from the Greek poet, grammarian, and physician Nicander of Colophon (c. 2nd century BC):

[*Giving ideas for fixing hors d'oeuvres*] ...Cut turnip roots into fine slices after you gently wash the dry outer skin; dry them for a little while in the sun, then dip [*apobaptōn* (*baptō*)] a number of them in boiling water and plunge them into [*embaptison* (*baptizō*)] a bitter brine-sauce. Alternatively [*allote*—at another time], mix equal amounts of white grape-must and vinegar together in a jar, place them inside [*sustamnison*—put together in the same vessel], and cover them in salt.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ *The Diseases of Women*, 1; (cf. T. Conant, *The Meaning and Use of Baptizein*, 34.)

Greek: *Επειτα βαμας ις αλείφα ροδινον ή Αιγύπτιον προσθέσθο τήν ήμέραν, και έπην δάκνηται άφαρέεσθαι, και βαπτίζειν πάλιν ές γάλα γυναικός και μύρον Αιγύπτιον;* (Ibid.)

¹²⁶ The same kinship is also conveyed in Lawrence Totelin's *Hippocratic Recipes*, (Leiden: Brill, 2009; p.250).

¹²⁷ *Fragments*, 8b; E. Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 245.

Greek: *Ποίος δέ χρυσός ή άργυρος ή χαλκός ή σίδηρος πυρωθείς ού βαπτίζεται ύδατι, ό μέν αύτών ίνα φαιδρυνθή διά τής χροάς, ό δέ ίνα τονωθή διά τής βαφής;* (Stuart G. Hall, *Saint Melito; Bishop of Sardis: On Pascha and Fragments*, [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979], 70.)

¹²⁸ *The Learned Banqueters*, 4.133; S. Douglas Olson, *Athenaeus: The Learned Banqueters*; {LOEB Classical Library: 224}, (Cambridge: President and Fellows of Harvard College, 2006), 2:138f.

Greek: *τιήγε δέ γογγυλίδος ρίζας κατακαρφέα φλο ήκα καθηράμενος λεπτοργέας, ήελίω δέ αύήνας επί τωτόν, ότ έν αποβάπτων ύδατι, δριμειή πολέας έμβαπτισον άλμη. άλλοτε δ' αυ λευκόν γλεύκος συστάμισσον όξει ίσον ίσω, τάς δ' έντος έπιστύψας άλί κρύψαις.* (Ibid, 139.)

This quotation is from a lost work of Nicander on agriculture and domestics, called *Georgics* (2), as cited by Athenaeus of Naucratis (3rd century AD). Dale only gave it passing notice and no discussion (*Classic Baptism*, 266). However, it has become somewhat familiar in Christian circles as it is quoted in some newer and online editions of *Strong's Greek Lexicon* (under *baptizō*), which cites a lesson from Dr. James M. Boice (1938–2000; Presbyterian):

“The clearest example that shows the meaning of *baptizō* is a text from the Greek poet and physician Nicander, who lived about 200 B.C. It is a recipe for making pickles and is helpful because it uses both words. Nicander says that in order to make a pickle, the vegetable should first be ‘dipped’ (*baptō*) into boiling water and then ‘baptized’ (*baptizō*) in the vinegar solution. Both verbs concern the immersing of vegetables in a solution. But the first is temporary. The second, the act of baptizing the vegetable, produces a permanent change.” (James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of John; The Coming of the Light, John 1–4*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 135.)

This analogy, while appealing and plausible, assumes the turnips were pickled by a protracted soaking. Yet as Olson's translation indicates, *baptizo* and *baptō* seem more likely to have been used to describe a practice of “double dipping” an appetizer, with a different process being given for creating a more preserved “pickle”.

8) In a catechetical treatise in which the baptism of Simon the magician (Acts 8:12–13) was examined, Cyril of Jerusalem (c.313–386) wrote:

Even Simon Magus once came to the Laver [or, “bath”—*loutrō*]: He was baptized [or, “immersed”—*ebaptisthē* (*baptizō*)], though not enlightened [*ephōtisthe*]; and though he dipped [*ebapsen* (*baptō*)] his body in water, he enlightened [*ephōtise*] not his heart with the Spirit: his body went down [*katebē*] and came up [*anabē*]; but his soul was not buried with Christ, nor was it raised up by Him.¹²⁹

In this tripart sequence of synonymous terms Cyril conceptually equated and as such effectively described both *baptizō* and *baptō* as a “going down” and a “coming up.”¹³⁰ Moreover, Cyril’s whole point was that despite their having undergone a *baptizō* the subject had utterly failed to attain, as Dale would virtually always have the word convey, *a thorough change in condition*.¹³¹ Rather, both verbs were clearly used here to convey the same physical action.

Dipping vs. Immersion

As countless writings plainly evince, from the technical to the poetic, the English verbs *dip* and *immerse* are commonly used in a synonymic manner as well. We actually see this convention demonstrated in various quotations already cited in this review.¹³²

It is of course allowable that each of these words may possess nuances or shades of meaning which at times may be beneficial to draw upon. For example, in certain contexts *dip* might indicate an action that is performed quickly more obviously than *immerse* does. As such, one term might be chosen over the other when it is important to emphasize the characteristics of duration or tempo. This relative yet still contiguous range of meaning is plainly seen in the way many English dictionaries readily use one term in explaining the primary meaning of the other. For instance, here are the definitions for “dip” and “immerse” given in a recent edition of Merriam-Webster’s familiar *Collegiate Dictionary*:

¹²⁹ *Procatechesis*, 2; Philip Schaff, Henry Wace, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers; Second Series* {hereafter, NPNF2}, (New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1890), 7:1;

Greek: Προσήλθε ποτε καὶ Σίμων τὸ λουτρῷ ὁ μάγος ἐβαπτίσθη, ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἐφωτίσθη καὶ τὸ μὲν σῶμα ἐβαφεν ὕδατι τὴν δὲ καρδίαν οὐκ ἐφώτισε Πνεύματι καὶ κατέβη μὲν τὸ σῶμα, καὶ ἀνέβη ἢ δὲ ψυχὴ οὐ συνετάφη χριστῷ, οὐδὲ συνεγέρθη; (Jacques Paul Migne, ed., *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca* {hereafter, PG}, [Paris: Garnier Fratres, 1856–86], 33:336.)

¹³⁰ A substantive and contextually consistent argument can be made that in this instance Cyril used *baptizō* as the first constituent in a three-part description of the thrice repeated action by which the ritual of water baptism was then generally performed—while the overall rite itself was termed *the bath* (*loutrō*). In such a case *baptizō*, *baptō*, and the verbal combination *katebē/anabē* were all used synonymously. A more recent translation of Cyril’s statement clearly conveys such a consonance:

“...He was dipped in the font, but he was not enlightened. While he plunged his body in the water, his heart was not enlightened by the Spirit; physically he went down and came up, but his soul was not buried with Christ, nor did it share in His resurrection.” (L. P. McCauley, A. A. Stephenson, *The Works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem*, [Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1969], 1:71.)

This interpretation also has material support in that later in his series of lectures to recently baptized catechumens Cyril indeed emphasized the meaning and importance of the triple immersion they had earlier received:

“You made the saving confession, and descended thrice into the water, and ascended again, thus shadowing forth by means of a symbol the three days’ burial of Christ.” (*Catechetical Lectures*, 20.4; cited in, James Chrystal, *A History of the Modes of Christian Baptism*, [Philadelphia: Lindsay & Blakiston, 1861], 69f.)

Greek: Καὶ ὁμολογεῖτε τὴν σωτήριον ὁμολογίαν, καὶ κατεδύετε τρίτον εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ πάλιν ἀνεδύετε, καὶ ἐνταῦθα διὰ συμβόλου τὴν τριήμερον τοῦ Χριστοῦ αἰνιττόμενοι ταφήν; (PG 33:1080.)

¹³¹ Also compare *Classic Baptism*, p.354 with the case of Simon the Sorcerer in Acts 8:13–23.

¹³² See many of the lexical entries on pages 6–9 and texts for notes 23, 24, *et al.*

Dip: to plunge or immerse momentarily or partially under the surface (as of a liquid).

Immerse: to plunge into something that surrounds or covers *especially*: to plunge or dip into a fluid.¹³³

The somewhat older but more comprehensive *Desk Standard Dictionary of the English Language* gives this useful etymological information:

Immerse...To dip entirely, as under water... [from] Latin *in*, in + *mergo*, dip.

...Synonyms: *bury, dip, douse, duck, immerge, plunge, sink, submerge*.

Dip is Saxon, while **immerse** is Latin for the same initial act; *dip* is accordingly the more popular and common-place, *immerse* the more elegant and dignified expression in many cases. To speak of baptism by immersion as *dipping* now seems rude, though entirely proper and usual in early English.¹³⁴

A copious dictionary of English synonyms goes into considerable detail regarding the various nuances that are often present with each word within this kindred grouping, while still making evident their general semantic compatibility.

Immerse, dip, douse, duck, dunk, plunge, submerge. These verbs refer to the forceful pushing of something into water or another liquid.

...*Immerse* indicates the lowering of something into water so that all of it is below the surface... (“He *immersed* the cabbage in boiling water.”)

Submerge also refers to putting something completely under water, but in this case the verb often suggests an object's being lowered to a greater depth than necessarily suggested by *immerse*. (“They weighted the old boat with rocks to keep it *submerged* at the bottom of the lake.”)

...The remaining verbs are much more informal and often refer specifically to distinct kinds of *immersing* or *submerging*.

...*Dip* may suggest any kind of partial lowering, but most often, perhaps, would suggest a cautious, tentative movement. (“She *dipped* her foot into the water...”) *Dip* may also apply to a brief but complete lowering; Easter eggs made by *dipping* them in bowls of food coloring.¹³⁵

According to this authority “dip” is a “kind,” or subset of “immersing or submerging.” As such *dip* and *immerse* are sure to be interchangeable in many situations—a seemingly self-evident convention that *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of Synonyms* explicitly notes:

Dip, immerse, submerge, duck, souse, dunk are compatible when meaning to plunge a person or thing into or as if into liquid.¹³⁶

Somehow, I suspect “official” information like this stating there is significant semantic compatibility between *dip* and *immerse* will come as little surprise to the average English speaker. In terms of accounting for their common usage, then, Dale's claim of a vast incompatibility is both extreme and implausible. Yet, maintaining a nearly inviolable separation between the meaning and usage of *baptō*/*dip* and *baptizō*/*immerse* is crucial to maintaining the viability of Dale's system as a whole. Remove or even modestly diminish the degree of disparity he insisted upon and his entire schema is greatly compromised.

¹³³ *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (11th ed. [electronic]), *in loc cit*; emphasis Merriam-Webster's.

¹³⁴ James Champlin Fernald, Francis Horace Vizetelly, eds., *The Desk Standard Dictionary of the English Language*, (New York & London: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1919), 401.

¹³⁵ Samuel I. Hayakawa, Eugene Ehrlich, eds., *The Penguin Guide to Synonyms and Related Words*, (London: Penguin Books, 1996), 253f.

¹³⁶ *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of Synonyms*, (Springfield: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 1984), 244.

Chapter 5 - Dale's Translation of Primary Sources

Dale ostensibly acknowledged that the common and prevalent usage of a word, or *usus loquendi*, is the final arbiter in determining its primary and normative meaning.¹³⁷ Accordingly, much of his effort focused on trying to show that his foundational theories were substantiated by the way *baptō* and *baptizō* were used among ancient Greek writers.

Yet as can already be seen, Dale's characterization of *baptizō*'s normal meaning was very different from that determined by the vast majority of Greek scholarship. Hand-in-hand with this aberration is the fact that Dale's translation of historical *baptizō* passages often differed significantly from those consistently given by other translators, whether religious or secular in background. It is also important to emphasize the fact that many pivotal passages which, when given their usual interpretations, militate most strongly against Dale's theory were subjected to some of the most strained and awkward translations. The self-affirming but question-begging nature of this kind of source management is obvious, and cannot be overstated.

While many additional examples could be cited, in this segment twelve representative cases from a variety of genres will be examined, including taking a closer look at some noteworthy passages that have already been referenced.

Classical (Pagan) Greek Writings

1) First, we will briefly consider a passage in which the verb *baptō* occurs. Here, the Greek scholar Dr. A. C. Kendrick (1809–95; Baptist) puzzled over Dale's failure to ascribe his own primary definition of *dip* even when it would seem most appropriate to do so:

Suidas de Hierocle¹³⁸ is cited to prove that *baptō* means to *wet*:¹³⁹

“*Bapsai [baptō] choilen [hands] tēn cheira [crack; hollow],*” etc.: “Wetting the hollow of his hand, he sprinkles [*prosrainei*] the judge.”¹⁴⁰

But why “wetting?” *How* does he wet the hollow of his hand, and why the *hollow* of it rather than his fingers, in order to sprinkle; and what necessary relation between “wetting” and “sprinkling?” The appropriateness of the imagery is totally lost in Mr. Dale's rendering. “He *dips* the hollow of his hand”¹⁴¹ (literally, “his hand hollowed”)—it is clearly a case of dipping, not of “wetting.”¹⁴²

¹³⁷ E.g., *Classic Baptism*, 135f; *Johannic Baptism*, 134f; *Christic Baptism*, 26.

¹³⁸ Literally, “Suidas on Hierocles”—referring to a short biographical entry for the 5th century Greek philosopher Hierocles of Alexandria occurring in a 10th century Greek lexicon-encyclopedia called the *Suda* (sometimes though dubiously attributed to a supposed single author named “Suidas”).

¹³⁹ Whether more of legend or fact, this fragment is from an ancient account of when Hierocles was said to have been put on trial and badly beaten. The full statement runs as follows:

“And as his blood flowed, dipping his hollowed hand in it, he splattered [*prosrainei*] some on the judge, saying [borrowing a metaphorical line from Homer's *Odyssey*; 9.347], ‘Come, Cyclops, drink wine—seeing how you eat the flesh of men!’”;

Greek: *ρέόμενος δὲ τῷ αἵματι, βάψας κοίλην τὴν χεῖρα προσραίνει τὸν κριτὴν ἄμα, λέγων: κόκλωψ, τῆ, πῖε οἶνον, ἐπεὶ φάγες ἀνδρόμεα κρέα;* (Thomas Gaisford, Gottfried Bernhard, *Suidae Lexicon Graece et Latine*, [Halle: Sumptibus Schwetschkiorum, 1853], 1.2:954.)

¹⁴⁰ J. Dale, *Classic Baptism*, 140;

¹⁴¹ Kendrick's translation of *baptō* accords with the only “neutral” translation of this work I located:

“Dipping the hollow of his hand...”; (Hermann S. Schibli, *Hierocles of Alexandria*, [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002], 35).

¹⁴² Asahel Clark Kendrick, “*Dale's Classic Baptism*”; Weston, Henry G., ed., *The Baptist Quarterly*, (1869), 3:147.

So, as Kendrick asked, what was Dale’s reason for not translating *baptō* as “dip” here? Could it have been the fact, as the next several cases will show, that *baptizō* was also used in some very similar constructs—and thus both words might be shown to sometimes mean “dip,” and in such cases to in fact be interchangeable?

2) Here is how Dale translated a passage from Plutarch (which will be looked at again in an upcoming segment¹⁴³), along with his explanation for rendering it as he did:

...Soldiers mersing with bowls and cups and flagons, along the whole way, pledged one another out of large wine-jars and mixing vessels.

...It is quite possible that the cups, used for drinking, were filled by being dipped into the wine; but Plutarch says nothing about the manner in which they were filled. We must not confound *baptizō* with *baptō*.

In the edition of Plutarch, before me, there is a comma after *baptizontes*; showing that, in the judgment of the editor, there was no immediate logical or grammatical connection between that word and *ek pithōn* [“pledged...out of”]. According to the punctuation of this edition, and without changing the Greek order, it would read, “but with bowls and cups and flagons, along the whole way the soldiers mersing, out of large wine-jars and mixing-vessels, drank to one another”; or, “the soldiers drank to one another, out of large wine-jars and mixing vessels, with bowls and cups and flagons, along the whole way, mersing (making drunk one another).”

Baptizō, in the sense to make drunk, is entirely familiar to Plutarch. The translation, “dipping”, is entirely without authority from use. ...When Plutarch uses this Greek word, in connection with the drunken rout described, he undoubtedly uses it, as he does elsewhere, to express the controlling influence of the wine, which was flowing like water.¹⁴⁴

This seems a rather forced interpretation—and hence the awkwardly stiff and stilted translational offerings—seemingly for the purpose of preserving a necessary presupposition in Dale’s theory. All other renditions of this passage that I have seen use the term *dip*,¹⁴⁵ and so are in line with that given by the Cambridge classicists Aubrey Stewart and George Long as previously cited. Dale, however, seems to have been largely driven by the self-imposed requirement that under no circumstance can *baptizō* ever be made out as meaning *to dip*—and his personal take on the punctuation that was subjectively added in one Greek edition. Readers can judge for themselves which reading is more sensible and natural, and thus probable.

3) Dale treated a number of similar cases where some form of “dip” would seem to be the most obvious and natural translational choice in an equally question-begging manner. For example, here is how he translated a passage that again is usually attributed to Plutarch:

He [Postumius Albinus, a Roman consul of the 3rd century BC] gathered the shields of the slain foe, and, having mersed [*baptisas (baptizō)*] his hand into the blood, he reared a trophy and wrote upon it.

¹⁴³ See text for note 288.

¹⁴⁴ J. Dale, *Classic Baptism*, 335f.

¹⁴⁵ E.g.: H. Liddell, R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 306 (see text for note 42); Ian Scott-Kilvert, *Plutarch: The Age of Alexander*, (London: Penguin Books, 1973), 324; Bernadotte Perrin, *Plutarch’s Lives*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 7:413; T. Conant, *The Meaning and Use of Baptizein*, 11f; W. R. Frazer, *Plutarch’s Lives*, (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1906), 81; J. W. M’Crimble, *The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great*, (Westminster: Archibald Constable & Co., 1893), 317.

[This passage] ...makes special claim to a dipping, and no passage makes it with more plausible, though superficial, pretensions. A Roman soldier, wounded, is left on the battle-field, who spends his failing strength in gathering the armor of his slain enemies to erect a trophy. In order that he may write an explanatory and dedicatory inscription, “he mersed his hand into the blood.”

It is claimed, that baptize, merse, in this statement, means “to dip.” We ask for the grounds on which such claim rests. Is it the current usage of the word? ...If any Baptist writer thinks that *to dip* would answer, in such case, just as well as *to merse*, that is a matter to be settled with Plutarch. I do not pretend to correct or to rewrite (in imagined equivalent phrases) this old Greek; but merely to interpret what he has written. And he has written that the hand was *mersed* and not *dipped*, *baptized* and not *bapted*. I presume it will have to stand so.¹⁴⁶

Dale classified this passage as one in which *baptizō* indicates a “mersion” resulting in “saturation, incrustation, etc.” Dale further claimed that in this case such a condition was effected by “scooping” blood into one hand, in order to carefully dip a finger from the other hand into it—although Dale insisted neither of these actions were specifically denoted in the account by any given word—to then finally write with it upon the shields. But is this really a natural construal of the text, or the protracted and even urbane image that comes to mind when reading of this excruciating, dying deed?

Dale’s comments in this case are also an example of a false impression fostered throughout his writing. Based on his frequent but discriminate criticism of their renderings, one might well be tempted to think “Baptist writers” are for the most part scholastic amateurs and even interlopers whose given interpretations are blatantly prejudicial. Yet, as we are already in the process of seeing, it is actually Dale’s translations that are so frequently alien from all others. Here is how Thomas Conant (Baptist) translated the passage currently in question:

But in the depth of night, surviving a little longer, he took away the shields of the slain enemies, and dipping his hand into the blood, he set up a trophy inscribing it, “the Romans against the Samnites, to trophy-bearing Jove.”¹⁴⁷

Here is the translation of Dr. William Goodwin (1831–1912), an Eliot Professor of Greek at Harvard University who wrote two textbooks on the Greek language that became part of the standard curriculum in many top-tier schools.¹⁴⁸ He also served as director of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens, Greece (1882–83):

In the dead of the night, finding himself near his end, he gathered together the targets of his dead enemies, and raised a trophy with them, which he inscribed with his hand dipped in blood, “Erected by the Romans to Jupiter, Guardian of the Trophies, for a victory over the Samnites.”¹⁴⁹

The translation of Dr. Frank Cole Babbitt (1867–1935; Episcopalian), a Professor of Classical Languages (Greek and Latin) at Harvard, also accords with Conant’s:

But in the dead of night he revived for a little and despoiled the enemy's corpses of their shields. With these he set up a trophy and, dipping his hand in his blood, wrote upon it: “The Romans from the Samnites to Jupiter Feretrius.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ J. Dale, *Classic Baptism*, 270, 274f.

¹⁴⁷ T. Conant, *The Meaning and Use of Baptizein*, 32.

Greek: *Βαθείας δὲ νυκτός ὀλίγον ἐπιζήσας, περιείλετο τῶν ἀνηρημένων πολεμίων τὰς ἀσπίδας, καὶ εἰς τὸ αἷμα τὴν χεῖρα βαπτίσας, ἔστησε τρόπαιον ἐπιγράψας, Ῥωμαῖοι κατὰ Σαμνιτῶν Διὶ τροπαιοῦχῳ;* (Ibid.)

¹⁴⁸ *Syntax of the Mood and Tenses of the Greek Verb*, (1860–72); *A Greek Grammar*, (1870–92).

¹⁴⁹ William Watson Goodwin, *Plutarch's Morals*, (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1874), 5:453.

4) The Athenian Society’s translation of another seemingly self-evident hand-dipping passage notwithstanding,¹⁵¹ Dale again insisted that “dipping” was wholly incompatible with the given description. However, his claim seems more based on lingual sophistry than any real or apparent difference in the meaning of the terms used, and was yet once again primarily “proven” by a bare reassertion of the supposedly unchallengeable “fact” that *baptizō* can never mean to dip:

It is one thing “to let the hand down into the water” for the sake of “mersing and filling it,” and, afterward, “darting the water thus secured into the mouth;” and, it is another thing “to dip” the hand into water. The process of letting down, mersing, filling, darting, may be a very rapid one, and a little complicated; and some may think that “dip” may, as well as not, be thrown in, somewhere.

But the short answer to this is, Plutarch did not think so. When he put *baptizō* there, he selected a word which can never be displaced by *baptō*, without Greek usage uttering an indignant protest, from a hundred mouths, against such violation of her sovereignty. To introduce “dip,” as representing *baptizō*, is out of all question.¹⁵²

5) Another translational curiosity occurs in Dale’s treatment of a Homeric allegory as recited by Heraclitus, previously quoted above, in which the process of tempering hot iron with water is described.¹⁵³ Again, other translators both before and after Dale’s work was published consistently render *baptizō* in this passage as “dipped,” “plunged” or “immersed.”¹⁵⁴ Dale, on the other hand, refused to admit that such an act was logically in view even in this, literarily speaking, familiar context. As such he ended up with this rather faltering translation:

Since, now, a mass of iron, pervaded with fire, drawn out of the furnace, is mersed by water, and the heat, by its own nature quenched by water, ceases.

...The point involved in this representation is not whether water can physically merse iron, but the relation between *heat* and water. The writer says that heat is of such a nature that it is mastered, mersed, completely controlled by water. ...Hot iron, when desired to be brought into a state of coldness, may be mersed by water by being mersed in water; or, if the iron be hollow, by mersing the water in the iron; or, if solid, by pouring the water over it; or, by sprinkling the water upon it.¹⁵⁵

Elsewhere,¹⁵⁶ Dale referred to this circumstantial milieu as one in which water was surely “poured” over the hot iron.¹⁵⁷ Yet with the side-by-side use of *baptō* and *baptizō* in the work of Melito that was also shown earlier,¹⁵⁸ which dealt with the same industrial theme, the practice among ancients of tempering various metals by dipping them—as well as the popular use of that

¹⁵⁰ Frank Cole Babbitt, *Plutarch’s Moralia*, (New Haven: Harvard University Press, 1969), 4:263.

¹⁵¹ See text for note 289.

¹⁵² J. Dale, *Classic Baptism*, 271.

¹⁵³ See text for note 115.

¹⁵⁴ E.g.; M. Stuart, *Is the Mode of Christian Baptism Prescribed in the New Testament?*, 53; Donald A. Russell, David Konstan, *Heraclitus: Homeric Problems*, (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 111; T. Conant, *The Meaning and Use of Baptizein*, 34; William F. Hanson, *Ariadne’s Thread: A Guide to International Tales found in Classical Literature*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 417; et. al.

¹⁵⁵ J. Dale, *Classic Baptism*, 325f.

¹⁵⁶ J. Dale, *Classic Baptism*, 353.

¹⁵⁷ In a fawning digest of Dale’s series (...“God distinctively equipped Dr. Dale for this unique task...to think, analyze and write with a precision beyond the capacity of most men today...”), a modern Presbyterian writer would have us believe numerous possible ways of using water to temper iron may be in view here, including pouring and sprinkling—indeed, virtually any method imaginable, *except* dipping. (Ralph E. Bass, Jr., *Baptidzo: A 500 Years Study in the Greek Word Baptism*, [BookSurge Publishing, 2009], 57.)

¹⁵⁸ See text for note 127.

sense-engaging process as a vivid metaphor—is made especially plain. Although it seems a bit silly to have to further evince something seemingly so obvious, many other early Greek writers referenced this common metallurgic practice as well. For example, the Roman presbyter Hippolytus (170–235 AD) wrote of braziers “molding iron and repeatedly dipping it [*metabaptōn* (*bapto*)] into fire and water [*pyros eis hydōr*].”¹⁵⁹ The Latin church father Tertullian (c.155–222) related this Stoic belief regarding human birth:

In time, the body is born, still warm from the furnace of the womb, and it loses its heat just as a hot iron does when dipped [*immersum*] into cold water; on feeling the cold air, the body is shocked into life and utters its first cry.¹⁶⁰

Nor should it be forgotten that Heraclitus himself was specifically hearkening back to a work of Homer’s in which the word *baptō*—which Dale agreed normally means “to dip”—was originally employed.

There are of course many additional accounts in classical writings, both Greek and Latin, where the practice of dipping metal in ancient blacksmithing is brought out with utmost clarity. The Greek physician Galen of Pergamum (c.129–216 AD) described a birth ritual practiced in some northern European cultures in which the hardness of newborns was proven by taking them to a river and “dipping [*baptontas* (*baptō*)] them into cold water like glowing iron.”¹⁶¹

A voluminous Greek lexicon/encyclopedia known as the *Suda*¹⁶² (c.10th century AD) used *baptō* several times in this connection under the headword *ethelunthen* (“I was softened” or, “I was weakened”):

“I [Ajax¹⁶³] was softened [by his wife’s pleading] like iron when dipped [*baphē* (*baptō*)].” ...Yet [one might object] iron is not softened by dipping [*baphē*], rather it is made hard. ...But, actually, iron is dipped two ways [*dissōs baptetai*]; if they want it to remain malleable [*malthakon*] they dip it in oil [*elaiō baptousin*], but if they want to make it hard [*sklēron*], then in water [*hydati*].¹⁶⁴

Writing in Latin in apostolic times, a description by the Roman philosopher Seneca (c.4 BC–65 AD) unmistakably brought out the process of dipping in this industrial context:

¹⁵⁹ *Refutation of all Heresies*, 7.17; Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, A. Cleveland Coxe, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* {hereafter, ANF}, (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1903), 5:111;

Greek: μετακοσμών σίδηρον καί ἐκ πυρός εἰς ὕδωρ μεταβάπτων; (Ludwig Duncker, Friedrich Schneidewin, *S. Hippolyti Refutationis Omnium Haeresium*, [Göttingen: Sumptibus Dieterichianis, 1859], 2:390.)

¹⁶⁰ *On the Soul*, 25.2; Rudolph Arbesmann, Sr., Emily Joseph Daly, Edwin A. Quain, *The Fathers of the Church: Tertullian; Apologetical Works*, (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America, Inc., 1950), 237.

Latin: *Eam editam et de uteri fornace fumantem et calore solutam, ut ferrum ignitum et ibidem frigidae immersum, ita aeris rigore percussam et uim animale[m] rapere et vocalem sonum redder*; (PL 2:690f.)

¹⁶¹ *The Maintenance of Hygiene*, 1.10; Ken Dowden, *European Paganism: The Realities of Cult from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, (London: Routledge, 2000), 259.

Greek: ...βάπτοντας εἰς τὸ ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ ὡς περ τὸν διάπυρον σίδηρον; (Konrad Koch, Georg Helmreich, *Galen, De Sanitate Tuenda* {*Corpus Medicorum Graecorum*, vol. 6}, [Leipzig & Berlin: B.G. Teubner, 1923], 24.)

¹⁶² See footnote 138.

¹⁶³ The opening phrase in this entry is from Sophocles’ tragedy *Ajax* (651), which was originally written in the 5th century BC. (See: E. Morshead, *The Ajax and the Electra of Sophocles*, [London: Methuen & Co., 1895], 42.)

¹⁶⁴ Latin: *Ego autem mitigatus sum, ut ferrum tingitur...Ferrum tinctura non mollitur, sed duris evadit...Vel quia ferrum duplici modo tingitur. Si enim id molle fieri volunt, oleo tingunt; sin durum, aqua.* (T. Gaisford, G. Bernhard, *Suidae Lexicon Graece et Latine*, 1.2:114f.)

Greek: βαφή σίδηρος ὡς ἐθελύνθη...βαφή οὐκ ἀνίεται ὁ σίδηρος, ἀλλὰ σκληρύνεται...δισσῶς βάπτεται ὁ σίδηρος: εἰ μὲν γὰρ μαλθακὸν βούλονται αὐτὸν εἶναι, ἐλαίῳ βάπτουσιν, εἰ δὲ σκληρόν, ὕδατι; (Ibid.)

Some think that a warm wind traveling through a cold, humid environment produces a loud sound [i.e., thunder]—just as hot iron cannot be dipped [*tingitur*] silently. Rather, as the mass of iron descends into the water [*in aquam...descendit*], the heat is extinguished with a loud noise.¹⁶⁵

The Roman poet and philosopher Lucretius (99–55 BC) was equally explicit:

Red-hot iron from a hot furnace thunders when it is submerged [*demersimus*] in cold water.¹⁶⁶

6) In Section 3 a passage attributed to Hippocrates was cited as especially clear evidence that *baptō* and *baptizō* are sometimes used synonymously.¹⁶⁷ Here is Dale’s rendering of that text:

Then dipping into oil, rose or Egyptian, apply it through the day, and, as soon as it stings, take it away, and merse it, again, into woman’s milk.¹⁶⁸

The only portion of this sentence Dale provided the Greek for was, “and merse it, again, into woman’s milk” (*kai baptizein palin es gala gunaikos*).¹⁶⁹ However, in his later discussion of the passage it was divulged that the word he had earlier rendered “dipping” is in fact *baptō*.

... [Here some] assume that *baptō* and *baptizō* are of “perfectly the same import.” The assumption is groundless, and the argument based upon it falls. Had it been said, “dip it in oil and then soak it in milk,” what would have been thought of the reasoning which would make dip and soak “of perfectly the same import”? Are they not words of contrasted intensity, rather than of agreement?

Dip expresses an act introducing its object momentarily into “the oil;” soak expresses no form of act, but brings its object under the unlimited influence of “the milk.” Such is the distinction between the Greek words.

Their use by Hippocrates, instead of proving that both have the same power, proves the reverse. When the feebleness of *baptō* has failed to mollify the application sufficiently, then the greater power of *baptizō* is to be resorted to.¹⁷⁰

Dale’s rendition is once again, and self-admittedly dependent on the presupposition that *baptō* and *baptizō* cannot convey the same idea (“such is the distinction between the Greek words”). Yet the chronic invocation of this rationale avoids many of the issues ostensibly under consideration. Dale’s translation also raises this question: If *baptizō*, rendered “merse” by Dale, never denotes an action, then why say “merse...into” as he indeed did? Similarly, can one really “soak” the receiving element “into” the influencing agency?

Even more puzzling is that while in his initial translation Dale assigned the adverb *palin* its normal meaning of “again”—and even employed it in a manner that seems to associate it with the preceding verb “dipping”—he avoided any direct discussion of that term or its likely

¹⁶⁵ *Natural Questions*, 2.17;

Latin: *Quidam existimant, ipsum spiritum per frigida atque humida euntem, sonum redder. Nam ne ferrum quidem ardens silentio tingitur. Sed quemadmodum, si in aquam feruens massa descendit, cum multo murmure extinguitur;* (Thomas Fritsch, *L. Annaei Senecae Philosophi*, [Liepzig: Thomas Fritsch, 1702], 2:620)

¹⁶⁶ *On the Nature of Things*, 6.148f;

Latin: *Ut calidis candens ferrum e fornacibus olim stridit, ubi in gelidum propter demersimus imbrem;* (John Mason Good, *The Nature of Things: A Didactic Poem*, [London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, & Orme, 1805], 2:452.)

¹⁶⁷ See text for note 125.

¹⁶⁸ J. Dale, *Classic Baptism*, 269.

¹⁶⁹ J. Dale, *Classic Baptism*, 263.

¹⁷⁰ J. Dale, *Classic Baptism*, 273.

correlatives in his comments. But why?—when determining this point is obviously critical if one is to properly understand how the text rightly informs the principal question at hand. In relation to the previous point, the fact that different liquid solutions are associated with each of the two verbs plainly militates against the idea that *again* was used in reference to those substances. Rather, a repeated action as jointly denoted by *baptō* and *baptizō* is almost certainly in view.

7) Dale's handling of a particular passage from Plutarch (c.42–120 AD) is notable in that it involves a rare instance where a pagan author used *baptizō* in reference to an act of ritual purification. It is also notable that this account was written just shortly after the New Testament was composed. Dr. James Hadley (1821–72; Congregationalist), a highly-respected philologist¹⁷¹ and Professor of Greek¹⁷² at Yale University (1851–72), found Dale's treatment of this passage troubling in several respects: 1) his interpretive method improperly set aside a basic hermeneutic rule, 2) his translation of the text was quite strange and thus disputable, and 3) as a result of these two breaches his conclusions were forced and unnatural:

Of the results which may be looked for from such views of language [Dale's], we are able to present a somewhat striking illustration. In a passage quoted from Plutarch, an impostor is represented as saying to a person whose superstitious fears have been excited by frightful dreams:

Call the purifying old woman and immerse (baptize) [*baptison (baptizō)*] thyself into [*eis*] the sea, and having sat down on the land pass the day (there).¹⁷³

Mr. Dale would translate, “merse thyself (going) to the sea;” and to this, though we think it less probable, we will not now object. But what is meant by the direction “(im)merse thyself”? Let it be remembered that, according to Mr. Dale, the primary sense of *baptizō* differs only very slightly from that of *immerse*; and that this is also the *ordinary* sense: he finds the idea of physical “intusposition” in more than half of all the instances collected.¹⁷⁴

What, then, will a man understand if told to “go to the sea and *baptize* himself?” What would a man understand if told to “go to the sea and *immerse* himself?” Do we not understand a word in the sense which is at once primary and ordinary, unless there is something in the connection which will

¹⁷¹ Dr. William Whitney (1827–94), co-founder of the American Philological Association, said of Dr. Hadley:

“In extent and accuracy of knowledge, in retentiveness and readiness of memory, in penetration and justness of judgment, I have never met his equal. ...He was, in the opinion of all who knew him most fully, America's best and soundest philologist.” (Cited by: Noah Porter; *In Memoriam: Professor James Hadley*”; G. P. Fisher, T. Dwight, W. L. Kingsley, eds., *The New Englander and Yale Review*, [New Haven: W. L. Kingsley, 1873], 32:772.)

Dr. Samuel Lee Wolff, (1874–1941), Professor of English at Columbia University, concurred:

“Hadley's work produces an irresistible impression of sheer all-around power. ...In light of such work, Whitney's opinion that Hadley was ‘America's best and soundest philologist’ is not a friendly exaggeration, but an expert's cool appraisal.” (“*Scholars*”; William Peterfield Trent, John Erskine, Stuart Pratt Sherman, Carl Van Doren eds., *The Cambridge History of American Literature*, [New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1921], 3:462.)

Also see: *Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1892), 3:23f.

¹⁷² Hadley authored several textbooks on the Greek language then used at Yale and other Ivy League schools, including, *A Greek Grammar for Schools and Colleges*, (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1862), and *Elements of the Greek Language*, (New York: D. Appleton & Co, 1869).

¹⁷³ Plutarch, *On Superstition*, 3. Greek: *Τὴν περιμάκτριαν κάλει γραῦν, καὶ βάπτισον σεαυτὸν εἰς θάλασσαν, καὶ καθίσας ἐν τῇ γῆ διημέρευσον*; (T. Conant, *The Meaning and Use of Baptizein*, 31).

Cf: “Send for some old witch who can purify thee, go dip thyself in the sea, and then sit down upon the bare ground the rest of the day.” (William Watson Goodwin [1831–1912; Professor of Greek at Harvard University], *Plutarch's Miscellanies and Essays*, (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1898), 1:170.

¹⁷⁴ According to Dale, in its classical usage *baptizō* denotes a physical “intusposition” in 61 of the 112 examples he examined. (See lists in *Classic Baptism*, 235, 254, 266, 278, 283, 317.) Dale defined *physical intusposition* as existing in the *condition* of being “enveloped on all sides by, ordinarily, a fluid element.” (Ibid, 196.)

not allow us to do so?¹⁷⁵ But in the connection here there is nothing irreconcilable with the primary and ordinary sense of this word. In the connection we find *the sea*, and we find the idea of *purification*; but surely immersion—complete physical “intusposition”—is not impossible in the sea, and it is not incompatible with purification.

And yet Mr. Dale will not allow to the word, as used here, its primary and ordinary sense; he will not allow that it denotes “intusposition” at all; he contends that it denotes a “controlling influence,” that influence having here the specific character of “purification.” The command is really no more than this, “Going to the sea, subject thyself to a controlling, purifying influence.” Whether this influence was to be secured “by sprinkling,” “by washing the hands,” “by drinking sea-water,” he leaves undecided [*Classic Baptism*, 345].

Perhaps he would allow us to add “sculling” and “clam-fishing” to the list of possible methods.¹⁷⁶

Given his prestigious standing within Greek academia, Hadley’s sarcastic closing rebuttal is doubly forceful. It is also interesting that the theological journal where this piercing criticism appeared (*The New Englander and Yale Review*) waited until 1880 to reveal that Dr. Hadley—a Congregationalist¹⁷⁷ and thus denominationally a non-immersionist—had authored it.¹⁷⁸ Meanwhile, Dale had presumptuously and quite dismissively classified it among a number of rather inconsequential “Baptist criticisms.”¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁵ This is of course a cardinal rule of grammatico-historical interpretation. Here are some notable Protestant exegetes that emphasized this hermeneutic principle:

1) Martin Luther: “...No violence is to be done to the words of God, whether by man or angel; they are to be retained in their simplest meaning wherever possible. Unless the context manifestly compels it, they are not to be understood apart from their grammatical and proper sense, lest we give our adversaries occasion to make a mockery of all the Scriptures.” (*On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church*; Helmut T. Lehman, ed., *Luther’s Works*, [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959], 36:30)

Latin: ...*Quod verbis divinis non est ulla facienda vis, neque per hominem neque per angelum, sed quantum fieri potest in simplicissima significatione servanda sunt, et nisi manifesta circumstantia cogat, extra grammaticam et propriam accipienda non sunt, ne detur adversariis occasio universam scripturam eludendi.* (D. Martini Lutheri; *Opera Latina varii Argumenti ad Reformationis Historiam Imprimus Pertinentia*, 5:31)

2) Francis Turretin: “It is agreed by all that one should never depart from the literal and native signification of words, except for the most pressing and urgent reasons.”

Latin: *At ut apud omnes est in confesso a propria & nativa verborum significatione nanquam est recedendum nisi gravissimae urgeant causae:* (Francisci Turretini, *De Satisfactione Christi Disputationes*, [Geneva: Samuelem de Tournes, 1691], 70.)

3) Campegius Vitringa (1669–1722; *Dutch Reformed*): “This is accounted by all a constant and undoubted rule of approved interpretation, that the ordinary and most usual signification of words must not be deserted except for sufficient reasons.” (Cited in: *A Debate Between Rev. A. Campbell & Rev. N. L. Rice*, [Lexington: A. Skillman, 1844], 108.)

Latin: *Constans & indubia probatae expositionis regula haec ab omnibus habetur, quod ab ordinaria & usitatissima vocum significatione non sit recedendum, nisi ob idoneas rationes;* (Campegii Vitringae, *De Synagoga Vetere Liber Tertius*, [Franeker: Johannes Gyzelaar, 1696], 110.)

4) Jonathon Edwards—[no, not that one...](1637–1716; *Anglican*): “In words which are capable of two senses, the natural and proper is the primary; and therefore ought, in the first place and chiefly, to be regarded.” (*Preservative Against Socinianism*, [Oxford: Henry Clements, 1698], 3.52)

¹⁷⁶ James Hadley, “*Dale’s Classic Baptism*”; Edward R. Tyler, William L. Kingsley, George P. Fisher, Timothy Dwight, eds. *The New Englander and Yale Review*. New Haven: Thomas J. Stafford, 1867) 26:756.

¹⁷⁷ See: Brooke Foss Westcott, *A General View of the History of the English Bible*, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1916), 329.

¹⁷⁸ “*Ford’s Studies on the Baptismal Question*”; William L. Kingsley, ed., *The New Englander and Yale Review*, (New Haven: William L. Kingsley, 1880) 39:149; This initial anonymity of course meant that at the height of the controversy Baptist writers were not able to invoke Hadley’s name and status in their responses to Dale.

¹⁷⁹ James W. Dale, *An Inquiry into the Usage of βαπτίζω, and the Nature of Judaic Baptism, as shown by Jewish and Patristic Writings*, (Philadelphia: Wm. Rutter & Co., 1870), 31ff. {hereafter, *Judaic Baptism*}

One of the few other surviving instances where a pagan writer used *baptizō* in a cultic sense occurs in the so-called *Greek Magical Papyri*, with the passage cited here having originated sometime around the 3rd century AD. Its more detailed description of a relatable practice clearly brings out the intent of a full bodily dipping:

Jump [*enallou*—leap] into the river. Immerse [*baptisamenos*] yourself in the clothes you have on, walk backwards out of the water, and, after changing into fresh garments, depart without turning around.¹⁸⁰

Significantly, in recounting a very similar superstitious ritual, some seven centuries earlier the Greek historian Herodotus (484–425 BC) used the verb *baptō*:

The pig is accounted by the Egyptians an abominable animal; and first, if any of them in passing by touch a pig, he goes into the river and dips [*ebapse* (*baptō*)] himself forthwith in the water together with [i.e., “while still wearing”] his garments.¹⁸¹

Jewish Writings

8) Dale’s interpretation of important *baptizō* passages in ancient Jewish writings are regularly at odds with those of other scholars as well. One of the most striking examples of this is his translation of Josephus’ description of a ceremonial process given in Numbers 19:18:

...Introducing a little of the ashes and hyssop-branch into a spring, and baptizing of this ashes (introduced) into the spring, they sprinkled...¹⁸²

Earlier the rendering of this passage by Dr. Louis Feldman (1926–2017; a classical scholar at Yeshiva University who specialized in Josephus’ works) was shown.¹⁸³ There *baptisantes* is treated as directly corresponding with the Hebrew verb *tabal* / LXX *baptō* found in Numbers 19:18—and thus as conveying the action of *dipping* the applying instrument of hyssop into the water and ash mixture. Once again, every other translation I have seen interprets Josephus in the same manner,¹⁸⁴ except one that, being based on a different critical Greek text, supposes *baptizō* refers to the act of immersing and so dissolving the purificatory ashes in the water.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁰ *PGM*, 4.42f; Hans D. Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 37.

Greek: *καί ἐνάλλου τώ ποταμῷ ἧς ἔχεις ἐσθήτος βαπτισάμενος ἀναποδίζων ἀνελθε καί μεθαμ φιεσάμενος καινά ἀπιθι ἀνεπιστρεπτι*; (Karl Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae die Griechischen Zauberpapyri*, [Leipzig & Berlin: Verlag und Druck von B.G. Teubner, 1928], 1:68.)

¹⁸¹ *Histories*, 2.47; George Macaulay, *Herodotus: The Histories*, (New York: Macmillan & Co., 1890), 1:213.

Greek: *ὃν δὲ Αἰγύπτιοι μιὰρὸν ἤγηται θηρίον εἶναι, καὶ τοῦτο μὲν ἦν τις ψάουση αὐτῶν παριῶν αὐτοῖσι τοῖσι ἰματίοισι ἀπ’ ὧν ἔβαψε ἐουτὸν βὰς ἐς τὸν ποταμόν*; (Ibid.)

¹⁸² J. Dale, *Judaic Baptism*, 100.

¹⁸³ See text for note 119.

¹⁸⁴ Here are a number of notable examples:

1) John Court: “A little therefore of these ashes being put into a vessel, and fountain water being added thereto...with a branch of hyssop dipped into this mixture...” (*The Works of Flavius Josephus*, [London: R. Penny & J. Janeway, 1733], 77.)

2) Thomas Conant: “...Casting a little of the ashes into a fountain and dipping a hyssop-branch, they sprinkled...” (*The Meaning and Use of Baptizein*, 33.)

3) Henry St. John Thackeray [1869–1930; Anglican]: “They put a little of these ashes into running water, dipped hyssop into the stream, and sprinkled...” (*Josephus*, [New Haven: Harvard University Press, 1961], 4:515.)

4) Everett Ferguson: “They put a little ashes into running water and, dipping hyssop into the running water, they sprinkled it on them.” (*Baptism in the Early Church*, 47.) ⇒

Still, Dale engaged in a fairly lengthy and spirited defense of his translation. Yet just as in the previous case involving Plutarch's work, rather than beginning with an examination of either immediate syntax or context, one of Dale's first appeals was once again to his favorite presumption—*baptizō* simply cannot denote the action of dipping. In the process of repeating this assertion, it also seems Dale had taken the sweeping and heady endorsements of his first volume as automatically extending to any reading of any text that he wished to proffer:¹⁸⁶

The true import of this word has been discussed, at large, in *Classic Baptism*. For the conclusions there reached, so far as they are my own, I ask no deference to be paid by any Baptist scholar; but inasmuch as many of the first scholars of the country have made these conclusions their own, by a cordial approval, I feel bound to affirm their judgment, and to say, that *it is a settled point*, that *baptizō* does not belong to the class of verbs which expresses modal action, but to the class of verbs making demand for *state*, or *condition*.¹⁸⁷

Thus, contra virtually all other translators and determined to preserve his idea that *baptizō* is inherently incapable of conveying any specific action, Dale made Josephus' use of that verb out as signifying the purpose or resulting condition of the process in view.

Dale also insisted his interpretation was corroborated by the 1st century Jewish philosopher Philo's (c. BC 20–c.50 AD) treatment of the same Levitical account:

[Philo]...Moses employed ashes for this purpose. Then, as to the manner, they put them into a vessel, pour on water, then moisten branches of hyssop with the mixture, then sprinkle it upon those who are to be purified.¹⁸⁸

... [Quotations such as this] place this ordinance before us in all its characteristics, in the clearest manner... The elements, then, which claim attention are, 1. A state of ceremonial defilement; 2. A state of ceremonial purification; 3. Ashes, (mixed with spring-water as a vehicle,) the purifying

5) Jean Buchon [French]: “*Un peu de cette cendre dans de l'eau de fontaine ou ils trempèrent [dipped] une petite branche d'hysope dont ils s'arroserent.*” (*Oeuvres Complètes Flavius Joseph*, [Paris: Panth. Litteraire, 1843], 88.)

Thus, the translation of Josephus' statement by Feldman, Court, Conant, Thackeray, Ferguson and Buchon all accord with Immanuel Bekker's critical Greek text (see text for note 119), in which the phrase in question reads, “*τῆς τέφρας ὀλίγον εἰς πηγὴν ἐνιέντες καὶ ὑσσώπον βαπτίσαντες, ἐρραῖνον...* [*tēs tefras oligon eis pēgēn enientes kai hyssōpon baptisantes, errainon...*].”

¹⁸⁵ Probably the best-known English translation of Josephus' writings is the widely disseminated, public domain version of William Whiston (1667–1752; Anglican), which was based on an older Greek corpus of Josephus' work (Siwart Haverkamp's *Flavii Josephi quae Reperiri Potuerunt*, [Amsterdam: 1726]). In that edition the additional, albeit rather odd (in that it does not corespond with other historical accounts of that process) and seemingly redundant phrase “part of these ashes into the spring [or, ‘running water’]—*τε καὶ τῆς τέφρας ταύτης εἰς πηγὴν* [*te kai tēs tefras tautēs eis pēgēn...*].”—is inserted between *βαπτίσαντες* and *ἐρραῖνον*. (Leipzig edition, 1772; 1:364.) With this variation in mind, Whiston's translation becomes more appreciable:

6) “...They put a little of these ashes into spring water, with hyssop, and, dipping part of these ashes in it, they sprinkle them with it...” (William Whiston, *Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged; New Updated Edition*, [Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003], 107.)

Ultimately, contra Dale, all of the above translators substantively understood *baptizō* as referring to the physical action of putting one of the mentioned empirical entities into a liquid, wether the hyssop or the ashes, as opposed to a supposed cultic or generic concept of purification.

¹⁸⁶ Given the much-lessened support Dale's *Baptizō* series seemed to receive over time, relative to the release of his first volume, one might be excused for wondering if some of his early supporters may have realized their initial unbounded endorsements had helped create the proverbial “monster”.

¹⁸⁷ J. Dale, *Judaic Baptism*, 102, emphasis Dale's.

¹⁸⁸ This translation is from a work by Dr. Edward Beecher (1803–95; Congregationalist—*Baptism: With Reference to Its Import and Modes*, [New York: John Wiley, 1849], 42.)

agency; 4. Sprinkling, the mode of applying. By the ordinance, possessed of such features, a baptism was effected, according to the declaration of Josephus, “baptizing them of ashes by sprinkling”.¹⁸⁹

Yet a very important fact Dale left out of his exposition was that Philo actually used the word *baptō* (translated “moistened” above—but which Dale agreed often expresses the specific act of “dipping”) in his description. Here is a standard translation of Philo’s account:

...Moses, having previously prepared ashes which had been left from the sacred fire (and in what manner shall be explained hereafter), appointed that it should be right to take some of them and to put them in a vessel, and then to pour [*epipherein*—impose; bring upon] water upon them, and then, dipping some branches of hyssop [*baptontas (baptō) hyssōpou kladous*] in the mixture of ashes and water, to sprinkle [*epirrainein*] it over those who were to be purified [*kathairomenois*].¹⁹⁰

Objectively, then, we again see *baptō* and *baptizō* being used interchangeably in an identical context, this time by two contemporaneous 1st century Jewish writers. One certainly has to wonder why Dale chose not to provide any Greek words from the original in this significant case, even while the secondary source he cited had. It is also notable that in context the three modal terms used by Philo (*baptō*; *epipherein*; *epirrainein*) clearly have distinct meanings.

9) Though it concerns what is likely the most widely recognized and even celebrated case of Old Testament immersion, Dale refused to admit that the Septuagint’s use of *baptizō* in its account of Naaman’s cleansing in the Jordan River was for the purpose of conveying that idea. First, here is the passage in question from a recent English translation of the Septuagint:

2 Kings 5:14: And Naaman went down and immersed [Hebrew: *tabal* <> LXX: *ebaptisato (baptizō)*] **himself in the Jordan** [*b-Yarden* <> *en tō Iordanē*] **seven times, according to the word of Elisaie, and his flesh returned like the flesh of a small child, and he was cleansed** [*ekatharisthē (katharizo)*].¹⁹¹

The vast majority of scholars, whether immersionist or otherwise, either statedly or implicitly agree it would require some rather unnatural exegesis to try and maintain that Naaman *bathed* (*rahas / louo*—v.10) himself by *tabal / baptizō* seven times *in the Jordan River* (*b-Yarden / en to Iordanē*), yet somehow in a manner not supposing a physical immersion. For example, Moses Stuart wrote:

In like manner *baptizō* takes the same signification [as the word *baptō*—i.e., “to plunge, immerse, dip in”]. 2 Kings 5:14, “And Naaman went down, and *plunged himself*...seven times into the river Jordan”; Hebrew *tabal*.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ J. Dale, *Judaic Baptism*, 101f.

¹⁹⁰ *The Special Laws*, 1.262; Charles Duke Yonge [1812–91; Anglican], *The Works of Philo Judaeus, the Contemporary of Josephus*: (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1855), 3:230.

Greek: *Μουσιης δὲ τέφραν προετοιμασάμενος ἐξ ἱεροῦ πυρὸς ὃν δὲ τρόπον, αὐτίκα δηλωθήσεται ἀπὸ ταύτης φησὶ δεῖν ἀναιρεῖσθαι καὶ ἐμβάλλοντας εἰς ἀγγεῖον αὐθις ὕδωρ ἐπιφέρειν, εἶτα ἐκ τοῦ κράματος βάπτοντας ὑσώπου κλάδους τοῖς καθαιρομένοις ἐπιρραίνειν*; (Peder Borgen, Kare Fuglseth, Roald Skarsten, eds., *The Works of Philo: Greek Text with Morphology*, [Bellingham: Logos Research Systems, 2005], in loc. cit.)

¹⁹¹ A. Pietersma, B. G. Wright, *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, 323;

Greek: *καὶ κατέβη Ναυμαν καὶ ἐβαπτίσατο ἐν τῷ Ιορδάνῃ ἐπτάκι κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμα Ελισαιε, καὶ ἐπέστρεψεν ἡ σὰρξ αὐτοῦ ὡς σὰρξ παιδαρίου μικροῦ, καὶ ἐκαθαρίσθη*; (E. Tov, *The Parallel Aligned Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Texts of Jewish Scripture*, in loc. cit.); for the Hebrew text see note 481.

¹⁹² M. Stuart, *Is the Mode of Christian Baptism Prescribed in the New Testament?*, 66.

So too thought the noted German-Lutheran linguist Solomon Deyling (1677–1755):

The word *baptizesthai* as used by Greek authors signifies immersion and submersion. So we read in Plutarch, *baptison seauton eis thalassan*, “Immerse yourself in the sea”: so too Naaman (2 Kings 5:14) who “baptized himself seven times in Jordan,” which was an immersion of the whole body.¹⁹³

Even Dale agreed the primary meaning of the corresponding Hebrew verb *tabal* is in fact “to dip”¹⁹⁴—and thus English translations, which are primarily based on the Masoretic Hebrew text,¹⁹⁵ may be justified in rendering it as such.¹⁹⁶ Nevertheless, he was adamant that the Septuagint’s translators definitely would not have used *baptizō* in the same sense. Accordingly, he translated the passage as follows:

And Naaman went down and baptized (purified) himself in the Jordan seven times, according to the word of Elisha; and his flesh came again like the flesh of a little child, and he was made pure.¹⁹⁷

In justifying his translation Dale of course reverted to his default rationale—*baptizō* cannot indicate a dipping in whatever case happens to be under consideration because it may simply be presupposed that *baptizō* never means to dip:

Is not, strictly speaking a self-dipping an impossibility? ...There may have been good reason why the translators rejected the simply modal character of the word, and gave, as its representative, one which never means “dip,” but is always expressive of condition, and, Judaically, of a purified condition, which is just what the case demands.¹⁹⁸

But where is the objectivity in deeming it understandable that English translators have universally aligned their renderings with the primary meaning of the corresponding Hebrew verb, while on the other hand insisting the Septuagint’s translators would definitely have not done the same thing? This is a blatant case of special pleading. Additionally, does the idea that Naaman went and “cleansed/purified himself seven times” in the River Jordan really make more (any?) sense? I would argue that it does not—especially when we observe that the result of this sevenfold *baptizō* is already designated in the Septuagint’s account by another word that distinctly means to cleanse/purify (*ekatharisthē*).

With all things considered, as seems would be the case in any language and from any reasonable vantage point, *The Westminster Annotations*’ succinct account of these events seems much more natural—and thus probable:

¹⁹³ *De Joanne Baptista*, 2;

Latin: *Nam verbum βαπτίζεσθαι Graecorum auctorum usu immersionem & demersionem notat. Sic apud Plutarchum βαπτίσον σεαυτόν εἰς θαλάσσαν, teipsum mari immergito, sicut 2 Reg. 5, 14 Naaman qui εβαπτίσαστο ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ ἐπτάκις, quae immersio erat totius corporis.*

(Salomon Deyling, *Observationum Sacrarum*, [Lipsiae: Haeredum Friderici Lanckisii, 1789], 3:252.)

¹⁹⁴ J. Dale, *Judaic Baptism*, 156f.

¹⁹⁵ Beginning with the King James Version all mainstream English translations use the terms *dipped*, *plunged*, or *immersed* in this passage (ASV, ERV, ESV, GNT/TEV, GWT, CSB, KJV, NAB, NASB, NCV, NET, NIV, NKJV, NLT, NRSV, RSV, TNIV, YLT). Earlier English translations generally used the word “washed” (e.g. Wycliffe, Tyndale, Bishops’, Geneva), as, especially in the case of the Old Testament, they relied more heavily on the Latin Vulgate—where in this particular place Jerome rendered *tabal* as “*lavit*” (“wash”): “*Descendit, et lavit in Jordane septies juxta sermonem viri Dei: et restituta est caro ejus sicut caro pueri parvuli, et mundatus est.*” (P. Lethielleux, *La Sainte Bible: Texte de la Vulgate*, [Paris: 1871], 2:418.)

¹⁹⁶ J. Dale, *Judaic Baptism*, 164.

¹⁹⁷ J. Dale, *Judaic Baptism*, 154.

¹⁹⁸ J. Dale, *Judaic Baptism*, 159.

He [Naaman] went up deep in the river, and drenched himself over head and ears, so oft as the prophet had enjoined him. The leprosy was spread over his whole body from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet, therefore he so dipped himself.¹⁹⁹

Patristic Writings

10) With an entire upcoming chapter dedicated to this particular category, in the present setting we will consider a single example of Dale's translation of early patristic writers, specifically his rendering of a statement by the famous orthodox apologist Irenaeus (c.125–202):

But some of them say, to conduct to the water is unnecessary, and mixing together oil and water (with some words, such as we have mentioned), they sprinkle it upon the head of the baptized.²⁰⁰

Upon closer scrutiny, however, a meaning quite different from that tendered by Dale readily emerges. First, here is the translation of Irenaeus' statement from the standard early church fathers series, in fuller context (which Dale did not provide or discuss), and again showing some key words used in the original Greek—upon which the differences in the two renderings are quite conspicuous:

For some of them [Marcosian Gnostics] prepare a nuptial couch, and perform a sort of mystic rite (pronouncing certain expressions) with those who are being initiated [*teleiomenois*—dedicated; initiated; perfected], and affirm that it is a spiritual marriage which is celebrated by them, after the likeness of the conjunctions above.

Others, again, lead [*agousin*—lead; take with] them to a place where water is [*eph hydōr*], and baptize [*baptizontes*] them.

...But there are some of them who assert that it is superfluous [*perisson*—excessive; unnecessary] to bring to the water [*agein epi to hydōr*], but mixing oil and water together, they place [*epiballousi* (*epiballo*)—throw or cast upon; lay on] this mixture on the heads of those who are to be initiated [*teleiomenōn*], with the use of some such expressions as we have already mentioned.²⁰¹

There are some obvious problems with the way Dale presented Irenaeus' statement. At the most basic level he chose not to account for the fact that within the broader context of his remark Irenaeus used the verbs *baptizontes* and *epiballonai* to describe what were obviously two considerably different rituals. That is, while some Gnostic groups chose to *baptize* their converts, there were others who in *contrast to that procedure* merely cast a water-and-oil mixture on the convert's head.

Moreover, a fundamental disparity between the physical aspects of these two practices is unmistakably brought out in the details of Irenaeus' description—the *baptizontes* necessarily involved going to a location with a considerable amount of water,²⁰² while the *epiballonai*

¹⁹⁹ *Annotations upon all the Books of the Old and New Testament*, (London: John Legatt, 1658), vol. 1, in loc. cit.

²⁰⁰ J. Dale, *Christic and Patristic Baptism*, 533.

²⁰¹ *Against Heresies*, 1.21.3, 4; ANF 1:346

Greek: *Οί μὲν γὰρ αὐτῶν νυμφῶνα κατασκευάζουσι καὶ μυσταγωγίαν ἐπιτελοῦσι, μετ' ἐπιρρήσεόν τινων τοῖς τελειομένοις, καὶ πνευματικόν γάμον φάσκουσιν εἶναι τὸ ὑπ' αὐτῶν γίνομενον, κατὰ τὴν ὁμοίτητα τῶν ἀνω συζυγιῶν. Οἱ δὲ ἀγούσιν ἐφ' ὕδωρ, καὶ βαπτίζοντες οὕτως... Ἐνιοὶ δ' αὐτῶν τὸ μὲν ἀγεῖν ἐπὶ τὸ ὕδωρ περισσόν εἶναι φάσκουσι, μίζαντες δὲ ἔλαιον καὶ ὕδωρ ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό, μετ' ἐπιβάλλουσι ὁμοιοτρόπον, ἀρς ροεῖρήκαμεν, ἐπιβάλλουσι τὴ κεφαλὴ τῶν τελειομένων καὶ τοῦτ ἐργαί τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν θέλουσι;* (PG 7.1:661f.)

²⁰² There are also a number of similar descriptions of baptism in other literature of the same period. For example, the Christian apologist Justin Martyr (c.100–c.165) wrote: ⇒

distinctly did not. As such it is entirely unwarrantable to construe *teleiounenon* (or *epiballonai*) as being synonymous with *baptizō*, let alone, in light of all the contextualizing details, to obfuscate things by translating it “baptized” as Dale did.

In reality this is a good example of a prominent 2nd century, Greek-speaking churchman using *baptizō* in accordance with its classical sense—that is, by all reasonable indication, to denote an act of immersion in water.

The New Testament

11) Next, we will look at Dale’s irregular interpretation of two New Testament passages. First is his treatment of various statements concerning John’s baptism which, as such, are also procedurally relevant to Jesus’ water baptism by the baptist. Here are two central verses from the *English Standard Version*:

*Matthew 3:6: ...And they were baptized [ebaptizonto] by him in the river Jordan [en—in; by; with; etc.—to Iordanē potamo], confessing their sins.*²⁰³

*Mark 1:5: And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized [ebaptizonto] by him in the river Jordan [en to Iordanē potamō], confessing their sins.*²⁰⁴

Dale’s translation (as somewhat distinct from his interpretation) of these verses is actually quite conventional, with the key phrases in question being rendered “baptized by him in the Jordan” and “were baptized by him in the river Jordan,” respectively.²⁰⁵ However, what Dale meant by this was not what might normally be expected.

We are ready to admit, that “Jordan” ordinarily, not necessarily nor by any means always, includes water. Sometimes, under this term the banks of the river only are referred to; sometimes, only the dried channel; and sometimes, only a locality without specific reference to banks, or channel, or stream.

Now, in “water” there is neither bank, nor channel, nor stream, nor locality. It is possible, beyond all possible denial, that when John uses the phrases *en hydati* [John 1:26, 31, 33], and *en Iordanē* [²⁰⁶], that he used them not because of that particular in which they agreed, but because of that in which they differed. That is to say, he speaks of “water” as the symbol element employed in ritual

“They [new converts] are led by us to where there is water...Then they receive the bath [*loutron*∗] in the water.”
First Apology, 61; (cf. ANF 1:183); ∗See discussion of *louo* on pages 100–102.

Greek: *επειτα ἀγονται ὕω ἡμῶν ἐνθα ὕδωρ ἐστί...τό ἐν τῇ ὕδατι τότε λουτρόν ποιῶνται*; (PG 6:420.)

The Greek version of the apocryphal *Acts of Thomas* (c.225 AD) gives this congruent description of baptism:

“...And there was there a fountain [or “natural fed pool”] of water, upon which the apostle went up and baptized Mygdonia.”; v.121; (Montague R, James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924], 418.)

Greek: *ἦν δέ τις ἐκεῖ κρήνη ὕδατος, ἐφ ἣν ἔλθόν ὁ ἀπόστολος τήν Μυγδοῖαν εβαπτισεν*; (Max Bonnet, *Acta Thomae*, [Leipzig: Hermann Mendelson, 1883], 68.)

²⁰³ Greek: *καὶ ἐβαπτίζοντο ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ ποταμῷ ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ ἐξομολογούμενοι τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν*.

²⁰⁴ Greek: *καὶ ἐξεπορεύετο πρὸς αὐτὸν πᾶσα ἡ Ἰουδαία χώρα καὶ οἱ Ἱεροσολυμίται πάντες, καὶ ἐβαπτίζοντο ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ ποταμῷ ἐξομολογούμενοι τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν*.

²⁰⁵ J. Dale, *Johannic Baptism*, 326.

²⁰⁶ In context the meaning of this statement is unclear. If the writings of the Apostle John are meant, the only instance in which he used the preposition *en* in close proximity to the word *Jordan* is in John 1:28, which specifies that Bethany (cf. John 3:26, 10:40) was on a particular side of the Jordan: “**These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.**” (*ταῦτα ἐν Βηθανίᾳ ἐγένετο πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου, ὅπου ἦν ὁ Ἰωάννης βαπτίζων*.) Nor is John the Baptist ever recorded as having used the expression “*en Jordan*”.

baptism, while “Jordan” is spoken of as the place where the ritual baptism took place, without any reference to anything else than the simple determination of the locality.

This possibility, even if it should be carried no farther than a possibility, is adequate to crush all assertions and assumptions by which the integrity of our translators is stolen away. But we do not stop at a bare possibility; we go much farther. It is usual for the Scriptures to state the place of baptism. They mention “the Wilderness,” “Bethany,” and “Aenon,” as places of baptism.

Now “Jordan” is a locality, as truly as is the Wilderness, or Bethany, or Aenon; and the same precise form which is used to denote Wilderness, Bethany, Aenon, as localities where baptism took place, is also used in speaking of “Jordan;” therefore we say, it is denoted as a locality.²⁰⁷

So, according to Dale, baptizing “in Jordan” very likely just means “in the general location of Jordan,” and “in the Jordan River” may possibly refer to baptizing “on the banks” or even “in the dried channel” of the river. Elsewhere Dale indeed pronounced with staid certainty that Jesus never actually went *into* the Jordan River.²⁰⁸

But once again assertions like these necessarily raise the question whether they are derived from a natural reading of the text, or, as I have suggested, are simply an attempt to propagate at virtually any cost the presupposition that *baptizō* can never convey a specific action—and most certain of all, not dipping. More in keeping with this position, Dale translated the parallel account of Jesus’ baptism in Mark 1:9 as follows:

Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee to the Jordan, and was baptized by John.²⁰⁹

While this translation may not immediately seem peculiar, it is in fact markedly different from what one finds in every mainstream English Bible translation, such as the ESV:

Mark 1:9: ...In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized [ebaptisthē] by John in the Jordan [eis ton iordanēn].²¹⁰

Historically, discussions on mode relative to the biblical accounts of John’s baptism revolve around the role the attached prepositions *en* and *eis* should play in that context. Here are what two lexical sources have to say, beginning with the abridged version of *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (the so-called “middle Kittel”):

...*Eis* may occur where one would expect *en*, e.g., when being in a place results from movement to it, e.g., Matthew 2:23; Mark 1:39; Mark 1:9 (dipping into the Jordan is suggested here)...²¹¹

In his lexicon Joseph Thayer (translating Grimm) similarly remarked:

Baptizō...with prepositions...*eis*, to mark the element into which the immersion is made...Mark 1:9...*en*, with dative of the thing in which one is immersed...Mark 1:5...John 1:31.²¹²

²⁰⁷ J. Dale, *Johannic Baptism*, 348f.

²⁰⁸ See text for note 249.

²⁰⁹ J. Dale, *Johannic Baptism*, 377.

²¹⁰ Greek: *Καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις ἦλθεν Ἰησοῦς ἀπὸ Ναζαρέτ τῆς Γαλιλαίας καὶ ἐβαπτίσθη εἰς τὸν Ἰορδάνην ὑπὸ Ἰωάννου.*

²¹¹ Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich, Geoffrey Bromiley, trans., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament; Abridged in One Volume*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1985), 213.

²¹² J. Thayer, *A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 94.

Many Bible scholars have concurred, including the Westminster divine (albeit only briefly) Daniel Featley (1582–1645; English episcopal Puritan):

This *Ichthus*, or mystical Fish [i.e. Christ] is taken by John in the river Jordan, and that Head before which the cherubims and seraphims, and all principalities in heaven bow, is bowed by John on earth, and dipped under the water in the river Jordan. This the particle *eis* intimateth, *ebaptisthē eis Iordanēn*, that is, word for word, “He was baptized into the river Jordan.”²¹³

Heinrich Meyer²¹⁴ also agreed:

[on *Mathew 3:11*] ...*En* is, agreeably to the conception of *baptizō*, not to be taken as instrumental [i.e., *with* or *by*], but as *in*, in the meaning of the element, in which baptism takes place.²¹⁵

[on *Mark 1:9*] ...[*baptizō*]...*eis ton Iordanēn* [“in the Jordan”]. Conception of immersion.²¹⁶

The Scottish Presbyterian theologian George Campbell (1719–96) addressed a number of issues involved in this area of the baptismal debate in exceptionally pointed terms:

...Nothing can be plainer, than that if there be any incongruity in the expression *in water*, this *in Jordan* [Matt. 3:6] must be equally incongruous. The word *baptizein*, both in sacred authors and in classical, signifies *to dip, to plunge, to immerse*. ...It is always construed suitably to this meaning. Thus it is, *en hydati, en to Iordanē*.

But I should not lay much stress on the preposition *en*, which answering to the Hebrew *beth*, may denote *with* as well as *in*, did not the whole phraseology, in regard to this ceremony, concur in evincing the same thing. Accordingly, the baptized are said *anabainein, to arise, emerge, or ascend*, (Matt. 3:16, *apo tou hydatos*, and Acts 8:39, *ek tou hydatos*,) *from or out of the water*.

Let it be observed further, that the verbs *rainō* and *rantizō*, used in Scripture for sprinkling, are never construed in this manner. ...When therefore the Greek word *baptizō* is adopted, I may say, rather than translated into modern languages, the mode of construction ought to be preserved so far as may conduce to suggest its original import [i.e., *en Iordanē* = “in the Jordan”; *en hydati* = “in water”].

It is to be regretted that we have so much evidence that even good and learned men allow their judgments to be warped by the sentiments and customs of the sect which they prefer. The true partisan, of whatever denomination, always inclines to correct the diction of the Spirit by that of the party.²¹⁷

Moses Stuart noted that while technically it may not be indisputable that immersion is in view in these accounts based solely on the attached prepositions, the general composition and flow of the phrases in question does make that the most natural conclusion:

²¹³ Daniel Featley, *Clavis Mystica; A Key opening Divers Difficult and Mysterious Texts of Holy Scripture*, (London: R.Y. for N. Bourne, 1636), 213.

²¹⁴ See note 323.

²¹⁵ Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Hand-book to the Gospel of Matthew*, (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1884), 81; emphasis mine.

German: *Es ist nach Massgabe des Begriffs von βαπτίζω (Eintauchen) nicht instrumental zu fassen, sondern: in, im Sinne des Elements, worin das Eintauchen vor sich geht*; (Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Kritisch Exegetisches Handbuch über die Evangelien des Matthaus*, [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1853], 88.)

²¹⁶ Heinr. Aug. Wilh. Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Hand-book to the Gospels of Mark and Luke*, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1880), 1:21.

German: (...εἰς τὸν Ἰορδάνην) *Vorstellung des Eintauchens*; (Heinr. Aug. Wilh. Meyer, *Kritisch Exegetisches Handbuch über die Evangelien des Markus und Lukas*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1855), 16.

²¹⁷ G. Campbell, *The Four Gospels, Translated from the Greek*, 4:24.

On the whole...the probability seems to be in favor of the idea of immersion, when we argue simply *ex vi termini*, i.e., merely from the force of the words or expressions in themselves considered.²¹⁸

Literally dozens of additional authors who have seen Scripture as plainly teaching that Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan River by immersion might be cited here. But perhaps no historical source is more broadly representative of this timeless belief than the *Second Helvetic Confession* (written in 1562 by the Swiss reformer Heinrich Bullinger [1504–75]). As the church historian Philip Schaff (1819–93; Presbyterian) noted, this hallmark statement of Protestant faith “was adopted, or at least highly approved by nearly all the Reformed Churches on the Continent and in England and Scotland.”²¹⁹ The confession’s chapter on *Holy Baptism* begins with the following simple, yet forthright statement:

Baptism was instituted and consecrated by God. First John baptized, who dipped Christ in the water in Jordan [*aqua in Jordano tinxit*].²²⁰

12) As a final example of Dale’s often singular translations we will examine his treatment of another New Testament account of water baptism, that of the Ethiopian eunuch by the evangelist Philip. First, here is the ESV’s rendering of that event, which is again wholly congruent with all other English Bible translations:

Acts 8:36–39: And as they were going along the road they came to some water [ēlthon epi—on; to; upon; at, etc.—ti hydōr], and the eunuch said, “See here is water! What prevents me from being baptized [baptisthēnai]?” 38 And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down [katebēsan—to go down; descend] into the water [eis to hydōr], Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized [ebaptisen (baptizō)] him. 39 And when they came up out of the water [anebēsan ek tou hydatos], the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.²²¹

Here is Dale’s translation:

And as they went on their way, they came upon some water; and the Eunuch said, “See! water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?” ...And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and they alighted, both, at the water, Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him. But when they remounted from the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; and the Eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing.²²²

In justifying this quite unusual translation Dale laid considerable emphasis on the distinct presence of a chariot in the account:

²¹⁸ M. Stuart, *Is the Mode of Christian Baptism Prescribed in the New Testament?*, 85.

²¹⁹ Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1854), 3:233.

²²⁰ Chapter 20.1; John H. Leith, *Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine, from the Bible to the Present*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1982), 167.

Latin: *Baptismus a Deo institutus et consecratus est, primusque baptizavit Joannes, qui Christum aqua in Jordano tinxit.* (John Randolph, *Sylloge Confessionum sub tempus Reformandae Ecclesiae Editarum*, [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1804], 81.)

²²¹ Greek: ὡς δὲ ἐπορεύοντο κατὰ τὴν ὁδόν, ἦλθον ἐπὶ τι ὕδωρ, καὶ φησιν ὁ εὐνοῦχος· ἰδοὺ ὕδωρ, τί κωλύει με βαπτισθῆναι; καὶ ἐκέλευσεν στήναι τὸ ἄρμα καὶ κατέβησαν ἀμφότεροι εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ, ὃ τε Φίλιππος καὶ ὁ εὐνοῦχος, καὶ ἐβάπτισεν αὐτόν. ὅτε δὲ ἀνέβησαν ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος, πνεῦμα κυρίου ἤρπασεν τὸν Φίλιππον καὶ οὐκ εἶδεν αὐτὸν οὐκέτι ὁ εὐνοῦχος, ἐπορεύετο γὰρ τὴν ὁδὸν αὐτοῦ χαίρων.

²²² J. Dale, *Christic and Patristic Baptism*, 182.

It [the chariot] is the determining interpretative element in important phraseology [*sic*] of this baptism in which it does appear. These are the facts: 1. Philip and the Eunuch riding in a chariot (*elthon epi ti hydōr*) “came upon some water,” and there the chariot was stopped. The position of the chariot in relation to the water is of vital importance. This must, primarily, be determined by *epi*. The chariot stands wherever *epi te hydōr* puts it. This may be either *upon*, *over*, the water (the wheels in the water of a streamlet running across the road), or immediately adjacent to the water.

...The position of the chariot may, farther, be determined by the statement *katebesan eis hydōr*, “they stepped down *to* or *into* the water.” This additional fact is in the most absolute accord with the declaration, that the chariot came and stopped (*epi ti hydōr*) “*upon*, *over*, or *in immediate contiguity with*, some water.” Whether the chariot wheels were in the water or on the edge of the water, they who “stepped down” must step down “*to* or *into* the water.”

But this fact, again, confirms what everything points to, namely, the limited quantity of the water. The implication is, if they stepped down “*into* the water” that it was so trifling in depth as to make it unnecessary to change the position of the chariot; certainly no one would step down out of a chariot into water *two feet nine inches*²²³ in depth; which they must have done, if at all, at one step, for there is no second step in the record beyond that which brought them down out of the chariot. Going down, step by step, from shallower into deeper water, is the purest fiction.²²⁴

I am at a genuine loss as just how to characterize, let alone actually break down these statements—although, remarkably, this recipient of baptism is at least said to possibly have made it “into” some water! Given the obvious deviations from how this event is normally perceived and presented, I will simply leave it to readers to decide for themselves whether Dale’s reckoning seems more a case of extraordinarily insightful exegesis, or a rather eye-glazing exercise in eisegetical sophistry.

Any admitted possibilities notwithstanding, in the end Dale confidently concluded that the eunuch had certainly been baptized by “pouring...or sprinkling”²²⁵—all in accordance with his preeminent *ipse dixit* certainty that *baptizō* never means “to dip”:

The language of Scripture, unquestionably, may express stepping down into the water, and just as unquestionably this may have been due to the position of the chariot when suddenly arrested, and because the limited quantity of water made such action a matter of indifference.

The assumption that the baptism of a person standing in water necessitates a dipping into water is an assumption “as unstable as water.” It is certain, that *baptizō* does not mean to dip.²²⁶

For a historical frame of reference, here is a sampling of what most biblical scholars have concluded is the natural, commonsense reading of the story of the eunuch:

1) John Calvin: “They went down into the water.”²²⁷ [Acts 8:38] Here we see the rite used among the men of old time in baptism; for they put all the body into the water.²²⁸

²²³ Dale somewhat loosely attributed this phrase to “[Alexander] Carson and friends” (*Christic Baptism*, 184), and first mentions it (placing it in quotation marks) in his consideration of the treatment of the eunuch’s baptism on pages 128–140 of Carson’s book, *Baptism in its Mode and Subjects* (see *Christic Baptism*, 182–184). However, such a phrase does not appear either there or, that I have been able to find, elsewhere in Carson’s work. Nor have I been able to locate such an expression, in context, in any other Baptist writings.

²²⁴ J. Dale, *Christic and Patristic Baptism*, 185, 186.

²²⁵ J. Dale, *Christic and Patristic Baptism*, 190.

²²⁶ J. Dale, *Christic and Patristic Baptism*, 189.

²²⁷ Dr. Oskar Skarsaune (b.1946; Lutheran) made some useful observations on how the terminology “going down/coming up” was frequently employed in early accounts of both Jewish proselyte baptism (which inarguably was, and still is by immersion) and Christian water baptism: ⇒

2) **Dutch Annotations:** [on John 3:23] They that were baptized by John, went into the water with their whole bodies (see also Matt. 3:16; Acts 8:38).²²⁹

3) **Francis Turretin:** For as in baptism, when performed in the primitive manner, by immersion and emersion, descending into the water and then going out of it, of which descent and ascent we find an example in the eunuch, Acts 8:38, 39.²³⁰

4) **Wilhelmus á Brakel** (1635–1711; *Dutch Reformed*): The Lord Jesus was baptized by immersion (Matthew 3:16), as was the eunuch (Acts 8:38). The apostle also refers to this: “Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death” (Romans 6:4).²³¹

“In his analysis of Jewish proselyte baptism, David Daube [1919–99; Anglican; in *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism*, (North Stratford: 1973), 109ff] called attention to the frequent use of the term ‘come up’ (Hebrew, *ala*) in connection with baptism:

“When he has immersed and come up (*tabal we ala*) he is like an Israelite in all respects’ (*Talmud*, Yebamot 47b)...Having reconstructed the original idea attached to proselyte baptism—namely, the Gentile’s belonging to the realm of the dead, and coming up alive from the waters of baptism, like a new-born child, like a newly created being—Daube compares this idea with some New Testament passages.

“But in early Christian writings after the New Testament...the parallels are even closer. Let us again look at a passage in Barnabas [c.70–125 AD]: ‘We go down into the water full of sins and foulness, and we come up, bearing the fruit of fear [of the Lord] in our hearts, and having hope on Jesus in the Spirit’ (*Epistle of Barnabas* 11:11*). Barnabas is here apparently using a quite conventional scheme of speaking about baptism and its significance: we ‘go down’ in such-and-such a state; we ‘come up’ in such and such a state.

“Compare the following saying of Hermas (Rome, ca. AD 140): ‘...They [i.e. those being baptized] go down into the water dead, and come up alive.’ (*Shepherd of Hermas*, 9:16**).” (Oskar Skarsaune, *In the Shadow of the Temple*, [Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002], 366f.)

Greek: *Τοῦτο λέγει, ὅτι ἡμεῖς μὲν καταβαίνομεν εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ γέμοντες ἁμαρτιῶν καὶ ῥύπον, καὶ ἀναβαίνομεν καρποφοροῦντες ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ τὸν φόβον, καὶ τὴν ἐλπίδα τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἔχοντες ἐν τῷ πνεύμένῳ; (PG 2:760)

**Κατέβησαν οὖν μετ’ αὐτῶν εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ...νεκροὶ κατέβησαν, ζῶντες δὲ ἀνέβησαν; (PG 2:996)

Writing in about 475 AD, although claiming to be citing the apocryphal *Acts of the Council of Nicea* (325 AD), the Orthodox Byzantine historian Gelasius of Cyzicus employed similar phraseology:

“He that is baptized descends, indeed, obnoxious to sins, and held with the corruption of slavery, but he ascends free from that slavery and sins...” (*Syntagma*, 2.30; cited in, J. Crystal, *A History of Baptism*, 286.)

Greek: κατέσχηται μὲν ὄν ὁ Βαπτίζομενος ὑπερθυνος ἁμαρτιῶν, καὶ τῇ τῆς φθοράς δουλοεῖα καὶ ἐχόμενος ἀνέρχεται δὲ ἐλευθερωθεὶς τῆς τε τοιαύτης δουλείας καὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας; (Philippe Labbe, Gabriel Cossart, eds., *Sacrosancta Concilia ad Regiam Editionem Exacta*, [Paris: Societas Typographica Librorum Ecclesiasticorum, 1671], 2:233.)

²²⁸ John Calvin, *Commentary upon the Acts of the Apostles*, Christopher Fetherstone, Henry Beveridge, trans., (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1844), 2:364f.

Latin: ‘Descenderunt in aquam.’ *Hic perspicimus, quisnam baptizandi apud veteres ritus fuerit, totum enim corpus in aquam mergebant;* (August Tholuck, *Ioannis Calvini in Novum Testamentum Commentarii*, [Berlin: Gustavum Eichler, 1833], 4:168.)

²²⁹ *The Dutch Annotations upon the whole Bible, or, all the Holy Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament: Together with, and According to their own Translation of all the Text: as Both the One and the Other were Ordered and Appointed by the Synod of Dort, 1618, and Published by Authority, 1637;* Theodore Haak, trans., (London: Henry Hills, 1657), vol. 2, in loc. cit.

Dutch: *Om dat degene die van Joanne gedoopt wierden, met hare geheele lichamen in 't water gingen. Siet Matth. 3:16. Act. 8:38; (Biblia, dat is: De Gantsche H. Schrifture, Vervattende alle de Canonijcke Boecken des Ouden en des Nieuwen Testaments,* [Leiden: Statenvertaling, 1637], in loc. cit.)

²³⁰ Francis Turretin, *Decas Disputationum; de Baptismo* [7.24]; Latin: *Nam ut in baptismo, prout olim peragebatur per immersionem et emersionem, in aquas descendendo, et exillis rursus exeundo, dabantur descensus et ascensus, ejus exemplum extat in eunucho, Act. viii. 38, 39;* (Francis Turretino, *De Necessaria Secessione ab Ecclesia Romana, Disputationes Decas*, [Edinburgh; John T. Lowe, 1848], 336f.)

²³¹ Wilhelmus á Brakel, *The Christian’s Reasonable Service*, (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 1993), 2:494.

⇒

5) John Lightfoot (1602–75; *English Presbyterian - Westminster divine*): That the baptism of John was by plunging the body (after the same [Levitical] manner as the washing of unclean persons, and the baptism of proselytes) seems to appear from those things which are related of him, namely:

[1] that he baptized “in” Jordan; [2] that he baptized in Enon, near to Salim, “because there was much water there;” [3] and that Christ, being baptized, “went up out of the water;” ...to which that seems to be parallel (Acts 8:38), “Philip and the eunuch went down into the water.”²³²

6) Herman Venema (1697–1787; *Dutch Reformed*): It is without controversy that baptism in the primitive church was administered by immersion into water, and not by sprinkling; seeing John is said to have baptized “in Jordan,” and where there was “much water,” as Christ also did by His disciples in the neighborhood of those places (Matt. 3 and John 3). Philip also “going down into the water,” baptized the eunuch (Acts 8). To which also the apostle refers (Rom. 6).²³³

7) Philip Doddridge (1702–51; *English Congregationalist*): Baptism was generally administered by immersion. ...It would be very unnatural to suppose, that “they went down to the water,” merely that Philip might take up a little water in his hand to pour on the eunuch. A person of his dignity had, no doubt, many vessels in his baggage, on such a journey through so desert a country, a precaution absolutely necessary for travelers in those parts, and never omitted by them.²³⁴

Dr. William Thompson (1806–94), an American Presbyterian scholar and missionary to Syria and Palestine, factually disabused another modern Western supposition as to why the eunuch could not have been immersed—namely, an imagined scarcity of water, given the event occurred in a desert during early summertime. In an extensive documentary about the region in which he personally lived and ministered for over forty years, Thompson observed:²³⁵

[In leaving from Samaria] he [Philip] would then have met the chariot somewhere southwest of Latron. There is a fine stream of water, called Murubbah, deep enough even in June to satisfy the utmost wishes of our Baptist friends. This Murubbah is merely a local name for the great Wady Surar, given to it on account of copious fountains which supply it with water during summer.²³⁶

Dutch: *De Heere Jezus is door indompeling gedoopt, Matth. 3:16. Zo ook de Moorman, Hand. 8:38. Daarop zegt ook de apostel: Rom. 6:4. Wij zijn dan met Hem begraven door de doop in de dood.*; (Wilhelmus á Brakel, *Logikē Latreia, dat is, Redelyke Godtsdienst*, [Leiden: D. Donner, 1893], 1:39.11).

²³² *The Whole Works of the Rev. John Lightfoot*, John R. Pitman, ed., (London: J. F. Dove, 1823), 11:63. {cont.}

Latin: *Baptismum Ioannis per immersionem corporis fuisse (quo modo se habuit & ablutio pollutorum, & Baptismus Proselytorum) patere videtur ex iis, quae de eo referuntur, quod scilicet baptizaret in Iordane, quod in Aenone, eo quod illic aquae multa, & quod Christus baptizatus ascendit ex aqua. Cui parallelum videtur illud Act. viii 38. Philippus atque Eunuchus descenderunt in aquam, etc.*; (Joanne Lightfooto, *Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae Impensae in Evangelium S. Matthaei*, [Cambridge: Johannes Fields, 1658], 2:43.)

²³³ *History of the Church*, 3:168; (cited in, R. Ingham, *A Hand-book on Christian Baptism*, 156);

Latin: *Fuisse baptismum per immersionem in aquam, et non adspersionem, administratum in Ecclesia primaeve, controversia caret, cum Johannes in Jordane, et ubi multae erant aquae, legatur baptizasse, sicut et in vicinia ejus secit Christus per discipulos, Matt. III. Et Joh. III. Philippus quoque Eunuchum in aquas descendens, Act. VIII. Quo Rom. VI. quoque respicitur*; (Hermann Venema, *Institutiones Historiae Ecclesiae Veteris et Novi Testamenti*, [Leiden: Samuelem et Johannem Luchtmans, 1779], 3:149.)

²³⁴ Philip Doddridge, *The Works of the Rev. Philip Doddridge, D.D.*, (Leeds: Edward Baines, 1805), 8:29.

²³⁵ *The New Englander & Yale Review* made these remarks about Thompson’s qualifications in such matters:

“Dr. Thompson has the inestimable advantage of having resided for nearly fifty years in the country which he describes. He is no hasty traveler, giving out the information which he has collected for the purpose. He is, moreover, sympathetic with the Scriptures, a reverent believer. He writes in a devout spirit. He is an accurate and truthful observer. He is, also, familiar with the Bible, and is thus able to bring forward its passages in apposite relation to the scenes and phenomena to which they refer.” (1880; 39:565)

²³⁶ William McClure Thompson, *The Land and the Book*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1880), 2:310.

Chapter 6 - Dale's Presentation and Use of Source Materials

The manner in which Dale chose to present certain texts is sometimes rather troubling, especially in terms of what he arbitrarily did and did not show.

1) Here is Dale's citation of a passage from a homily sometimes attributed to Gregory Thaumaturgus (213–270 AD—Bishop in Asia Minor), and his subsequent use of it:

[*Jesus is speaking to John at his baptism*] 'It is necessary that I should, now, be baptized with this baptism, and, hereafter, confer upon all men the baptism of the Trinity. Lend me thy right hand, O Baptist, for the present administration...Take hold of my head which the Seraphim worship. [...] Baptize me, who am about to baptize them that believe (*di hydatos, kai Pneumatos, kai puros*) by water, and Spirit, and fire; (*hydati*) by water, which is able to wash away the filth of sin; (*Pneumati*) by Spirit, which is able to make the earthy spiritual; (*puri*) by fire, consuming, by nature, the thorns of transgressions.' The Baptist having heard these things, [...] stretching out his trembling right hand, [...] baptized the Lord.²³⁷

This account of the baptism of the Lord Jesus Christ shows a baptism administered after a very different fashion from the baptism by Baptists of the present day. They never baptize by stretching out the right hand over the head of the baptized.²³⁸ All others do, always, thus baptize.²³⁹

²³⁷ *Four Homilies*, 4; a.k.a. *On the Holy Theophany*, or, *On Christ's Baptism*; J. Dale, *Johannic Baptism*, 405; bracketed ellipses are added; on the accreditation of this work see, E. Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 747.

Greek: Δεί με βαπτισθῆναι τοῦ τό βάπτισμα νῦν, καί ὕστερον τῆς ομοουσίου Τριάδος τό βάπτισμα πάσι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις χαρίσασθαι. Δάνεισόν μοι, Βαπτιστά, πρός τήν παροῦσαν οἰκονομίαν, τήν σὴν δεξιάν ...Κράτησον τήν ἐμήν κεφαλὴν, ἣν σεβει τά σεραφίμ...Βάπτισόν με, τόν μέλλοντα βαπτίζειν τοὺς πιστεύοντας δι ὕδατος, καί Πνεύματος, καί πρὸς ὕδατι δυναμένω ἀποπλῦναι τὸν ἁμαρτιῶν τὸν βόρβορον Πνεύματι, δυναμένω τοὺς χοϊκοὺς, πνευματικοὺς ἀπεργάσασθαι πυρί, πεφνκότι κατακαίειν τὰς τὸν ἀνομημάτων ἀκάνθας. Τούτων ἀκούσας τὸν λόγων ὁ Βαπτιστής...δεξιάν ἐκτείνας ὑποτρέμουσαν...τὸν Δεσπότην ἐδάπτισεν; (PG 10:1185f)

²³⁸ Dale's remarks insinuate that such a physical posture must indicate something other than immersion. However, there is abundant historical evidence that early Christian (patristic) baptisms were often performed in a manner that might be called an assisted self-immersion, in which the recipient stood in and then bent themselves under the water while the administrator's hand rested on their head. In commenting on this practical and efficient method Everett Ferguson wrote:

"[Early literary sources indicate that] the baptizer placed his hand on the head of the candidate, who was standing in the water, when he asked for a confession of faith. The gesture might not only refer to this moment of confession but could also be functional. The triple immersion accompanied the confession, and the administrator's hand, therefore, was in position to guide the candidate's head into the water. The hand on the head plunging it into the water would be a natural extension from the self-immersions of Judaism." (*Baptism in the Early Church*, 126.)

The most detailed extant first-hand description of early Christian baptism (c.390 AD) comes from a bishop in Mopsuestia (central Asia Minor) named Theodore (c.350–428), in which such a procedure is clearly indicated:

"At the time I have already explained to you, you go down into the water that has already been blessed by the bishop...Then the bishop lays his hand on your head with the words, 'In the name of the Father,' and while pronouncing them pushes you down into the water...You bow your head when you immerse yourself...Meanwhile the bishop says, 'And of the Son,' and guides you with his hand as you bend down into the water as before...You raise your head, and again the bishop says, 'And of the Holy Spirit,' pressing you down into the water again with his hand. Then you come up out of the font...Three times you immerse yourself, each time performing the same action, once in the name of the Father, once in the name of the Son and once in the name of the Holy Spirit.'"*

(*Baptismal Homilies*, 4; Edward Yarnald, *The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation: Baptismal Homilies of the 4th Century*, [Slough: St. Paul Press, 1972], 180, 192.)

[*Theodore's original writings were in Greek. However, the oldest surviving copies of this work are Syriac translations, for which English transliterations are not readily available—nor am I capable of creating such. The full Syriac text is given in Alphonse Mingana's *Commentary of Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Lord's Prayer, Baptism and the Eucharist*, (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, 1933), 180ff.] ⇒

However, what Dale’s readers almost certainly would not be aware of is that his immediate point about an outstretched hand, even if meant rhetorically or whimsically, is rendered entirely moot by the portion of the passage he excluded with a selective ellipsis. Here is the omitted portion, bracketed between the sentences in Dale’s rendition that come just before and after it:

‘Lend me thy right hand, O Baptist, for the present administration [—even as Mary lent her womb for my birth. Immerse me in the streams of Jordan [*kataduson es tois Iordanou reithrois*], even as she who bore me wrapped me [*eneilsse*—enwrap; cover up] in children’s swaddling-clothes. Grant me thy baptism, even as the Virgin granted me her milk.²⁴⁰—] Take hold of my head which the seraphim worship.’

There is certainly nothing wrong with an economizing, subject-focusing, or even strategic use of ellipses. But the obfuscation of an integral part of the text with such an obvious and crucial bearing on Dale’s treatment of it—not to mention the fundamental question being considered in his series—is inexplicable by any standard of scholarship.

2) Another example of a problematic presentation is seen in Dale’s treatment of an interesting patristic passage:²⁴¹

A congruent description occurs in the earlier (c.3rd century) *Apostolic Tradition* (21.12f), which is most likely of Alexandrian or Syrian origin. While not quite as explicit as the preceding account, the act of pouring or sprinkling is obviously not in view as the administrator’s hand remains positioned on the recipient’s head throughout the baptism.

“When the one being baptized goes down into the waters, the one who baptizes, placing a hand on him, should say thus: ‘Do you believe in God the Father Almighty?’ And he who is being baptized should reply, ‘I believe.’ Let him baptize him once immediately, having his hand placed upon his head...[etc.]” (Alistair Stewart-Sykes, *Hippolytus; On the Apostolic Tradition*, [New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2001], 111f);

Latin: *Cum ergo descendit qui baptizatur in aquam, dicat ei ille qui baptizat manum imponens super eum sic: Credis in deum patrem omnipotentem? Et qui baptizatur etiam dicat: Credo. Et statim manum habens in caput eius inpositam baptizet.* (Ruggero Iorio, *Battesimo e Battisteri*, [Florence: Nardini, 1993], 108.)

Early Christian art almost invariably shows recipients of baptism standing in water with the administrator’s hand resting on their head, and not actually pouring or sprinkling any water as is commonly supposed. Notably, virtually all pre-7th century depictions of baptism are now also recognized by art scholars as portrayals of Jesus Baptism by John in the Jordan. (See: Robin M. Jensen, *Understanding Early Christian Art*, [New York: Routledge, 2000], 5, 177ff; also: H. F. Stander, J. P. Louw, *Baptism in the Early Church* [Leeds: Reformation Today Trust, 2004], 37ff; E. Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 124ff.) These baptismal scenes consistently show the streams or rays that are sometimes mistaken for water as actually emanating from a hovering dove, not the administrator’s hand, in representation of Christ’s anointing with the Spirit. There are in fact relevant patristic sources that make explicit the intent of this portrayal, such as Peter Chrysologus (c.380–c.451), the Bishop of Ravenna, Italy, when the city’s orthodox baptistery was originally adorned with its iconic mosaic (later changed into its present form—see, Spiro Kostof, *The Orthodox Baptistery of Ravenna*, [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965], fig. 42b):

“Today [at Jesus’ baptism] the Holy Spirit hovers in the form of a dove over the waters. But this dove does not, like the first, bear a mere twig of the old olive-tree [Gen. 8:11]...but pours [Latin: *fundit*] the whole fatness of the new unction [*novi chrismatis*] upon the head of its author, that it may fulfill what the prophet foretold: ‘Wherefore God, even thy God, hath anointed [*unxit*] thee with the oil of gladness [*oleo laetitiae*] above thy fellows.’ [Psalm 45:7].” (*Sermons*, 160; *The Bibliotheca Sacra*, G. Frederick Wright, Z. Swift Holbrook, eds., [Oberlin: Bibliotheca Sacra Co., 1898], 55:24; Latin: *Hodie Spiritus sanctus supernat aquis in specie columbae, ut sicut illa columba Noe nuntiaverat diluvium discessisse mundi (Gen. v111)...sed totam d in caput parentis novi chrismatis pinguedinem fundit, ut impleat illud quod propheta paedixit: Propterea unxit te Deus Deus tuus oleo laetitiae pae consortibus tuis (Psal.xLiv).* [PL 52:621])

²³⁹ J. Dale, *Johannic Baptism*, 405f; bracketed ellipses are mine.

²⁴⁰ This portion of the original passage is taken from ANF 6:70; Greek; *ὡς ἐδάνεισέ μοι πρὸς τὴν γέννησιν τὴν νηδὸν ἢ Μαρία. Κατάδυσόν με τοῖς Ἰορδάνου ρεῖθροις, καθάπερ ἢ γεννήσασα τοῖς παιδικοῖς σπαργάνοις ἐνείλισσε. Δός μοι τό βάπτισμα, ὡς ἡ Παρθένος τό γάλα;* (PG 10:1185f)

²⁴¹ Also see text for note 279.

[Basil of Ceasarea—c.330–379 AD] But I do not know why it should have occurred to you to inquire concerning the uncovering (*anaduseos*) in the baptism, since you have received the covering (*katadusin*) as a type exemplifying the three days. For it is impossible to be baptized thrice without being uncovered (*anadunta*) as often.

The use of the phrase *en to Baptismati* in connection with *anaduseos* is confirmatory of the interpretation which makes it comprehensive of the whole rite, since if *Baptismati* be understood to mean *covering*, the phrase “uncovering in the covering” becomes impossible and absurd.²⁴²

First, the understanding that the noun *baptisma* is normally used in reference to the overall rite of baptism (or the experience of a spiritual *baptism*) rather than to simply and solely denote the physical act it may entail is virtually undisputed. For all intents and purposes this renders Dale’s remark about its usage in connection with the verb *anaduseos* rather pointless. However, what readers would again perhaps not be aware of is that the word “baptized” in his rendition is in fact a variant of the verb *baptizō*. Yet Dale simply left that information out, even though is the very word ostensibly at the heart of his inquest.

With this in mind, and in line with the translation in the standard Early Church Fathers series, the intended connection here is almost certainly with the correspondent verbs *anaduseos* and *katadusin*. The verbs *anadunta* and *baptizō* were then apparently used as their practical equivalents. By this reckoning the two verb sets were part of a dual description of the physical action (i.e., a “going down” and an immediate “coming up”) involved in the ritual, which as a whole was denoted by the noun *baptismati*. It is also unlikely that the definition *purification/cleansing* which Dale proposed as the meaning of *baptizō* in most patristic passages²⁴³ is in view here since, even according to his own structuring, the passage might then be given the nonsensical reading, “purified/cleansed thrice without being uncovered as often.”

3) A particularly flagrant case of omitting part of a citation from a secondary source can be seen in Dale’s criticism of a then newly completed and arguably, in places, sectarian Baptist translation of the New Testament.²⁴⁴ The specific presentation being censured here was that the prepositions *en* and *eis* were sometimes interchangeably translated as either “into” or “in”:

That the Baptist version is made on this idea of confusion in these prepositions would appear from the fact, that they translate John 9:7, “Go, wash (*eis*) in the pool,” and John 5:4,²⁴⁵ “Went down (*en*) into the pool.”²⁴⁶

Yet in these two places most other English translations follow the exact same course. For example, in echoing its 1611 predecessor the *New King James Version* renders these two passages, “Go wash in [*eis*] the pool of Siloam,”²⁴⁷ and, “For an angel went down at a certain time into [*en*] the pool and stirred up the water,”²⁴⁸ respectively. As such, Dale’s selective criticism here is obviously prejudicial.

²⁴² J. Dale, *Christic and Patristic Baptism*, 590f.

²⁴³ See especially *Christic and Patristic Baptism*, 595–601, and the summary statements on pages 618 and 624.

²⁴⁴ *The Common English Version*, (New York: American Bible Union, 1864). Notably, even many Baptists and other immersionists opposed this translation. (See: W. Brantley, *Objections to a Baptist Version of the New Testament*, [New York: Callender, 1837].)

²⁴⁵ John 5:3b–4 is a variant manuscript reading that is excluded from many modern translations.

²⁴⁶ J. Dale, *Johannic Baptism*, 395.

²⁴⁷ Greek: ὑπάγε νίψαι εἰς τὴν κολυμβήθραν τοῦ Σιλωάμ.

²⁴⁸ Greek: ἀγγελος γὰρ κατὰ καιρὸν κατέβαιεν ἐν τῇ καλυμβήθρα και ἐτάρασσε το ὕδωρ; (*The New Testament in the original Greek: Byzantine Textform*, [Bellingham: Logos Research Systems, 2005].)

At any rate, Dale’s broader objective was to prove that understanding *eis* in the traditional sense of “in/into” in the account of Jesus’ baptism in Mark 1:9 (“**Jesus...was baptized by John in the Jordan** [*eis ton Iordanēn*]” NKJV—as NIV, NASB, NLT, ESV, CSB, *et. al.*) was similarly unwarranted. Rather, according to Dale, a simple movement “to” these places was all that was being indicated.

We (I think both consistently and truly) say, that the blind man went to the pool (*eis kolymbethran*) without going into it; and that Jesus went to the Jordan (*eis 'Iordanēn*) without going into it.²⁴⁹

In an attempt to bolster his stance, Dale referred to a grammar written by the distinguished Greek scholar Dr. George Winer (1789–1858; German Lutheran):

Winer objects to this idea [i.e., understanding *en* and *eis* as meaning either “in” or “into,” instead of simply “to” or “toward” in certain circumstances]. He says (p. 412, 4):

It was formerly supposed, that in the New Testament *en* was employed agreeably to the Hebrew idiom with verbs of motion or direction to denote *into*, as John 5:4, *angelos katebainen en te kolymbethra*. The latter, it was imagined, was used with verbs of rest to signify *in*, as John 9:7, *nipsai eis ten kolymbethran*. Homer uses *en* with verbs of motion to indicate at the same time the result of the motion, that is, rest. This they do from a love of terseness peculiar to the Greek race.

More surprising still are the passages adduced in support of the assertion, that *eis* is used for *en*. Even in Greek authors *eis* is not infrequently construed with verbs of rest; and then the idea of *motion* (preceding or accompanying) was originally included, agreeably to the principle of *breviloquentia* [brevity or terseness] mentioned above. In this way is to be explained Acts 8:40, “Philip was found (*eis*) conducted *to* Azotus.” In John 9:7, *eis ten kolymbethran* is, as respects sense, to be connected with *hypage* [“go”], cf. v. 11. So Luke 21:37. Still more easy of explanation is Mark 1:9.

Thus, these high authorities take away, on naked grammatical principles, from the theory the passage [Mark 1:9] which, of itself, was to settle the controversy by converting a locality into water, robbing a verb of motion of its preposition, and revolutionizing the character of *baptizō*!²⁵⁰

However, Dale’s quotation of Winer is precise only through a little more than the first half of the second paragraph. While he once again did not employ an ellipsis to denote the fact, Dale actually left out a large number of literary references that Winer examined between the phrase “in this way is to be explained” and his subsequent consideration of “Acts 8:40.” Here then is what Winer stated immediately after that statement in the original work (which, based on Dale’s brief remark that he was using “Thayer’s Ed.” and the given pagination, is evidently from the same edition):

In this way are to be explained the following passages: Mark 2:1 [“he was in [*en*] the house” NKJV], where we say...“*he has gone into the house and is now there.*”²⁵¹

²⁴⁹ J. Dale, *Johannic Baptism*, 396.

²⁵⁰ J. Dale, *Johannic Baptism*, 395.

²⁵¹ George Benedict Winer, Joseph H. Thayer, trans., *A Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament, Prepared as a Solid Basis for the Interpretation of the New Testament*, (Andover: Warren F. Draper, 1869), 415.

German: *Hiernach erklären sich: Mr. 2, 1., wo ach wir sagen: er ist ins Haus d. h. er ist ins Haus gegangen und befindet sich jetzt dort; (Georg Benedikt Winer, Grammatik des Neutestamentlichen Sprachidioms; [Leipzig: F. C. W. Vogel, 1867], 387.)*

Thus, contrary to what could likely be supposed from Dale's severe though entirely undisclosed editing, Winer certainly was not of the opinion that *en* infrequently let alone never conveys the idea of "going into" something.

While Dale yet again failed to indicate such with an ellipsis, there is actually more than half a page of discussion between Winer's references to Acts 8:40 and John 9:7, in which a number of contextually based variables are examined. But this formal infraction pales by comparison when one discovers what Dale left out between Winer's note "cf. v.11" and his remark "still more easy of explanation is Mark 1:9"—as well as what came immediately afterward:

In John 9:7, *eis ten kolymbethran* is, as respects sense, to be connected with *hypage* ["go"], cf. v. 11: *go into the pool and wash thyself* (cf. Luke 21:37) see Lücke, though *niptesthai eis hydōr* ["washed in/with water"] by itself is as correct as in Cato R. R. 156, 5 *in aquam macerare* ["soak in water"], or *sich in ein Becken waschen* ["go wash in a basin"], (Arrian. Epict. 3, 27, 71).

Still more easy of explanation is Mark 1:9 *ebaptisthe eis ton Iordanen*. In Luke 8:34 *apengeilan eis ten polin* etc. means, *they carried the news into the city*, (for which we find a more circumstantial statement in Matt. 8:33: *apelthontes eis ten polin apegeilan* ["they went away into the city and told..." NKJV]).²⁵²

Observably, the omitted portion repudiates the strong insinuation created by Dale's undisclosed staging that Winer's stated principles would affirm going "to" the pool is all that is intended in John 9:7–11. Similarly, Winer's statement that "still more easy of explanation is Mark 1:9" is obviously couched in a section in which he was giving examples of where he believed *eis* does indeed convey the idea of a given subject ultimately going "in" or "into" its destination. Moreover, as circumstantially concerns the account of Jesus' baptism in Mark 1:9 when considered alongside its kindred description in Matthew's Gospel (3:6—*ebaptizonto en tō Iordanē*; 3:11—*baptizein en hydati*), just a few pages earlier this same "high authority" had plainly stated:²⁵³

Sometimes we find in parallel phrases a preposition now inserted and now omitted; as...Acts 1:5; 11:16 *Baptizein hydati*, but *Baptizein en hydati* Matthew 3:11; John 1:26, 33.

...*Baptizein en hydati* signifies, *baptize in water* (immersing); *Baptizein hydati*, *baptize with water*. Here, and in most other passages, the identity of the two expressions is manifest; yet we must not consider one as put for the other.²⁵⁴

²⁵² G. Winer, *A Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament*, 415f.

German: *Jo. 9, 7. Hangt εις της κολυμβηθραν dem Sinne nach auch mit υπαγε zusammen vgl. v. 11. geh hinab und wasche dich in den Teich (vgl. Lc. 21, 37.) s. Lücke, wiewohl auch νιπτεσθαι εις υδωρ an sich so richtig ist, wie Cato R. R. 156, 5. in aquam macerare odor: sich in ein Becken waschen (Arrian. Epict. 3, 27, 71). Noch leichter erklarbar ist Mr. 1, 9. εβαπτισθη εις τον Ιορδανην. Lc. 8. 34. heisst ἀπήγγειλαν εις την πόλιν cet. sie meldeten es in die Stadt (wofur Mt. 8, 33. Umständlicher...); (G. Winer, *Grammatik des Neutestamentlichen Sprachidioms*, 387.)*

²⁵³ Another widely-read Greek grammarian, Dr. William Trollope (1798–1863; Anglican), gave a harmonious appraisal:

"It is not that *eis* is used for *en*, but the idea of *rest* and *motion* is combined, when *eis* is constructed with verbs which convey the former meaning; as in Matthew 2:23...Other passages, which have been referred to this head, do not belong to it; as Mark 1:9, *ebaptisthe eis ton Iorden*, *he was baptized by immersion into the Jordan*." (William Trollope, *A Greek Grammar to the New Testament*, [London: Whittaker & Co., 1842], 175.)

²⁵⁴ G. Winer, *A Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament*, 412.

German: *Zuw. findet sich in parallelen Redensarten hier eine Präposition gesetzt, dort ausgelassen...Act. 1, 5. 11, 16. βαπτίζεν υδωτι, dag. βαπτ. εν υδωτι Mt. 3, 11. Jo. 1, 26. 33...βαπτ. εν υδωτι in Wasser taufen (eintauchend), βαπτ. υδ. mit wasser taufen. Die Gleichgültigkeit für den Sinn ist hier und in den meisten andern Stellen einleuchtend, nur soll man nicht eins für das andre gesetzt wahren; (G. Winer, *Grammatik des Neutestamentlichen Sprachidioms*, 384f.)*

One should certainly exercise due caution and even deference when trying to ascertain someone's intentions in a situation like this. It may be simple carelessness. Yet in objective terms it cannot help but call Dale's academic credibility into question.

4) It must also be said that Dale assembled and appraised his primary sources in a very unscientific and anachronistic manner. Jacob Ditzler (Methodist) very critically wrote:

As a sample of the reckless manner of treating this subject, Dr. Dale, in his late works on baptism, when treating of *bapto*...entirely ignores every rule or principle by which the primary could be discovered. He cites his first passage to find the primary from an author [Aelianus; 3rd century AD; *Classic*, 139] who flourished some twelve hundred years later than Homer [c.9th century BC]! ...We will see more of this under *baptidzo*.

...While he deserves the greatest credit—as far as we have seen his works, two first volumes—for research, his rule or canon of interpretation is so destitute of all science that it is simply preposterous. Seeking the primary meaning of the words in dispute, he never classifies authors, disregards time, the early or late date of authors; but all are thrown together without order or method, and the most arbitrary principles adopted.²⁵⁵

A chronological disorder similar to what Ditzler was protesting with regard to *baptō* vitiates Dale's assertions regarding the meaning of *baptizō*, for which, he claimed, there was a course of "development" with its classical usage.²⁵⁶ That is, moving from the simple sense of 1) "merse," Dale insisted that *baptizō* eventually came to (also) more generally mean 2) "to merse into any liquid for the sake of its influence," before finally acquiring the even further denotation 3) "to affect by any controlling influence (without the condition of mersion)."²⁵⁷

Yet it is significant that Dale did not develop a historical outline of any kind to evince his proposed diachrony, let alone give an actual timeline that objectively demonstrated or defined it. Indeed, rather than constructing and then following any kind of chronology at all with respect to the Greek authors he considered, Dale simply arranged them alphabetically within the various categories of meaning he arbitrary chose to posit. As such, within the collective listings that supposedly pertained to each of these derived, yet presumably sequential groupings,²⁵⁸ Dale persistently comingled quotations from a variety of Greek authors who collectively wrote over a vast time span of around a thousand years (from the 6th century BC all the way through the 5th century AD).

For instance, within a grouping of examples where *baptizō* is said to convey its initial idea of "Intusposition [or, Mersion] Without Influence," passages from the well-known Greek philosopher Aristotle (4th century BC) and the historian Polybius (2nd century AD) are presented side-by-side.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁵ J. Ditzler, *Baptism*, 110f.

²⁵⁶ Cf., *Classic Baptism*, xix–xxi, 65, 152, 182, 332, 353, *et al.*

²⁵⁷ J. Dale, *Classic Baptism*, 353; {cont.}

While in his concluding remarks Dale specified the three stages of "development" mentioned here (along with his supposed corollary definitions of *baptō*), elsewhere he often denominated the additional category of "Intusposition With Influence." (e.g., *Classic Baptism*, xix, 254f)

²⁵⁸ In his outline of Dale's work, Dr. Robert Countess (Presbyterian) agreed Dale's theory necessarily posits the idea that *baptizō*'s meaning and usage involved a "diachronic movement" which occurred "over time."

(James Dale, Robert H. Countess, James E. Adams, *Classic Baptism: BAIITIZΩ, An Inquiry into the Meaning of the Word*, [Wauconda & Phillipsburg: Bolchazy-Carducci Pub., Presbyterian & Reformed Pub. Co., 1989], intro., 13.) See also Dr. Hadley's summary of the diachronic aspect of Dale's theory in text for note 666.

²⁵⁹ J. Dale, *Classic Baptism*, 235.

Then, in a list of examples said to evince an intermediate stage when *baptizō* had come to mean “Intusposition [or, Mersion] For Influence,” the writings of pseudo-Aesop—a collection of fables generally thought to have been compiled sometime in the 7th or 6th centuries BC—as well as the 4th century AD rhetorician Themistius are both among those cited.²⁶⁰

Finally, a table said to contain examples reflecting the final stage of *baptizō*’s development—and thus to indicate a “Controlling Influence Without Intusposition [or, Mersion] in Fact or in Figure”—includes authors ranging all the way from the 6th century BC (pseudo-Aesop) up to the 5th century AD (the philosopher Proclus).²⁶¹ Notably, Dale included passages from the 1st century Greek philosopher and historian Plutarch in all three categories.

Considering how fundamental the whole idea that *baptizō* underwent a significant evolution in meaning is within Dale’s overall theory, such a chronological muddling is a conspicuous flaw.

5) A few additional items may also be briefly noted under the current heading. First is the fact that Dale often failed to disclose the sources for the original language texts he used. Nor did he provide a functional bibliography of the secondary sources he cited. Nor in lieu of either of these standard critical apparatuses did he use footnotes or endnotes of any kind. All of these omissions are highly unusual for a scholarly inquiry of such a controversial nature and comprehensive scope as Dale’s portended to be, and make independent and contextual examination of many of his citations necessarily—though also quite unnecessarily—difficult.

It is also sometimes said that Dale examined every occurrence of *baptizō* in ancient Greek literature known in his day. That is factually not the case. For example, Dale never considered any of the writings of the Greek physician Galen of Pergamum (c.129–216 AD). Moreover, Galen was among the most prolific of all classical Greek authors, whose massive corpus actually comprises nearly one-third of all such writings that have survived.²⁶² A number of Galen’s works appeared in Western Europe as early as the 1500’s, and a virtually complete edition had just been published a few decades before Dale wrote his series.²⁶³

Specific to Dale’s inquiry, Galen employed the verbs *baptō* and *baptizō* quite frequently, with both, when afforded a natural reading, used in their classical sense of *dip/immerse*.²⁶⁴ A representative example of Galen’s use of *baptizō* is seen in a statement concerning a person soaking in a solution of hot water and herbs, “...with the entire body immersed [*olou baptizomenou tou sōmatos*], except for the face...”²⁶⁵

Relevant to *Patristic Baptism*, as will be shown in an upcoming chapter, Dale also ignored or else was ignorant of numerous passages where the early church fathers employed *baptizō* or its Latin equivalents.

²⁶⁰ J. Dale, *Classic Baptism*, 266.

²⁶¹ J. Dale, *Classic Baptism*, 283f.

²⁶² See: Cagatay Ustun, *Galen and his Anatomic Eponym: Vein of Galen*; (cited in, *Clinical Anatomy*, [Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2004, 17.6:454f.).

²⁶³ The German medical historian Dr. Karl Gottlob Kühn (1754–1840) republished all of Galen’s then-known writings in Greek between 1821 and 1833 (*Claudii Galeni Opera Omnia*, [Leipzig: K. Knobloch], 22 vols.); see also Appendix A, beginning on page 148.)

²⁶⁴ E.g., see text for note 161; also, E. Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 41f, 50. Ferguson provides a number of examples of Galen’s use of both verbs, and concludes: “...Galen maintains the literal sense of *baptizō*, as he does in his use of *baptō* and with no apparent difference in meaning [dip/immerse].” (Ibid, 50.)

²⁶⁵ *Of the Composition of Local Remedies (De Compositione Medicamentorum Localium)*; Greek: ...ὅπως ὁλόυ βαπτίζομένου τὸ σῶματος πλὴν τοῦ προσώπου; (K. Kühn, *Claudii Galeni Opera Omnia*, 12:588.)

Kühn’s Latin rendering of this phrase is “...atque ita toto corpore praeter faciem in eo immerso elaterium insussulabit...” (Ibid.)

Chapter 7 - *Baptizō*/Baptism as “Drowning”

Dale’s assertion of a vast, nearly uncrossable gulf between the meanings of *baptō* (first) and *baptizō* also had a very technical bearing on his view of the proper mode for baptism. That is, Dale maintained that while *baptō* and *dip* fully allow for both the *entrance* and *exit* of an object from a given entity, words like *baptizō* and *baptize* simply do not. Rather, they at best can only indicate the *putting into* that might be involved in placing something into a state of “mersion.”

In the following discourse Dale was attempting to exploit the fact that the Baptist linguist Dr. Thomas Conant (1802–91), whose writings are a frequently target in Dale’s series, had agreed that in a certain narrow sense this would appear to be the case. Dale’s response to Conant’s admission was essentially this: If, then, God had intended Christian *baptism* to involve a physical action that both puts the candidate into, and then withdraws them from the water, he would obviously have caused the New Testament writers to use the word *baptō* instead of *baptizō* to designate and describe the ordinance:

[Conant] The idea of *emersion* is not included in the Greek word [*baptizō*]. It means simply to put into or under water, without determining whether the object immersed sinks to the bottom, or floats in the liquid, or is immediately taken out. A living being put under water without intending to drown him, is of course to be immediately withdrawn from it; and this is to be understood whenever the word is used with reference to such a case.²⁶⁶

This is hardly a fair statement of the case. It is true, there is nothing in the word to prevent its object from being “immediately taken out of the water;” but it is also true that the word never contemplates the removal of its object from the condition in which it has placed it. ...But why was the man put into the water? “Why, to be baptized.” Well, “baptize” will put a man into water, but it never did and never will take him out. This Dr. Conant admits; but, he adds, as the man is not intended to be drowned, he must be taken out of the hands of “baptize,” which otherwise would drown him.

In other words, the Holy Spirit has employed a word which requires, absolutely, disciples to be put under water without making any provision for their withdrawal; and Dr. Conant has to find some way to remedy the defect, on the ground of an inference that they are not to be drowned! And all this when *baptō* would have done just what Dr. Conant thinks necessary to volunteer to do, namely, to put in momentarily and withdraw; which word the Holy Spirit never once uses.

Now, such an oversight (may the word be used without irreverence?) by the Holy Spirit is infinitely incredible. And the Baptist system, which is responsible for originating such an idea, is, thereby, hopelessly ruined. ...Baptists put Christian disciples under the water, and are, then, under the necessity of saving them from their “watery tomb” by changing *baptizō* into *baptō*. We do not object to men being taken out of the water after they have been improperly put into it; but we object to men being dipped into water and then claiming to have received a Greekly baptism [i.e. a “*baptizō*”].

There is nothing more true than the proposition...“Dipping is NOT Baptizing, and Baptizing is NOT Dipping.”²⁶⁷

Dale repeatedly made use of this line of reasoning throughout his later volumes as well. Here are two more examples:

1) If it be insisted upon, that in John’s commission *baptizein en hydati* [“baptize with (or, in) water”²⁶⁸] refers to the execution of a physical baptism, the element of the baptism being water, and

²⁶⁶ T. Conant, *The Meaning and Use of Baptizein*, 88f.

²⁶⁷ J. Dale, *Classic Baptism*, 96f; emphases Dale’s.

²⁶⁸ Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:26, 31, 33; Acts 1:5, 11:16.

the verb used in its primary, literal sense, then, it is as certain as that Greek is Greek, that John was commissioned to drown every person whom he baptized.²⁶⁹

2) If *immerse* should be used at its [*baptizō*'s] true value (putting into without limitation of time), it would become worthless on the hands of those who insist on putting men and women into water, for in such case (as they confess) they would have *to drown*. The simple remedy is to baptize, as God enjoins, without putting into water.²⁷⁰

If such a notion is indeed correct, however, then the creators of the Septuagint are caught up in Dale's indictment as well, by virtue of their rather astounding insistence that the Syrian general Naaman went and "drowned" (*ebaptisat* [*baptizō*]) himself seven times (*eptaki*) in the River Jordan (*en to Iordane*) (2 Kings 5:14).

Despite Dale's censure, Hezekiah Harvey both maintained the "Baptist" position and claimed that in places Dale's own reasoning—though inconsistent with other statements he made—necessarily inferred the same thing.²⁷¹

...In regard to the taking of the baptized out of the element, it is not necessary that the word should, in itself, express this part of the act of baptism, since the circumstances, in each instance of its use, sufficiently indicate the fact. Thus, the word *immerse* does not, in itself, either in Latin or English, express the emersion of the person or thing immersed; nevertheless, it is used in numberless instances for a momentary immersion, wholly equivalent to *dip* or *plunge*. As a matter of fact, however, *baptizō* is often used to express momentary immersion, or the putting in or under a liquid and immediately withdrawing from it.

Plutarch [1st century AD] describes the soldiers of Alexander as "dipping (*baptisontes*) with cups from large wine-jars and mixing-bowls, and drinking to one another" [*Life of Alexander*, 61]; where Liddell and Scott define its meaning, "To draw wine from bowls in cups," and add, "of course by dipping them" [*A Greek-English Lexicon*, p.305] ...In all [such] cases as in a multitude of others, the word is plainly used as the English word *dip*, to express an action which includes not only the putting of an object in or under some element, but also the immediate withdrawing of it.

When, therefore, Dr. Dale concedes that an intusposition, or the putting within an element, is involved in the primary use of the word [e.g., *Classic*, 31], he has conceded the main point insisted on by us: the manner of the intusposition, and the withdrawal of the baptized out of the enveloping element are decided necessarily by the circumstances and the relations in which the word is used.²⁷²

Other philologists, such as Dr. Karl Fritzsche (1801–46; German Reformed), have agreed:

...Casaubon observed²⁷³ that *dunein* means to be submerged with the result that one perishes; *epipolazein*, to float on the surface of the water; *baptizesthai*, to immerse oneself wholly for another purpose, than that you may perish.

But that, in accordance with the nature of the word *baptizesthai*, baptism was then [in apostolic times] performed, not by sprinkling upon, but by submerging, is proved especially by Romans 6:4.²⁷⁴

²⁶⁹ J. Dale, *Johannic Baptism*, 235.

²⁷⁰ J. Dale, *Christic and Patristic Baptism*, 405.

²⁷¹ In one instance Dale frankly admitted: "The true position as taken is, the word [*baptizō*] expresses condition of intusposition, involving some act adequate for its accomplishment..." (*Judaic Baptism*, 51; emphasis added.)

²⁷² H. Harvey, *The Church: Its Polity and Ordinances*, 169f.

²⁷³ See text for note 19.

²⁷⁴ K. Fritzsche, *Quatuor N.T. Evangelia* [Matt. 3:6]; cf. Conant, *Baptizein*, 156.

Latin: *Ceterum dūveiv esse eo consilio ut pereas submergi, ἐπιπολάζειν in aquarum superficie natere, βαπτίζεσθαι alio quam ut te perdas fine se totum immergere bene subindicavit Casaubonus. Sed praeter naturam verbi βαπτίζεσθαι baptismum non aspergendo sed submergendo illo tempore esse evincit maxime I. Rom. 6:4; (Carl Fritzsche, *Quatuor N.T. Evangelia Recen. et cum Commentariis Perp.*, [Leipzig: Frederici Fleischeri, 1826], 1:120)*

Joseph Thayer wrote concerning this issue:

...The Greek word *baptizō*, when used physically in reference to persons, often describes an experience which issues in death. But that the word does not always carry with it the idea of drowning or complete loss of life, is evident from many extant examples, which are to be found alike in the larger Greek lexicons.

...Figuratively, the word is used of one “drowned” in grief, “overwhelmed” with care, “immersed” in debt...[etc.]; and no more excludes of necessity the notion of ultimate rescue than such expressions in English do.

In short, the word, intrinsically and in the classic use, no more implies that the immersed person of necessity loses his life thereby, than when used of the rite of Christian “baptism” it implies the drowning of every person immersed.²⁷⁵

In line with Thayer’s remarks, no one disputes that in a good number of cases *baptizō* does denote an immersion of people or objects that ultimately ends in their drowning or being permanently sunk. But contra Dale’s position, it is equally clear that in many instances it does not. The *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* also observes that there is a notable demarcation in this regard between the classical and Jewish-religious usage of the verb.

In the Septuagint...the sevenfold dipping of Naaman (2 Kings 5:14) perhaps suggests sacramental ideas... The meanings “to drown,” “to sink” or “to perish” seem to be quite absent from the Hebrew and Aramaic *tabal*²⁷⁶ and therefore from [the correspondent] *baptizein* in Jewish Greek...The usage of Josephus is not specifically Jewish Greek [i.e., it is more Hellenistic in style].²⁷⁷

Looking at how this issue was at least inadvertently treated in the patristic church, Chrysostom (c.349–407; Bishop of Constantinople) went so far as to state that Jesus likened his Passion to a “baptism” (e.g., Mark 10:38; Luke 12:50) for the very reason that persons who are *baptizō*-ed for Christian purposes are certain to also “rise” from the water:

For just as one who is baptized in water [*baptizomenos hydati*] easily [*eukolias*: with ease] rises up [*anistatai*; to rise; resurrect] because the nature of the water poses no hindrance, so too Christ rose with greater ease [*eukolias*] because he had gone down into death. And this is why he calls his death a baptism [*baptisma*].²⁷⁸

There could scarcely be a more direct or forceful repudiation of Dale’s stance than a previously cited statement made by the Greek-speaking early church father Basil of Ceasarea, who, in reply to a question from a newly ordained cleric named Amphilochius, frankly marveled:

²⁷⁵ Joseph H. Thayer (in a letter dated, March 17, 1890); cited in, J. Christian, *Immersion, the Act of Christian Baptism*, 32f.

²⁷⁶ See pages 78f.

²⁷⁷ G. Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 1:535f.

German: *Das siebenmalige Tauchen Naemans (2 Kö 5, 14) streift vielleicht sakramentale Gedanken...Die Bdtgen „ertränken“, pass „untergehen, versinken“ ligen dem hebr und aram לרַבּץ und dementsprechend auch βαπτίζειν im Judengriechisch anscheinend völlig fern...Der Sprachgebrauch des Josephus...ist nicht spezifisch juden-griechisch.* (Kittel, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, 1:532, 534.)

²⁷⁸ *On the Incomprehensible Nature of God*, 8.35; Paul W. Harkins, *Chrysostom, On the Incomprehensible Nature of God*, (Washington D.C., Catholic University of America Press, 1984), 226.

Greek: *ὡσπερ γάρ ὁ βαπτιζόμενος ὑδατι, μετὰ πολλῆς ἀνίσταται τῆς εὐκολίας, οὐδέν ὑπὸ τῆς φύσεως τῶν ὑδάτων κωλύμενος, οὕτω καὶ αὐτός εἰς θάνατον καταβάς, μετὰ πλειονος ἀνάβη τῆς εὐκολίας, διὰ τοῦτο βάπτισμα αὐτό καλεῖ;* (PG 48:775.)

With regard to the emerging [or, “coming up”—*ananeuseōs*] in Baptism [*Baptismatī*]—I do not know how it came into your mind to ask such a question, if indeed you [correctly] understand immersion [or, plunging down—*katadusin*] to fulfill the figure of the three days [burial of Christ]. It is impossible [*adunaton*] for anyone to be immersed [*baptisthēnai* (*baptizō*)] three times [*trissakis*] without emerging [*anadunta*] three times [*tosautakis*—just as often; correspondingly].²⁷⁹

Again, while no one denies that in *baptizō*'s classical usage drowning or sinking is often the end in view, there are unmistakable instances where persons or objects are said to be *baptizō*-ed in a temporary and non-lethal manner. Here are two more clear examples:

1) Hippocrates (c.460–370 BC): [*Describing a patient with a respiratory ailment*] And she breathed as persons breath after having been immersed [*bebaptisthaī*],²⁸⁰ and emitted a low sound from the chest, like the so-called ventriloquists.²⁸¹

2) Heliodorus of Emesa (c.3rd century AD): Having already been violently submerged [*baptizomenōn*] [under a large wave], and in danger of sinking [*katadunai*], some of the pirates attempted to leave and re-board their own boat.²⁸²

It is noteworthy that while Dale did include these two occurrences of *baptizō* in one of his basic listings, he never actually discussed them.²⁸³ Yet in the first example the subject was obviously being compared to someone who was still able to breathe even after having experienced a *baptizō*. In the latter case the import of *baptizō* was intentionally differentiated from that of actually drowning or sinking²⁸⁴—which was specifically denoted by *katadunai*.

This same verbal distinction occurs elsewhere many times as well. A particularly concise and thus equally unambiguous example is found in a Sibylline oracle that analogized Athens' cultural and political resiliency in the face of a forced occupation, as recited by the 1st century Greek historian Plutarch (c.46–120 AD):

3) The bladder [or “balloon”] may be dipt [*baptizē*], but not [*ou*—no; not; never] be drowned [*dunai*].²⁸⁵

²⁷⁹ *Letters*, 236.5; NPNF2, 8:278.

Greek: *Περὶ δὲ τῆς ἐν τῷ βαπτίσματι ἀνανεύσεως οὐκ οἶδα τί ἐπήλθε σε ἐρωτήσαι, εἴπερ ἐδέξω τὴν κατάδυσιν τὸν τύπον τῶν τριῶν ἡμερῶν ἐκπληροῦν. Βαπτισθῆναι γὰρ τρισσάκις ἀδύνατον μὴ ἀναδυντα τοσαυτάκις;* (PG 32:884); cf. *Apostolic Constitutions*, 50.

²⁸⁰ Dale's translation of this phrase was, “and breathed as one out of a state of mersion.” (*Classic Baptism*, 255)

²⁸¹ *Epidemics*, 5.63; (T. Conant, *The Meaning and Use of Baptizein*, 14.)

Greek: *Καὶ ἀνέπνεεν ὡς ἐκ τοῦ βεβαπτίσθαι ἀναπνέουσι καὶ ἐκ τοῦ στήθεος ὑπεμόφεεν ὡσπερ αἱ ἐγαστρίμυθοι λεγόμεναι;* (C. B. Hase, *Thesaurus tes Hellenikes Glosses*, [Paris: Institutii Regii Franciae Typographus, 1835], 3:22.)

²⁸² *Aethiopics*, 5.28; (cf., T. Conant, *The Meaning and Use of Baptizein*, 18)

Greek: *ἤδη δὲ βαπτιζομένων καὶ καταδύναι μικρὸν ἀπολειπόντων, ἐπεχείρουν τὴν πρώτην ἐνιοι τῶν ληστῶν εἰς τὴν ἰδίαν αὐτῶν μετισταίβειν ἀκατον;* (Immanuel Bekker, *Heliodori Aethiopicorum*, [Leipzig: B. Teubneri, 1855], 149.)

²⁸³ In a basic listing of examples, the passage from Heliodorus is assigned the number “16” (*Classic Baptism*, 255). However, when Dale later examined “16” (Ibid, 264), he was actually talking about number “19” on his list.

²⁸⁴ Cf.: “The waves now burst over us, and we were in peril of going to the bottom, when some of the pirates made an attempt to get again on board of their own bark.”

(Rowland Smith, *The Greek Romances of Heliodorus, Longus, and Achilles Tatius*, [London: George Bell & Sons, 1889], 124.)

²⁸⁵ John Langhorne, *Plutarch's Lives of Illustrious Men*, (New York: American Book Exchange, 1880), 1:23.

Greek: *Ἀσκὸς βαπτίζη, δύναι δὲ τοι οὐ θέμις ἐστίν;* (T. Conant, *The Meaning and Use of Baptizein*, 11.)

The classists Dr. Aubrey Stewart and Dr. George Long similarly rendered this line, “the bladder may be dipped, but cannot drown.” (*Plutarch's Lives*, [London: George Bell & Sons, 1880], 1:18.)

In the following account *baptizō* was used in describing an entire military unit that had “plunged” into a marshy area, yet not all of whom were drowned.²⁸⁶

4) Polybius (c.203–120 BC): On approaching Xenoeas’ force, unfamiliar as they were with the country, they had no need of any effort on the part of the enemy, but plunging [*baptizomenoi*] and sinking [*katadunontes*] by the impetus of their own advance into the pools and swamps were all [*pantes*—all] rendered useless, while not a few [*polloi*—many] perished [*diephtharēsan*; die; perish].²⁸⁷

Here the verb *baptizomenoi* is broadly associated with the entire army, while *diephtharēsan* was used to specifically denote the fate of the portion that indeed drowned.

There are also clear cases in classical Greek where *baptizō* was employed to denote even the most cursory acts of dipping, whereas according to Dale’s rigid grammatical system only *baptō* should occur. Here are two unmistakable examples, written just shortly after the apostolic era:

5) Plutarch [*Describing a victory celebration by Alexander the Great’s army*]: All along the road the soldiers were dipping [*baptizontes*] cups, and horns, and earthenware vessels into great jars of liquor and drinking to one another’s health...²⁸⁸

6) Achilles Tatius (c. 2nd century AD): For if any of them [boatmen on the Nile] thirsts as he is sailing along, he leans over from the boat, bending face down to the river; then he puts down his hand to the water and dips [*baptisas*] it in, made hollow, and filling it with water, shoots the same into his mouth, and fails not to reach it.²⁸⁹

Collectively, all of the above citations show how plain and simple context reveals whether one’s interpretative method is in fact promoting lingual precision, or rather is more an engagement in semantic sophistry.

²⁸⁶ Though he did not subject it to scrutiny, Dale’s own translation of this passage also conveys the idea that while all were *baptizō*-ed, not all were drowned:

“But mersed by themselves and sinking into the marshes, were all useless, and many of them were destroyed.” (J. Dale, *Classic Baptism*, 258.)

²⁸⁷ *History*, 5.47.2; William Roger Paton, trans., *The Complete Histories of Polybius*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954), 3:115.

Greek: *Οί καί συνεγγίσαντες τοίς περί τόν Ξενοίταν, διά τήν άγνοιαν τών τόπων ού προσεδέοντο τών πολεμίων αύτοί δ ύπ αύτών βαπτίζόμενοι καί καταδύνοντες έν τοίς τέλμασιν, πολλοί δέ καί διεφθάρησαν αύτών;* (Fridericus Hultsch, *Polybii Historiae*, [Berlin: Apud Weidmannos, 1867], 1:468)

²⁸⁸ *Lives*, 17; *Life of Alexander*, 67; A. Stewart, G. Long, *Plutarch’s Lives*, 3:264.

Greek: *καί θηρικλείοις παρά τήν όδόν άπασαν οί στραταιώται βαπτίζοντες έκ πίθων μεγάλων καί κρατήρων άλλήλοισ προέπινον;* (P. Doehner, *Ploutarchi Vitae*, [Paris: Inst. Imper. Franciae Typ., 1862], 2:837)

Cf: “...along the whole march with cups and drinking-horns and flagons the soldiers kept dipping wine from huge casks and mixing-bowls and pledging one another...” (*Plutarch - Plutarch’s Lives - With an English Translation by Bernadotte Perrin*, (Cambridge, MA: [Harvard University Press], London: [William Heinemann Ltd.] 1919, 7.)

²⁸⁹ *Loves of Cleitophon and Leucippe*, 4.18; *Achilles Tatius; Loves of Cleitophon and Leucippe*, (London: The Athenian Society Publications, 1897), 171;

Greek: *Εί γάρ τις αύτών διμήσειε πλέων, προκίψας έκ τής νεώς τό μέν πρόσωπον εις τόν ποταμόν προβέβληκε, τήν δέ χείρα εις τό ύδωρ καθήκε, καί κοίλην βαπτίσας καί πλησάμενος ύδατος, άκοντιζει κατά τοϋ στόματος τό πόμα, καί τυγχάνει τοϋ σκοποϋ;* (Ibid).

Chapter 8 *Baptizō*/Baptism as “Burial”

Even while Dale insisted *baptizō* has a clear and obvious semantic relationship with the idea of *drowning*—and at least in some sense even *to bury*²⁹⁰—he was equally adamant that *baptism* has no rational link whatsoever to the concept of *burial*. This denial was primarily directed against taking any such view of two well-known New Testament passages.

Romans 6:3–5: Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized [ebaptisthēmen (*baptizō*)] into Christ Jesus were baptized [ebaptisthēmen] into [eis] his death [thanaton—the death of the body]? 4 We were buried therefore with [sunetaphēmen—to bury together] him by [dia—through » tou—this] baptism [baptismatos (*baptisma*)] into [eis] death [thanaton], in order that, just as Christ was raised [ēgerthē—to arouse, cause to arise] from the dead [nekrōn] by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united with [sumphytoi—born together with; united with] him in a death [thanaton] like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection [anastaseōs—a resurrection; a raising up] like his.²⁹¹

Colossians 2:11–12: In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 having been buried with [suntaphentes] him in baptism [en tō baptismati (*baptisma*)] in which you were also raised with [sunegērhēte] him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised [egeirantos] him from the dead [nekrōn].²⁹²

[Dale] [“Baptists” say]... “To immerse a living man, affords an emblem of death as well as of burial. The baptized person dies under the water, and for a moment lies buried with Christ.” ...These statements are nothing but successive shocks to the good sense and right feeling of thoughtful minds.

...If ever (apart from the remarkable interpretation of this passage) the avowed momentary dipping of a living man (or the upper part of his body after he had walked into the water) was ever considered by any people as indicative of a death, and burial, and resurrection, it might be worthwhile to indicate when, or where, or among whom, this singularity has made and revealed itself.

...This ever-echoing refrain of a “burial in baptism” as extracted from the statement, “buried with him by baptism into his death,” is an error so patent that it would be inexcusable in a Sabbath-school child, or in “a wayfaring man though a fool.” [Isaiah 35:8]

...“Burial” and “Baptism” have nothing common.²⁹³

It may not be a vital requirement for all Christians to embrace the historical comprehension of Paul’s distinctive phrasing “buried...by/in baptism”, yet I have to think most observers will agree the manner in which Dale expressed his dissent was both excessively dogmatic and caustic.

In that regard, it is both telling and troubling to note some of the learned churchmen whom Dale would apparently deem—whether wittingly or not, yet by virtue of his wholesale verdict—as having embraced a thoughtless understanding “inexcusable in a Sabbath-school child,” and thus to be comparable to “a fool.” (Baptists, proper, will be excluded from the given examples.)

²⁹⁰ See, *Classic Baptism*, 106–124.

²⁹¹ Greek: ἢ ἀγνοεῖτε ὅτι ὅσοι ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ ἐβαπτίσθημεν; συνετάφημεν οὖν αὐτῷ διὰ τοῦ βαπτίσματος εἰς τὸν θάνατον, ἵνα ὡσπερ ἠγέρθη Χριστὸς ἐκ νεκρῶν διὰ τῆς δόξης τοῦ πατρὸς, οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς περιπατήσωμεν. εἰ γὰρ σύμφυτοι γεγόναμεν τῷ ὁμοιώματι τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως ἐσόμεθα.

²⁹² Greek: ἐν ᾧ καὶ περιετμήθητε περιτομῇ ἀχειροποιήτῳ ἐν τῇ ἀπεκδύσει τοῦ σώματος τῆς σαρκός, ἐν τῇ περιτομῇ τοῦ χριστοῦ, συνταφέντες αὐτῷ ἐν τῷ βαπτίσματι, ἐν ᾧ καὶ συνηγέρθητε διὰ τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἐνεργείας τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἐγείραντος αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν.

²⁹³ J. Dale, *Christic and Patristic Baptism*, 250f.

1) **Tertullian** (c.155–240; *early Christian apologist*); “Know ye not, that so many of us as are baptized into Jesus Christ [Latin: *in Iesum tincti*], are baptized into His death? We are therefore buried with Him by baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised up from the dead, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” [Rom. 6:3–4]

...By a figure [or, “by a simulation”—*per simulacrum*] we die in our baptism, but in a reality we rise again in the flesh, even as Christ did, “that, as sin has reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness unto life eternal, through Jesus Christ our Lord.”[Rom. 5:21]²⁹⁴

2) **Ambrose** (c.338–397; *Bishop of Milan*); Thou wast asked: ‘Dost thou believe in God, the Father Almighty?’ And thou replied: ‘I believe,’ and was dipped, that is, buried... The Apostle then teaches, as you have heard in the present lesson, ‘so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death’ (Romans 6:3f).

...A death there is, therefore, but not in reality a death of the body, but only in a similitude. For when thou wast dipped thou didst undergo the similitude both of a death and burial.²⁹⁵

3) **Chrysostom** (c.349–407; *Bishop of Constantinople*); For the being baptized and immersed and emerging, is a symbol of the descent into Hades [i.e. “the grave”], and return thence. Wherefore also Paul calls baptism a burial, saying, “Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death”²⁹⁶

4) **Augustine** (354–430; *Bishop of Hippo*); Before your baptism...we spoke to you about the mystery of the font in which you were to be immersed. And we told you—I trust you have not forgotten—that baptism signifies a burial with Christ, as the apostle says, “For we are buried together with Christ by baptism into death, that as he was raised from the dead so we also may walk in newness of life.”²⁹⁷

5) **Isidore** (560–636; *Archbishop of Seville*); It is fitting for us to be once washed for Christ, as Christ has once died for us; for if there is one God and one faith, it follows that there is also one baptism, seeing there is one death of Christ, into the image of which we are immersed in the mystery of the holy font, that dying to the world we may be buried with Christ, and that we may rise up from the same waters in the likeness of his resurrection.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁴ *Resurrection of the Body*, 47; ANF 3:580.

Latin: *An ignoratis quod quicumque in Iesum tincti sumus in mortem eius tincti sumus? Consepulti ergo illi sumus per baptismum in mortem, uti quemadmodum surrexit Christus a mortuis ita et nos in novitate vitae incedamus...Per simulacrum enim morimur in baptismo, sed per veritatem resurgimus in carnem et Christus: Ut sicut regnavit in morte delictum, ita et gratia regnet per iustitiam in vitam sempiternam per Iesum Christum dominum.* (Jacques Paul Migne, ed., *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina* {hereafter PL}, [Paris: Imprimerie Catholique, 1841–64], 2:862)

²⁹⁵ *On the Sacraments*, 2.7, (J. Chrystal, *A History of the Modes of Christian Baptism*, 71f).

Latin: *Interrogatus es: Credis in Deum Patrem omnipotentem? Dixisti: Credo, et persistis, hoc est, sepultrus es...Clamat ergo Apostolus, sicut audistis in lectione praesenti: Quoniam quicumque baptizatur, in morte Jesu baptizatur...Mors ergo est, sed non in mortis corporalis veritatem, sed in similitudine; cum enim mergis, mortis suscipis et sepulturae similitudinem.* (PL 16:429f.)

²⁹⁶ *Homilies on Corinthians*, 40; Philip Schaff, Henry Wace, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: First Series* {hereafter NPNF1}, (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1898), 12:245.

Greek: *Τό γάρ βαπτίζεσθαι καί καταδύεσθαι, εἶτα ἀνανεῶσιν, τῆς εἰς ἄδου καταβάσεως ἐστὶ σύμβολον, καί τῆς ἐκέιθεν ἀνόδου. Διό καί τάμρον τό βάπτισμα ὁ Παῦλος καλεῖ λέγων Συνετάμνημεν οὖν αὐτῷ διὰ τοῦ βαπτίσματος εἰς τὸν θάνατον;* (PG 61:348)

²⁹⁷ *Sermons*, 229a; W. Harmless, *Augustine & the Catechumenate*, (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1995), 306.

Latin: *Immo autem antequam baptizaremini...locuti sumus vobis de sacramento fontis, in quo tinguendi eratis, et diximus vobis, quod credo quia obliti non estis, hoc valuisse vet valere baptismum, quod est sepultura cum Christo, Apostolo dicente: Consepulti enim sumus Christo per baptismum in mortem, ut quemadmodum ille surrexit a mortuis, sic et nos in novitate vitae ambulemus;* (G. Rauschen, B. Geyer, P. Albers, J. Zellinger, eds., *Florilegium Patristicu.*, Issues 35–39, [Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1933], 23.)

²⁹⁸ Isidore, *De Ecclesiasticis*, 2:25; ⇒

6) John of Damascus (c.675–749; *Syrian monk and theologian*): Baptism is an image of Christ’s death. In the three immersions [or, “plungings”–*kataduseōn*] baptism expresses the three days of our Lord’s burial.²⁹⁹

7) Germanus (c.644–c.733; *Archbishop of Constantinople*): We have been baptized in solidarity with the death and resurrection of Christ himself. For with the descent into the water and the ascent out of it, and by the three submersions [or “coverings”–*epiklyseōs*], we symbolize and confess the three days’ burial and the resurrection of Christ.³⁰⁰

8) Theodulphus (794–821; *Bishop of Orleans*): We are buried with Christ when, at the invocation of the Holy Trinity, we descend and are thrice immersed in the cleansing font, as if into a kind of grave...as we emerge from the font, we arise with Christ.³⁰¹

9) Lanfranc (c.1005–89; *Archbishop of Canterbury*): In baptism, just as Christ lay for three days in the tomb, there are three immersions.³⁰²

10) Thomas Aquinas (c.1225–74; *Italian Roman Catholic scholar*): Just as someone who is buried is placed under the ground, so one who is baptized is immersed under the water.³⁰³

11) John Colet (1467–1519; *reform-minded English churchman*): That threefold immersion, with the invocation of the Trinity, is a beautiful image of death. As death is a putting off of the body, so spiritual baptism is a putting off of the life of the body.

And this is signified by the plunging of the whole man beneath the waters, by which men are admonished that they are dead with Christ, and as it were buried with Christ three days. This is the meaning of triple immersion; that, all our bodily life should be put off, that we may rise again in righteousness.³⁰⁴

Latin: *Semel autem nos operiet in Christo lavari, quia Christus semel pro nobis mortus est. Si enim unus Deus, et fides una est, necessario et unum baptisma sit quia et Christi mors una pro nobis est, in cujus imaginem mergimur per mysterium sacri fontis, ut consepeliatur Christo morientes huic mundo, et ab iisdem aquis in forma resurrectionis ejus emergimur.* (PL 83:821)

²⁹⁹ John of Damascus, *Exposition on the Orthodox Faith*, 4.9;

Greek: *τύπος τοῦ θανάτου τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐστὶ τὸ βάπτισμα. Διὰ γὰρ τῶν τριῶν καταδύσεων, τὰς τρεῖς ἡμέρας τῆς τοῦ Κυρίου ταφῆς σημαίνει τὸ βάπτισμα.* (PG 94:1120)

³⁰⁰ Germanus, *Church History; A Contemplation of its Mysteries*, 1;

Greek: *Βεβαπτισμεθα δὲ κατὰ τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ τὴν ἀνάστασιν αὐτοῦ. Διὰ γὰρ τῆς ἐν τῷ ὕδατι καταδύσεώς τε καὶ ἀναδύσεως, τριπλῆς τε ἐπικλύσεως, τὴν τριήμερον ταφὴν καὶ τὴν ἀνάστασιν αὐτοῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐξεικονίζομεν καὶ ὁμολογοῦμεν.* (PG 98:385)

³⁰¹ Theodulphus, *The Ordinance of Baptism*, 13;

Latin: *Consepelimum Christo, cum sub invocatione sanctae Trinitatis sub trina mersione, in fonte lavacri, quasi in quoddam sepulcrum descendimus...de fonte quasi egredimur.* (PL 105:232)

³⁰² Lanfranc, *Commentary on Philippians* [3:13]; Latin: *In baptismo, ut enim tribus diebus jacuit Christus in sepulcro, sic in baptismo trina sit immersio.* (PL 150:315)

³⁰³ Thoams Aquinas, *Commentary on Romans*, 6:4;

Latin: *Sicut enim ille qui sepelitur ponitur sub terra, ita ille qui baptizatur immergitur sub aqua;* (John Leighton, *Divi Thomae Aquinatis in Omnes d. Pauli Epistolas Commentaria*, [Liege: H. Dessain, 1857], 1:413.)

³⁰⁴ John Colet, *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, 11.3; J. H. Lupton, *Two Treatises on the Hierarchies of Dionysius*, by John Colet D.D., (London: Bell & Daldy, 1869), 74.

Latin: *Trina vero illa immersio, invocata trinitate, pulshra est mortis figuratio...ut mors est depositio corporis, ita spiritalis baptismus depositio est vite corporalis, quam obruitio illa totius hominis in aquis significat, qua admonentur se mortuos cum christo esse et quasi sepultos triduo cum christo. Quod vultu trina illa dimersio: ut deposito christi corpore, tota nostra corporalis vite deponatur, ut resurgamus iusti;* (Daniel Lochman, ed., Daniel J. Noddes, trans., *John Colet on the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy of Dionysius*, [Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013], 164f.)

12) Martin Luther (1483–1546); The sacrament, or sign, of baptism is quickly over, as we plainly see. But the thing it signifies, viz., the spiritual baptism, the drowning of sin, lasts so long as we live, and is completed only in death. Then it is that man is completely sunk in baptism, and that thing comes to pass which baptism signifies...Wherefore St. Paul says, in Romans 6, “We are buried with Christ by baptism into death.”³⁰⁵

13) Thomas Cranmer (1489–1556; *first Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury*); Baptism and the dipping into the water doth betoken that the old Adam...ought to be drowned and killed...and that, by renewing of the Holy Ghost, we ought to rise with Christ from the death of sin, and to walk in a new life...as Saint Paul teacheth, (Romans 6).³⁰⁶

14) William Tyndale (1494–1536; *linguistic genius, martyr, and father of the modern English Bible*); [In baptism] the plunging into the water signifieth that we die, and are buried with Christ, as concerning the old life of sin which is Adam. And the pulling out again, signifieth that we rise again with Christ in a new life full of the Holy Ghost, which shall teach us and guide us and work the will of God in us, as thou seest (Romans 6).³⁰⁷

15) John Calvin; He [Jesus–Luke 12:50] compares death, as do other passages,³⁰⁸ to baptism, because the children of God, after having been immersed for a time by the death of the body, shortly afterwards rise again to life, so that death is nothing else than a passage through the midst of the waters.³⁰⁹

16) Thomas Cartwright (1535–1603; *early English Presbyterian*); Baptism is the seal of our burying with Christ; for the properties of the thing signified, is often given to the seal. ...In the Romans 6 [:4] it is said that we are dead, buried, and raised up in baptism.

...And that was in times past notably set forth by the custom in the primitive church, their descending into the water, which signifieth death to sin, and remaining in the water, their burying to sin, and their rising out of the water, rising to righteousness.³¹⁰

17) The Geneva Bible (*English translation with commentary created by various Puritan scholars—largely Presbyterian*); “Buried with him in baptism”... [also] see Romans 6:4... One purpose of

³⁰⁵ *A Treatise on Baptism*; Henry Eyster Jacobs, Adolph Spaeth, eds., *Works of Martin Luther with Introductions and Notes*, (Philadelphia: Holman Company, 1915), 1:57f.

German: *Das Sacrament oder zeichen der Tauff ist bald geschehen, wie wir vor augen sehen, aber die bedeutung der geystlichen Tauff, die erseuffung der sund, werdt die weil wir leben, und wirdt aller erst ym todt volnbracht, da wirdt der mensch recht in die Tauff gesenckt und geschicht was die Tauff bedeut...Also sagt S. Paul Ro. VI. wir sindt mit Christo begraben, durch die Tauff zum tod*; (Albert Leitzmann, Otto Clemen, *Luther's Werke in Auswahl*; [Bonn: A. Marcus & E. Weber, 1912], 1:185)

³⁰⁶ Thomas Cranmer, *A Short Instruction into Christian Religion, being a Catechism set forth by Archbishop Cranmer, Together with the same in Latin*, (Oxford: University Press, 1829, pt.1, 190).

Latin: *Baptismus enim et illa immersion significat, veterem Adam...debere mortificar...et per renovationem Spiritus Sancti debere nos emergere, nove quadam vita conresuscitari Christo, it novus homo, in justica et veritatem coram Deo, in aeternum vivat, sicut Paulus ad Roma. Vi. Dicit.* (Ibid, pt.2, 162.)

³⁰⁷ *Obedience of a Christian Man*; Henry Walter, *Doctrinal Treatises and Introductions to Different Portions of the Holy Scriptures*, by William Tyndale, *Martyr, 1536*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1848), 253.

³⁰⁸ Some English translations parenthetically insert “Romans 6:4” at this point. While this verse, along with Col. 2:12, is undoubtedly among those in view, Calvin does not specify any references in the original Latin.

³⁰⁹ *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke* [on Luke 12:50], William Pringle, trans., (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1847), 3:169.

Latin: *Mortem (sicut alibi) baptismo comparat, quia carnis interitu submersi ad tempus filii Dei in vitam paulo post resurgent, ut mors nihil aliud sit quam per medias aquas transitus*; (August Tholuck, *Ioannis Calvini in Novum Testamentum Commentarii*, [Berlin: Gustavum Eichler, 1833], 2:290.)

³¹⁰ *Commentary upon the Epistle of St. Paul to the Colossians* [sermon 17]; bound with: Henry Airay, *Lectures upon the whole Epistle of St. Paul to the Philippians*, (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1864), pt. 2, 36f.

baptism is to symbolize the death and burial of the old man, and that by the mighty power of God alone, whose power we lay hold on by faith, in the death and resurrection of Christ.

... [Yet] all the force of the matter comes not from the very deed done, that is to say, it is not the dipping of us into the water by a minister that makes us to be buried with Christ, as the papists say, that even by the very act's sake we become very Christians, but it comes from the power of Christ, for the apostle adds the resurrection of Christ, and faith.³¹¹

18) The Dutch Annotations (*Bible commentary commissioned by the Synod of Dort*³¹²); The apostle seems here to allude to the manner of baptizing, much used in those warm Eastern countries, where men were wholly dipped into the water, and remained a little while under the water, and afterwards rose up out of the water: to show that their dipping into and remaining in the water is a representation of Christ's death and burial; and the rising up out of the water, of His resurrection.³¹³

19) James Ussher (1581–1656; *Irish episcopal Puritan*); What doth the being under the water, and the freeing from it again represent? Our dying unto sin by the force of Christ's death, and living again unto righteousness through his resurrection... (Rom. 6:3–6, Col. 2:11–12).³¹⁴

20) Thomas Goodwin (1600–80; *Congregationalist Puritan - Westminster divine*); Now baptism is the sacrament of regeneration, which resembles, in the dipping under water and coming forth again, our burial with Christ in his grave, and our rising again by faith and a new life: Col. 2:12.³¹⁵

21) Thomas Manton (1620–77; *English Presbyterian*); Baptism signifieth the death and burial of Christ; for immersion under the water is a kind of figure of death and burial, as our apostle explaineth it, [Romans 6] verse 4.³¹⁶

22) Francis Turretin (1623–87; *Swiss Reformed*); In baptism...when persons are immersed in water, they are overwhelmed, and, in a manner, “buried together with Christ;” and, again, when they emerge, seem to be raised out of the grave, and are said to rise again with Christ; Romans 6:4, 5...³¹⁷

23) Peter van Mastricht (1630–1706; *Dutch Reformed*); As in the baptismal washing, especially when performed by immersion, we are plunged in water, abide in it a little while, and then emerge; so

³¹¹ Annotation on Col. 2:12; *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1599 Edition*, (Buena Park: The Geneva Publishing Co., 1991), in loc. cit.

³¹² These were study notes attached to a Dutch translation of the Bible, known as the *Staten Bijbel* (“State Bible”). The project was commissioned by the Synod of Dort in 1619, and completed in 1637. The translators, who also wrote the accompanying annotations, represented some of the leading Dutch Reformed scholarship of that era, including Gerson Bucerus (1565–1631), Jacob Rolandus (1563–1632), Johannes Bogermann (1576–1637), Antonius Walaeus (1573–1639), Willem Baudaert (1565–1640), and Festus Hommius (1576–1642).

³¹³ Annotation on Romans 6:3; *The Dutch Annotations upon the whole Bible*.

Dutch: *De Apostel schijnt hier te sien op de wijze van doopen in die warme Oostersche landen veel gebruycklick, daer de menschen geheel in't water ingedoopt wierden, ende een weynigh tijds onder het water bleven, ende daer nae uyt het water opresen: ende aen te wijzen dat dese in-doopnige ende blijven in't water een af-beeldinge is van Christi doot ende begrafenisse, ende het op-rijzen uyt het water, van sijne verrijzenisse.*

(*Biblia, dat is: De Gantsche H. Schrifture*, vol. 2, in loc. cit.)

³¹⁴ *The Principles of Christian Religion*, (Charles Erlington, *The Whole Works of the Most Rev. James Ussher*, [Dublin: Hodges & Smith, 1864], 11:194.)

³¹⁵ John C. Miller, *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1863), 6:457.

³¹⁶ Thomas Manton, *The Complete Works of Thomas Manton, D.D.*, (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1873), 11:167.

³¹⁷ Francis Turretin, *Decas Disputationum; De Baptismo Nubis et Maris, ex 1. Cor. x, 1, 2* [7.24]; cited in: Richard Ingham, *A Hand-book on Christian Baptism*, (London: Simpkin, Marshall, & Co., 1865), 242.

Latin: *Nam ut in baptismo...quum immergerentur aquis obruti et quasi sepulti, et Christo ipsi quodammodo consepulti, rursusque quum émergèrent, e sepulchro excitari videbantur, et cum Christo resurgere dicebantur, Rom. vi. 4, 5, Col. ii. 12; (Francisci Turretini Opera, [Edinburgh: John D. Lowe, 1848], 4:336f.)*

Christ was immersed for us in death, continued under its dominion the space of three days, and then emerged by his resurrection. ...As in the baptismal washing, especially when performed by immersion, we are planted in water; so we are planted both in the blood and body of Christ, when we are baptized into his mystical body (1 Cor. 12:13): and as we, in a manner, put on water, so also do we put on Christ, (Gal. 3:2[7].)

Again: as Christ, by that baptism of his own blood (Matt. 20:22), died, was buried, and rose again; so we are planted in him, spiritually die with him to sin, are buried and rise again, (Rom. 6:3–6; Col. 2:11–13.). ...Finally: as in baptism we emerge out of a sepulcher of water, and pass, as it were, into a new life; so also being delivered from every kind of death, we shall be saved to eternal life, (Mark 16:16).³¹⁸

24) Hermann Witsius (1636–1708; *Dutch Reformed*); The immersion into the water represents the death of the old man. ...The continuing under the water, represents the burying of the body of sin, whereby all hopes of a revival are cut off. ...The emersion out of the water is a symbol of the revival of the new man, after our sins are now sunk, to a spiritual life by the resurrection of Christ. And this also the apostle declares, Rom. 6:3, 4, 5, 6, and Col. 2:11, 12.³¹⁹

25) John Milton (1608–74; *English Congregationalist*); Under the gospel, the first of the sacraments commonly so called is baptism, wherein the bodies of believers who engage themselves to pureness of life are immersed in running water, to signify their regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and their union with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection.³²⁰

26) John Wesley (1703–91; *Anglican; founder of Arminian Methodism*); ‘We are buried with him’—alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion. That as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory—Glorious power of the Father, so we also, by the same power, should rise again; and as he lives a new life in heaven, so we should walk in newness of life. This, says the apostle, our very baptism represents to us.³²¹

27) George Whitefield (1714–70; *Anglican; Calvinist Methodist*); It is certain that in the words of our text [Romans 6:3–4] there is an allusion to the manner of baptism, which was by immersion.³²²

³¹⁸ *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*, 1.7.4; cited in, A. Booth, *Paedobaptism Examined*, 1:139;

Latin: *Quemadmodum enim ablutione, imprimis immersione, aquae immergimur, in ea paululum commoramur & tandem emergimus; ita Christus pro nobis, morti immersus, sub ejus dominio per triduum commoratus est, & tandem resurrectione emerit... Quemadmodum ablutione, praeterim immersione, aquae inserimur: ita & sanguini & corpori Christi inserimur, dum in corpus ejus mysticum baptizamur 1 Cor. xii.13. & sicut aquam quasi induimus, ita & Christum Gal. iii. 26. Rursus, quemadmodum Christus, Baptismo sanguinis sui Matth. xx.22. mortuus suit, sepultus item, & resurrexit; ita & nos ei inserti, spiritualiter cum eo morimur peccato, sepelimur & resurgimus Rom. vi.3. 4. 5. 6. Col. ii.11. 12. 13... Denique, sicut in Baptismo emergimus ex, sepulchro aquae, & transimus in novam quasi vitam; ita etiam liberati a quavis morte, servabimur ad vitam eternam Marc. xvi. 16;*

(Petro van Mastricht, *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*, [Utrecht: Apud W. van de Water, 1724], 1:919.)

³¹⁹ H. Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants between God and Man*, 2:426.

Latin: *Immersio enim in aquam mortem veteris hominis adumbrat...Mora sub aquis sepulterum corporis peccatorum repraesentat, qua omnis reviviscentiae spes ei praescinditur...Emersio ex aqua, novi hominis, peccatis jam demersis, ad spiritualem vitam, per Christo resurrectionem, suscitati symbolum est. Atque haec quoque Apostolos docet, Rom. vi. 3, 4, 5, 6 & Col. ii. 11, 12; (H. Witsii, *De Eaconomia Feaderum*, 726.)*

³²⁰ *A Treatise on Christian Doctrine*, 1.28; (*The Prose Works of John Milton*, [London: Henry Bohn, 1853], 4:404)

Latin: *Baptismus est primum sub evangelio sacramentum vulgo dictum, quo credentium et puritatem vitae spondentium corpora in profluentem aquam immerguntur, as significandam nostrum per Spiritum Sanctum regenerationem, nostrum etiam cum Christo coalitionem per moreten, sepulturam, et resurrectionem ejus.*

(Joannis Miltoni, *De Doctrina Christiana*, [Brunsvigae: F. Vieweg, 1827], 320)

³²¹ John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*, (New York: Lane & Scott, 1850), 376.

³²² George Whitefield, *Eighteen Sermons*; (New York: John Tiebout, 1809), 211.

28) Heinrich Meyer (1800–73; *German Lutheran, and highly-regarded New Testament exegete*³²³):

The recipient—thus has Paul figuratively represented the process [in Rom. 6:4]—is conscious,

a) in the baptism *generally*: now am I entering into fellowship with the *death* of Christ...

b) in *the immersion in particular*: now am I becoming *buried* with Christ;

c) and then, in the emergence: now I *rise* to the new life with Christ. (cf. on Col. 2:12.)³²⁴

29) James Bannerman (1807–68; *Scottish Presbyterian*): There are two things which seem plainly enough to be included in this remarkable statement [Rom. 6:3–5].

In the first place, the immersion in water of the persons of those who are baptized is set forth as their burial with Christ in His grave because of sin; and their being raised again out of the water is their resurrection with Christ in His rising again from the dead because of their justification.

...And in the second place, their burial in water, when dying with Christ, was the washing away of the corruptness of the old man beneath the water. ...Their immersion beneath the water, and their emerging again, were the putting off corruption of nature and rising again into holiness.³²⁵

30) Charles Ellicott (1819–1905; *Anglican*): There seems no reason to doubt that both here [Col. 2:12] and Rom. 6:4 there is an allusion to the *katadusis* [plunging] and *anadusis* [rising up] in baptism.³²⁶

³²³ Meyer earned a Th.D. from the University of Jena, and served in several Lutheran pastorates. He later taught New Testament at the University of Giessen, and received an honorary Ph.D. from the University of Göttingen. Many of Meyer's peers considered him among the best New Testament exegetes of their era.

1) Dr. William L. Kingsley (1796–1882; Congregationalist), of Yale Divinity School, wrote: "Meyer is to be regarded as the leading commentator of the world. ...[He possessed] a knowledge of the Greek language unsurpassed by any of his contemporaries." (*The New Englander and Yale Review*, [1873], 32:738f.)

2) Dr. Talbot W. Chambers (1819–96; American Dutch-Reformed) heartily christened Meyer the "...prince of exegetes." (Samuel Spear, *Meditations on the Bible Heaven*; [New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1886], 408.)

3) The famed Princeton theologian Dr. Charles Hodge (1797–1878; Presbyterian) extolled Meyer as, "...perhaps the ablest commentator on the New Testament of modern times." (C. Hodge, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians*, [New York: Robert Carter & Bros., 1860], 20.)

4) One of Hodge's successors, Dr. Benjamin B. Warfield (1851–1921; Presbyterian), admirably declared: "For ourselves, we should be willing to hang the credit of this century's work in exegesis on the single commentary of Meyer on the New Testament." (*The Homiletic Review*, [New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1900], 39:201.)

5) Charles Spurgeon (1834–92; English Baptist) wrote: "A very learned Commentary...Meyer must be placed in the first class of scholars..." (*Commenting and Commentaries*, [New York: Sheldon & Co., 1876], 207.)

6) Abp. Charles Ellicott (see #30 above) proclaimed Meyer's work, "...accurate, perspicuous, and learned." (Charles J. Ellicott, *A Critical and Grammatical Commentary on Ephesians*, [Boston: Draper & Halliday, 1867], vi.)

7) Dr. Philip Schaff (1819–93; Presbyterian) unequivocally declared: "Meyer is the ablest grammatical exegete of the age." (*History of the Christian Church*, [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1888], 1:332.)

8) The editorial board of *The Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review* opined: "No exegetical work is on the whole more valuable or stands in higher public esteem. As a critic Meyer is candid and cautious; exact to minuteness in philology; a master of the grammatical and historical method of interpretation." (Lyman Atwater, Henry Smith, eds., [New York: J. M. Sherwood, 1874], 3:185.)

While some of the volumes in the overall series that came to bear his name were written by other scholars (Thes. through Rev.), Meyer authored all of the citations in this review (Gospels, Acts, Romans, Corinthians). (See, Donald McKim, ed., *Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters*, [Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998], 340f.)

³²⁴ Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Hand-book to the Epistle to the Romans*, (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1888), 231; emphasis Meyer's.

German: ...*Successiv in's Bewusstsein tritt, indem dieser a) bei der Taufe überhaupt sich bewusst ist: jetzt trete ich in Gemeinschaft mit dem Tode Christi... b) bei dem Untergetauchtwerden insbesondere: jetzt werde ich begraben mit Christo, und dann c) beim Auftauchen: jetzt erstehe ich zum neuen Leben mit Christo. Vrgl. z. Kol. 2, 12;*

(Dr. Heinr. Aug. Wilh. Meyer, *Kritisch Exegetisches Handbuch über den Brief des Paulus an die Römer*, [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1859], 212.)

³²⁵ James Bannerman, *The Church of Christ*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1868), 2:47f.

³²⁶ Charles J. Ellicott, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Philippians, the Colossians, and Philemon; With a Critical and Grammatical Commentary*, (London: Longman, Green & Roberts, 1865), 160.

31) John Cunningham (1819–93; *Scottish Presbyterian*); Baptism means “immersion” and it was immersion. The Hebrews immersed their proselytes; the Essenes took their daily baths; John plunged his penitents into the Jordan; Peter dipped his crowd of converts into one of the great pools which were to be found in Jerusalem.

Unless it had been so, Paul’s analogical argument about our being “buried” with Christ in baptism would have had no meaning. Nothing could have been simpler than baptism in its first form.³²⁷

32) Herman Bavinck (1854–1921; *Dutch Reformed*); In the first period of the life of the church, the rite of baptism consisted in immersing candidates for baptism in water and after a moment lifting them out again. The Greek word *baptizein* already points in that direction, for it literally means “to dip” or “dip into”. ...Finally, sacramental phraseology [in the New Testament] is completely based on this mode of administering baptism (Rom. 6:[3], 4; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12).³²⁸

References like these could be multiplied many times over.³²⁹ Clearly, *burial by/in baptism* is scarcely, as Dale so brashly pronounced, an inexcusably foolish comprehension, nor a recent partisan belief.³³⁰ The broad, representative sampling above also amply supplies the historical

³²⁷ John Cunningham, *The Growth of the Church*, (London: MacMillan & Co., 1886), 173.

³²⁸ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* [9.52.5], (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 4:516.

Dutch: *In den eersten tijd bestond de handeling van het doopen daarin, dat de doopeling in het water ondergedompeld en na een oogenblik daaruit weer opgetrokken werd. Het grieksche woord βαπτίζω wijst daar reeds op, want het beteekent letterlijk doopen, indooopen...En eindelijk is de phraseologia sacramentalis geheel en al op deze wijze van doopsbediening gebouwd, Rom. 6:3, 4, Gal. 3:27, Col. 2:12.*; (Herman Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, [Kampen: J. H. Bos, 1901], 4:272)

³²⁹ For some additional examples by authors cited in this survey, see texts for notes 14, 76, 79, 129, 231, 233, 274, 278, 279, 332, 333, 334, 335, 339, 340, 341, 342, 574, 635, 640, 641, 642, and 658.

³³⁰ Some modern non-immersionists insist that perceiving the symbolism of death, burial and resurrection in water baptism only occurred somewhat “late” in church history. (E.g., Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Shaping of the Reformed Baptismal Rite in the Sixteenth Century*, [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1992], 268f; Andre Benoit, *La Baptême Chrétien au Second Siècle*, [Paris: Universitaires de France, 1953], 125f; W. MacKay, *Immersion Proved to be Not a Scriptural Mode of Baptism*, p.50; Francis N. Lee, *Sprinkling is Scriptural*, [self-published, 198?], p.47)

However, the earliest extant patristic writings to extensively treat the subject of baptism are those of the North African lawyer and apologist Tertullian (c.155–c.240 AD), and as shown above he indeed made that connection (see text for note 294). Elsewhere Tertullian clearly indicated that the mode of baptism in his day was immersion (*in aqua mergimur*—see text for note 655).

The polemical character of Tertullian’s writing in this instance (c.208 AD) also indicates that he was appealing to something that, at least to his considerable understanding and knowledge, was an established view in the church. As such, this figurative association must have been commonplace well before the time Tertullian was compelled to invoke it, at least in the Western regions of Christianity that he was clearly familiar with.

There are of course patristic statements on baptism preceding Tertullian’s, but they are comparatively brief. We may nonetheless recall this compatible remark from the *Shepherd of Hermas*, among the oldest surviving Christian writings apart from the New Testament (c.140 AD): “...They [receiving baptism] go down into the water dead, and come up alive [Greek: τὸ ὕδωρ...νεκροὶ κατέβησαν, ζώντες δὲ ἀνέβησαν].” (See note 227.)

A correspondent claim advanced by many of these same non-immersionists is that the church’s eventual connection between immersion and the concept of a burial was capriciously adopted from various pagan mystery religions. However, this assertion is equally ill-founded. For one thing it discounts a good number of early Christians who insisted it was substantially the other way around—that is, according to patristic writers it was pagans and Gnostic heretics who were often guilty of expropriating biblical practices and concepts from the church.

For example, in another apologetical treatise (written c.200 AD) Tertullian pointedly accused non-Christians of “in the mystic rites of their idols mimicking [or ‘counterfeiting’] even the essential [or ‘divine’] aspects of the sacraments [*qui ipsas quoque res sacramentorum divinarum, idolorum mysteriis simulatur*].” Two examples Tertullian went on to give was that some pagans also “dip [*tingit*]” their followers, and “introduce an image of a resurrection [*et imaginem resurrectionis inducit*].” (*Prescription of Heretics*, 40; cf. ANF 3:262; Latin: PL 2:54f).

Tertullian also made some broadly correlative remarks in *De Anima* (*The Soul*—c.198 AD), 50 (ANF 3:228; PL 2:734f). (Also see: Justin Martyr, *First Apology* [c.153 AD], 61, 62, 66, [ANF 1:183f; PG 6:419f]; Clement ⇒

witness at least backhandedly demanded in Dale's remark that "it might be worthwhile to indicate when, or where, or among whom, this singularity has made and revealed itself." The preceding exercise also invites further consideration of the use and function of symbolism itself, and how such relates to the figurative language the Bible uses in connection with baptism.

First, by its very nature symbolic language is somewhat notional. While the intended meaning behind a given figure is obviously known to the one that originates it (in this case the Apostle Paul as inspired by the Holy Spirit), in an important respect its interpretation ultimately rests with the beholder. For instance, upon being shown or having described to them an emblematic dove, a Christian may instinctively perceive it as representative of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, a secular humanist might most readily associate it with so-styled "world peace." Still others might simply perceive the depiction as that of a certain species of bird, the meaning of which is uncertain, unimportant, or even indeterminable.

As such, a crucial concern in using figurative language is realizing how it is likely to be perceived by those intended to appreciate it. Correspondingly, for their readers to properly grasp a given symbolism an author must ensure two things: 1) That it is used in a familiar context, and 2) that there is a credible and readily discernible resemblance between the figure and what it is intended to portray.³³¹ Then, presuming the author's basic competency to communicate well,

of Alexandria, *Stromata* [*Miscelanea*]; c.198 AD], 5.8, 7.4 [ANF 2:454f; PG 9:71f]; Gregory Nazianzen, *On the Holy Spirit* [c.375 AD], 3 [NPNF2 7:318f; PG 36:133f].)

Notably, ever since the 17th century rationalist writers have charged the Apostle Paul himself with having co-opted the analogy of a ritualistic water baptism by immersion as representing a burial and resurrection from pagan mystery religions. However, that hypothesis has been widely discredited as well. (See: Sorin Sabou, *Between Horror and Hope: Paul's Metaphorical Language of Death in Romans 6:1-11*, [Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2007 reprint]; Günter Wagner, *Pauline Baptism and the Pagan Mysteries*, [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1967]; Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975], 22f; Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997], 362f.)

³³¹ Yet another common assertion among modern non-immersionists has been that to see a figurative burial in the act of immersion is fallacious on the following account:

"In the Near East, during Bible times, the customary manner of burial was by entombment in rock caves. ...Ignorance of words...and oriental customs common to people of the Bible lands during the period which the Scriptures were written, is the breeding ground of much heresy. The Western mind quite naturally thinks of a 'burial' in terms of lowering the body into the earth. ...This concept, however, was totally foreign to Paul's thinking." (Duane Spencer, *Holy Baptism*, Tyler: Geneva Ministries, 1984], 149f.; cf. James W. Dale, "Baptism"; Philip Schaff, ed., *A Religious Encyclopedia*, [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1883], 1:197.)

Even at the most rudimentary level, however, it seems improbable that the multiple millions of people who died in the Middle East throughout biblical history were all buried in hillside caves or sepulchers—there simply would not be enough places practically available and/or geologically suited for doing so. On that account Dr. Jodi Magness, a well-known archeologist and Professor of Early Judaism at the University of North Carolina, remarked:

"Because rock-cut tombs had to be cut by hand out of bedrock, only the upper classes (wealthy Jews like Joseph [of Arimathea—Matt. 27:57] could afford them. The poorer classes of Jewish society—the majority of the population—buried their dead in simple, individual trench graves dug into the ground, similar to the way we bury our dead today." (*Has the Tomb of Jesus Been Discovered?*, [Society of Biblical Literature Forum, March, 2007], 4.)

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia similarly states, "For the majority of Israelites, without the means to afford even a simple grave marker, burial continued to consist simply of placing the corpse in a shallow depression. After the body had been let down into the ground, the bier, of course, was set aside; and the earth was replaced, followed by a heap of stones to preserve the dead from depredations of beasts or thieves." (G. Bromiley, ed., [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1979], 1:557).

The fact that ancient Israelite graves were typically dug in the ground in opens areas is also directly evinced in early Jewish sources (cf. 2 Kings 23:6). In quoting from the sizable section of the Mishnah* that deals with corpses and graves (Ohalot 16–18), Maimonides** related the following rules (see notes *346, **375):

"[16.3]—If he digs and finds a corpse lying in the usual manner in which the dead are buried, he may remove it and the soil with which it has mingled...and the whole field becomes clean... [17.3]—If a man plows up a grave in a ⇒

simply observing how broadly and durably a figurative concept has been perceived among its target audience must be given considerable weight in determining its true intentionality.

In our case, if water baptism by immersion does not appreciably relate to or meaningfully convey the joint concept of a death, burial and resurrection, then surely such a comprehension would not widely resonate. Rather, the supposed allusion would exist only among a few overly imaginative or perhaps prejudiced individuals. Yet as the historical examples above clearly attest, this distinct, figurative correlation has proven broadly intuitive across a vast timespan, and universally transcended all cultural and ecclesial boundaries. Thus, reckoning such a didactic relationship to be intentional is not only credible, but the only reasonable conclusion.

Alternatively, by the same measure, one must suppose the historical consensus is in effect a mass delusion from which only a relatively few Christians, primarily, it must be said, from a particular segment of the church, have only somewhat recently begun to extricate themselves.

All this is not to say Paul's burial statements in Romans 6 and Colossians 2 are, strictly speaking, given as instructions on how water baptism is to be performed. Rather, their semantic construct suggests he is making a theological simile based on the known manner of baptism. Yet, ultimately, are not these kinds of apostolic correlations the very (and only) means by which the church is rightly informed of the spiritual concepts God intends to be symbolized, and thus sensibly portrayed in the Christian ordinances? Many theologians have thought so, such as Friedrich Tholuck (1799–1877; Prussian Unionist—a joint Lutheran and Reformed church):

For the explanation of this figurative description of the baptismal rite, it is necessary to call attention to the well-known circumstance that in the early days of the church persons, when baptized, were first plunged below, and then raised above, the water, to which practice, according to the direction of the apostle, the early Christians gave a symbolical import.³³²

field which is not his, he does not make it a grave area, since no one can render forbidden what is not his... [17.4]—If a field that is a grave area stands on high ground and below it is a field that is clean, and rain washes soil down from the grave area into the clean field...it remains clean...[etc.]” (*Mishnah Torah, Tum'at Met*, 9:3; 10.5, 7; Herbert Danby, *The Code of Maimonides—Book Ten*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), 37ff.)

Hebrew: ... שדה שנהרגו בו הרגים מלקט כל העצמות שבה והרי היא טהורה וכן המפנה קברו מתוך שדהו מלקט כל העצמות ...
... החורש את הקבר בשדה שאינה שלו אינו עושה בית הפרס שאין אדם אוסר ...
שדה בית פרס למעלה ושדה טהורה למטה ושטפו גשמים מעפר בית הפרס ...

As seen above, the Mishnah specifies that in cases where enough earthen graves were located within a certain proximity to each other, that field was indeed to be deemed a “graveyard” [Hebrew: שְׂכִינַת קְבָרוֹת—literally, “an area of graves”]. (Ohalot 16:3; Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah*, [Oxford: University Press, 1933], 673.)

With respect to Spencer's insistence that the Apostle Paul would never have thought of burial in such “Western” terms, one must of course consider this illustrative passage penned by the apostle:

“**And what you put in the ground [speireis—to sow; scatter; plant] is not the plant that will grow, but only a bare seed of wheat or whatever you are planting... It is the same way with the resurrection of the dead. Our earthly bodies are planted in the ground when we die, but they will be raised to live forever.**” (1 Cor. 15:37, 42; NLT);

Greek: *καὶ ὃ σπείρεις, οὐ τὸ σῶμα τὸ γενησόμενον σπείρεις, ἀλλὰ γυμνὸν κόκκον εἰ τύχοι σίτου ἢ τινος τῶν λοιπῶν...οὕτως καὶ ἡ ἀνάστασις τῶν νεκρῶν. Σπείρεται ἐν φθορᾷ, ἐγείρεται ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ.*

In his acclaimed commentary on Romans, Thomas Schriener (b.1954; Baptist) uncritically accepts the mistaken notion that 1st century Jewish burials were normally non-earthen, yet remarks:

“Burial was typically not under the earth but in caves or tombs, and so some say baptism was not an obvious symbol for death. ...[Yet] the closest antecedent to *hō* [(“in) which”] is *baptismō*, and thus a reference to dying and rising with Christ in baptism is probably intended. Paul likely had the analogy of death, burial, and resurrection, and immersion, submersion, and emersion in mind in Romans 6 as well. ...It is not a cogent objection to say that burial was in caves, because baptism is a metaphor for death, signifying the chaos and destruction of death.”

(*Romans {Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament}*, [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998], 308.)

³³² Friedrich August Gottreu Tholuck, *Exposition of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, (Philadelphia: Sorin & Ball, 1844), 178. ⇒

Here are three more in-depth commentaries that examine this understanding of purpose by churchmen from various theological traditions, beginning with the noted English Baptist scholar George Beasley-Murray (1916–2000):

...It is surely reasonable to believe that the reason for Paul's stating that the baptized is 'buried' as dead, rather than that he 'died' (as in verse 6), is the nature of baptism as immersion. The symbolism of immersion as representing burial is striking, and if baptism is at all to be compared with prophetic symbolism, the parallelism of act and event symbolized is not unimportant.

Admittedly such a statement as that of C. H. Dodd, 'Immersion is a sort of burial...emergence a sort or resurrection,' can be made only because the *kerygma* [κήρυγμα—proclamation (of the gospel)]; cf. Luke 4:18, Rom. 10:14] gives this significance to baptism; its whole meaning is derived from Christ and his redemption—it is the *kerygma* in 'action,' and if the action suitably bodies forth the content of the *kerygma*, so much the clearer is its speech.

But we repeat, the 'with Him' of baptism is due to the gospel, not to the mimesis [visual portrayal]. It is 'to *His* death': Christ and His dying, Christ and His rising give the rite all its meaning.³³³

Here is the statement of Charles Dodd (1884–1973; Congregationalist) referenced above by Beasley-Murray:

The position was simple: the Church was a society with its own forms of organized life, and it had always recognized faith by administering baptism, and thereby conferring membership of the Body. Hence Paul could appeal directly to baptism as a fact with a generally recognized significance, and draw from it conclusions what entrance into the people of God involved.

He is not, in the present passage, expounding the nature of a sacrament as such, but exploiting the accepted significance of the sacrament for a pedagogical [instructional] purpose—to bring home to the imagination a truth deeply rooted in experience, but difficult to put into purely intellectual terms. 'Surely you know,' he says, 'that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death!'

The very symbolism of the sacrament emphasizes that fact. Immersion is a sort of burial; emergence from the water is a sort of resurrection. Paul does not indeed draw out the suggestion of the symbolism, but it lies near the surface. The whole sacrament is an act by which the believer enters into all that Christ did as his Representative, in that He 'was delivered up for our trespasses and raised that we might be justified'. All this Paul could have said without any appeal to baptism at all, for it follows directly from his teaching about Christ as the second Adam; but the reference to baptism is of great value pedagogically.³³⁴

A commentary jointly produced by two Anglican biblical scholars at the University of Oxford, William Sanday (1843–1920) and Arthur Headlam (1862–1947), is most expressive and thought-provoking:

How did St. Paul arrive at this doctrine of the Mystical Union? Doubtless by the guiding of the Holy Spirit. Yet that guiding, as it usually does, operated through natural and human channels.

German: *Zum Verständniss der sinnbildlichen Behandlung der Taufe ist übrigens auf den bekannten Umstand aufmerksam zu machen, dass die Täuflinge der ersten Kirche unter: und wieder aus: getaucht wurden, welchem Gebrauche auch die ersten Christen nach Apostels symbolische Beziehung geben.* (Friedrich August Gottfreu Tholuck, *Auslegung des Briefes Pauli an die Römer*, [Berlin: Ferdinand Dümmler, 1824], 185.)

³³³ George Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972), 130ff.

³³⁴ Charles Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* {*Moffatt New Testament Commentary Series*}, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1938), 86f.

...We can understand that in St. Paul's case with an object for his affections so exalted as Christ, and with influences from above meeting so powerfully the upward motions of his own spirit, the process of identification had a more than common strength and completeness. It was accomplished in that sphere of spiritual emotion for which the Apostle possessed such remarkable gifts—gifts which singled him out as the recipient of special Divine communications.

...Here then came into help the peculiar symbolism of baptism. ...Paul soon found in it analogies from that same process. That plunge beneath the running waters was like a death; the moment's pause while they swept on overhead was like a burial; the standing erect once more in air and sunlight was a species of resurrection. Nor did the likeness reside only in the outward rite, it extended to its inner significance.

...And in this spiritual death and resurrection the great moving factor was that one fundamental principle of union with Christ, identification of will with His. It was this which enabled the Christian to make his parting with the past and embracing of new obligations real.

...The vocabulary and working out of the thought in St. Paul are his, but the fundamental conception has close parallels in the writings of St. John and St. Peter, the New Birth through water and Spirit (John 3:5), the being begotten again of incorruptible seed (1 Pet. 1:23), the comparison of baptism to the ark of Noah (1 Pet. 3:20, 21)...and there is a certain partial coincidence even in the *apekyēsen* [ἀπεκύησεν—brought (us) forth] of St. James (1:18).³³⁵

A remark by the church historian Philip Schaff (1819–93; Presbyterian) conveys the near unanimity that existed on this matter well into the 19th century.³³⁶

All commentators of note (except Stuart and Hodge³³⁷) expressly admit, or take it for granted, that in this verse [Rom. 6:4] the ancient prevailing mode of baptism by immersion and emersion is implied, as giving additional force to the idea of the going down of the old and the rising up of the new man.³³⁸

³³⁵ William Sanday, Arthur Headlam, *The Epistle to the Romans*, (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1905), 162f.

³³⁶ I have quoted sources that demonstrate a range of pre-contemporary writers, yet many modern commentators also advocate or at least grant the feasibility that baptism by immersion underlies the burial phraseology in Romans 6:4 and Colossians 2:12. (e.g.; C. E. B. Cranfield. *The Epistle to the Romans*, {*International Critical Commentary*}, [London: T&T Clark, 1975], 1:302; Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, *Romans* {*Anchor Bible Commentary*}, [New York, Doubleday, 1993]; 434;], 314; Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* {*New International Commentary*}, 361; David H. James Dunn, *Romans 1–8* {*World Biblical Commentary*}, [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015; David Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, [Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1996], 355.)

The historical comprehension is also deemed “intuitive” in the *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*. (Leland Ryken, James Wilhoit, Tremper Longman III, eds., [Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998], 73, 930f.)

³³⁷ Schaff is referring here to Moses Stuart and Charles Hodge. (See: Moses Stuart, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, [Andover: Warren F. Draper, 1854], 272f.; Charles Hodge, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, [Philadelphia: Grigg & Elliot, 1835] 243f.)

As such, Schaff's evaluation does seem focused on writers from his own era, as there is a scattering of notable earlier theologians who dissented or expressed uncertainty about the burial symbolism.

Perhaps most significant among these dissenters were two eminent Puritan scholars, John Owen (1616–83; Congregationalist) and Matthew Henry (1662–1714; Presbyterian).

In historical context, Owen's opposition was part of a sharp and somewhat exasperated response to the provocations of a baptistic-Presbyterian controversialist named John Tombes (1603–76). (*Of Infant Baptism, and Dipping*; T. Russel, ed., *The Works of John Owen. D. D.*; [London: Richard Baynes, 1826], 21:599f.)

Henry's stance was more agnostic, in admitting the plausibility of the symbolism while objecting to it being made essential. (*A Treatise on Baptism*; J. B. Williams, ed., *The Miscellaneous Works of the Rev. Matthew Henry*, [London: Joseph Robinson, 1833], 1175.)

Without a doubt the most ascerbic denunciation of the historical understanding of these burial passages I have encountered came from a Swiss-Canadian minister named Philippe Wolff (b.1817; Reformed):

“...We will assert that immersion is no baptism. ...[It is] an indecency, the parody of a Christian institution, if not even a blasphemy. ...We utterly deny that immersion has any analogy with the burial of Christ, unless as a parody and profanation of a holy thing. ...The conditions indispensable to a symbolic burial are in no way fulfilled by ⇒

Of course, deciding who is or is not a commentator “of note” is a somewhat subjective exercise. Yet coming from a scholar as diversified and well-read as Schaff the practical implication of his observation is certainly appreciable. Here are some statements from two other notable authors who were quite critical of any claim that the symbolism in question is not in fact realistic and obvious, the second being rather pointed, especially coming from a non-immersionist:

Sir Norton Knatchbull (1602–85; *Anglican*); We may positively affirm that baptism is properly and solely a type of the Resurrection, and to this truth do give their suffrage the Apostles, Fathers, Schoolmen,³³⁹ almost all interpreters, ancient and modern. The thing of itself is so manifest that there is no need of testimonies to confirm it.³⁴⁰

John Nevin (1803–86; *American German-Reformed*); It needs but ordinary scholarship, and the freedom of a mind unpledged to mere party interests, to see and acknowledge here a certain advantage on the side of the Baptists.

...The allusion in Rom. 6:4, and Col. 2:12, to the form of going under the water and rising out of it again, as being at least the primary and fundamental character of the rite, is too plain to be misunderstood by any unsophisticated mind; and it is only a melancholy exemplification of the power which theological prejudice has over the best men, when otherwise able and faithful commentators of the anti-Baptist order are found vainly endeavoring, in modern times, to torture the passages into another meaning.³⁴¹

Finally, there is yet another poignant correlation in this twice-occurring Pauline theme worthy of contemplation, here expressed by Dr. Frederick Kershner (1875–1953; Restorationist):

In the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians [vs. 3, 4] the great Apostle to the Gentiles characterizes the Gospel briefly as the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

If then the central facts in the Gospel are death, burial and resurrection; and if these are all expressed in the act of baptism, as the Epistle to the Romans declares, no more fitting or beautiful symbolism could be imagined. Baptism thus becomes in its very action a profession of faith in the great central facts of the religion which it represents.³⁴²

immersion. It is but a burlesque, a miserable parody, of the death of Jesus Christ, and that is all.” (*Baptism: The Covenant and the Family*, [Boston: Crosby & Nichols, 1862], 34, 73f.)

³³⁸ John Peter Lange, J. F. Hurst, trans., Philip Schaff, ed., *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1899), 202 [in Schaff’s editorial annotation on Romans 6:4].

³³⁹ Scholasticism was a method of theological formulation that flourished in late-medieval Western Christendom. A defining feature is its dialectic reasoning in which conclusions are reached by appraising various propositions and counter-propositions. Leading Catholic scholars that employed this technique from the 11th to 15th centuries later became known as Schoolmen. Prominent personalities in this grouping include Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109), Peter Abelard (1079–1142), Peter Lombard (1100–60), William of Melitona; d.1257, Alexander of Hales (1185–1245), Bonaventure (1221–74), Thomas Aquinas (1225–74—with his renowned *Summa Theologica* being the premiere example of this style of scholarship), Albert Magnus (1206–1280), Roger Bacon (1214–94), Duns Scotus (1266–1308), William of Ockham (1285–1349), and Thomas a Kempis (1380–1470).

³⁴⁰ Norton Knatchbull, *Annotations upon Some Difficult Texts in all the Books of the New Testament* (Cambridge: J. Hayes, 1693), 300.

Latin: *Baptismo...sed mortis & resurrectionis Christi simul & nostrum; atque huic veritati suffragantur Apostolis, Patres, Scholastici, & Interpretes fere omnes; Res est quidam ita manifesta, ut testimoniis non indigeat.* (*Animadversiones in Libros Novi Testamenti: Per Nortonum Knatchbull Militem & Barronettum*, [Oxford: Richard Davis, 1676], 179.)

³⁴¹ John Williamson Nevin, *The Mercersburg Review*, (Mercersburg: P. A. Rice, 1850), 2:236.

³⁴² Frederick Doyle Kershner, *Christian Baptism*, (Ft. Worth: C. C. U. of The Disciples of Christ, 1912), 38f.

Chapter 8 - Judaic Baptisms

It has become a staple in modern non-immersionist presentations to assert that historically Jewish religious cleansings were usually, if not always, performed by sprinkling or pouring, as opposed to using other means such as immersion. Dale was certainly a proponent of this view:

...Jewish baptisms were effected generally neither by dippings nor by envelopings, but by influential agencies, variously applied, usually by sprinkling.

...There is no dipping in the Jewish use of the word [*baptizō*].

...Jewish and Greek usage are, here, at one.³⁴³

If what Dale says here is indeed true, then it would necessarily follow that three crucial New Testament passages where *baptizō* or the derivative noun *baptismos* are used in such context, are not referring to immersion: Mark 7:3, 4 (8³⁴⁴), Luke 11:38, and Hebrews 9:10(–22).³⁴⁵ Yet before one can credibly determine how these words are in fact used in this instructive setting, they must first consider the historical milieu surrounding them.

The Mishnah would reasonably top the list of extra-scriptural historical sources most applicable in this matter, as it provides, among other things, detailed information on how Jewish ceremonial laws would likely have been understood and carried out in apostolic times. So, before we scrutinize any specific religious precepts it will be useful to outline the general pedigree and relevance of this ancient Hebrew archive.

The Mishnah³⁴⁶ is a late 2nd or early 3rd century (some Orthodox Jewish traditions specify 189 AD) redaction of the rabbinical oral law that was in effect or enacted during the late Second Temple period (c.150 BC to 70 AD). Although the exact historical origins and development of some components of the oral law are open to question, it is certain that for some centuries prior to the apostolic era many religious statutes were being transferred from one Jewish generation to the next by way of spoken word. Fearing this *viva voce* code could eventually be lost, whether through calamity or apathy, a Galilean rabbi named Judah na-Hasi (*Judah the Prince*; c.135–217 AD) undertook to assemble and preserve these precepts in written form.³⁴⁷

³⁴³ J. Dale, *Judaic Baptism*, 395, 392.

³⁴⁴ The *Textus Receptus* (Received Text)—the family of Byzantine Greek manuscripts that the King James Version is based on—repeats the phrase “**as the washing [baptismous] of pots and cups**” at the end of Mark 7:8. As such, some pre-20th century commentaries on this topic make reference to Mark 7:4 and/or 7:8. However, when all of the manuscript evidence is considered as a whole, the standard critical Greek texts (NA27/UBS4) regard this redundancy as likely having been a scribal interpolation.

³⁴⁵ This view goes back to at least the mid-1600’s, as Mark 7:4 and Hebrews 9:10, 19–22 are two scripture proofs cited in the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (28.3) as supporting baptism by means other than immersion.

³⁴⁶ *Mishnah* (מִשְׁנָה) is derived from the Hebrew word *shanah* (שָׁנָה—to learn and repeat). The Mishnah is also the foundational component of the Jewish *Talmud* (תְּלִמּוּד—instruction; learning), which copiously supplements the mishnaic text with later rabbinic expositions on it, known as *Gemara* (גְּמָרָא—study). To complete this line of thought, there are actually two Talmuds (both based on the *Mishnah* but with varying *Gemara*): the Jerusalem (c. 4th century AD), and the Babylonian (c. 6th century AD). The Babylonian is by far the more comprehensive and well known of the two, and when the term *Talmud* is used without further designation it generally refers to that version.

³⁴⁷ A select group of pre-mishnaic sages, known as Tannaim (תַּנַּיִם—teachers; repeaters), were widely deemed the most scrupulous and trustworthy purveyors of the oral law. For that reason, their collected teachings are the predominant sources underlying the Mishnah.

The Tannaim generally flourished from about 10–200 AD, whereas their forbearers (the top rabbinic authorities from c.200 BC–10 AD) are referred to as *zekenim ha-rishonim* (זְקֵנִים רִאשׁוֹנִים—the former elders). The two most famous and respected members of this earlier grouping were Hillel (c.100 BC–c.10 AD) and Shammai (c.50 BC–c.30 AD). Both of these rabbis attracted large followings that eventually developed into competing schools of religious teaching. (See: *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, [New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1907], 12:49ff.) ⇒

To be sure, Christians do not necessarily share the notion that all of the oral law was biblically sound—and certainly not so in terms of how at least some of it had come to be applied by the 1st century AD. Jesus often lambasted the Pharisees for aggrandizing and overvaluing some such statutes,³⁴⁸ and he emphatically denounced one socio-religious ruling that blatantly flew in the face of the Written Law³⁴⁹ (a.k.a. the Pentateuch, Torah, or Mosaic Law).

Still, the ultimate fallacy of at least some parts of the oral law is a separate issue from that of its historical significance. It is certain that well before its formal preservation in the Mishnah many religious Jews followed the teachings it came to codify. So, again, other than the Bible itself, the Mishnah is arguably the most important historical source that can be brought to bear on issues of orthodox religious perception and practice in Second Temple Judaism, as well as for understanding the relevant vocabulary that would have been used in apostolic times.

Cleansing of Objects – Mark 7:4

In the first of our three New Testament passages *baptizō* is used in reference to a personal cleansing ritual that was evidently quite common. The noun *baptismos* is also used in the same verse to describe the religious purification of certain inanimate objects. While we will consider the latter topic first, here is how both terms are used in their integrated context:

Mark 7:1–4: Now when the Pharisees gathered to him [Jesus], with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, 2 they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands [chersin—hands] that were defiled, that is, unwashed [aniptois—unwashed]. 3 (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash [nipsōntai (niptō)—wash] their hands [cheiras » pygme—fist; clenched hand], holding to the tradition of the elders, 4 and when they come from the marketplace [agoras—any sizable assembly of people (especially commoners); a marketplace; a busy street] they do not eat unless they wash [baptisōntai³⁵⁰ (baptizō)]. And there are many other traditions [parelabon—traditions] that they observe, such as the washing [baptismous (baptismos)] of cups [poterion—cup] and pots [exeston—pitcher; pot] and copper vessels [chalkiōn—a copper or brass vessel] and dining couches [klinōn (klinē)—a small bed; a couch].³⁵¹

In the 1st century AD, the schools of Hillel and Shammai influenced various aspects of the sectarian formulations of the Pharisees, whereas some of their rivals, most recognizably the Sadducees, rejected the notion of oral law.

Interestingly, the chief compiler of the Mishnah, Judah na-Hasi, was a grandson of Gamaliel the Elder (d.52 AD), who was in turn a grandson of Hillel. Gamaliel is seen in Jewish history as a significant figure within the Tannaim. (Ibid, 7:333f). Christians may of course also be familiar with Gamaliel as the well-regarded Pharisee and leading member of the Sanhedrin whom the pre-apostle Paul studied under (Acts 5:34–39; 22:3; cf. Acts 23:6; Phil. 3:5).

³⁴⁸ Cf. Matt. 23:23–24; Mark 2:23–28, Luke 13:10–17, 14:1–6; John 7:21–24.

³⁴⁹ Mark 7:9–13 (cf. Matt. 15:3–9).

³⁵⁰ It is noteworthy that two of the earliest New Testament codices of the Alexandrian text type (Vaticanus and Sinaiticus—c.325–375 AD) have *rantizōntai* (ραντίσωνται—sprinkle) in Mark 7:4. However, the reading in the *Textus Receptus* is *baptisōntai* (βαπτισώνται). The NA27/UBS4 includes both as possible original readings.

One important factor militating against *rantizōntai* is that this verb is in the middle voice—as is *baptisōntai*—which signifies that the subject is acting upon itself or is otherwise being affected by its own action. Yet no personal sprinkling rituals in the Old Testament or later Judaism were self-administered, whereas full bodily bathings were. For this reason, among others, many scholars again see it as likely being a misconsidered Gentile interpolation. (See: Roger Booth, *Jesus and the Laws of Purity: Tradition, History and Legal History in Mark 7*, [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1986], 200f.; Richard France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2002], 275; *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, H. Balz, G. Schneider, eds., [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1990], 1:195.)

³⁵¹ Greek: *Καὶ συνάγονται πρὸς αὐτὸν οἱ Φαρισαῖοι καὶ τινες τῶν γραμματέων ἐλθόντες ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων, καὶ ἰδόντες τινὰς τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ ὅτι κοιναῖς χερσίν, τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἀνίπτους, ἐσθίουσιν τοὺς ἄρτους. οἱ γὰρ Φαρισαῖοι καὶ πάντες οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἐὰν μὴ πύγμῃ νίψωνται τὰς χεῖρας οὐκ ἐσθίουσιν, κρατοῦντες τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν πρεσβυτέρων, ⇒*

Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, Dale did not deny the possibility that the cups and other small articles mentioned in this passage could have been dipped, although he again insisted that even if that were the case this action is not in any way conveyed by *baptizō/baptismos*.

Whether, then, these cup, pot, and brazen vessel baptisms were effected by dipping, by pouring, or by sprinkling, *baptizō* says nothing of, and cares nothing for, the modal act. The word makes demand for and is satisfied with a change of condition from ceremonial impurity to ceremonial purity.³⁵²

The New Testament itself has nothing more to say about how the washing/*baptismos* of the various items listed in Mark 7:4 was actually carried out. However, a foundational principle pertaining to such situations is clearly conveyed in the Old Testament:

Leviticus 6:28:³⁵³ **And the earthenware vessel** [Hebrew: *keli*—object; vessel <> LXX: *skeous*—an article of any kind] **in which it** [i.e., an animal sacrificed for an offering, vv. 25–27] **is boiled shall be broken. But if it is boiled in a bronze** [*nehoset*—copper; brass; bronze <> *chalkō*—copper] **vessel** [*keli* <> *skeue*], **that shall be scoured** [*maraq*—thoroughly scour; polish <> *ektripsei*—rub; scour] **and rinsed** [*shataph*—overflow; rinse off; overwhelm <> *ekklusei*—wash out; wash thoroughly] **in** [*b*—(a preposition) in; among; into; etc.] **water** [*mayim*—water <> *hydati*—water].³⁵⁴ (cf. Lev. 15:12)

Leviticus 11:32: **And anything** [*kol*—all; any; every kind of; etc. <> LXX *pan*—all] **on which any of them** [i.e., unclean vermin such as various insects, rodents and reptiles] **falls when they are dead shall be unclean** [*tumah*—(ritually) unclean <> *akatharton*—(ritually) unclean], **whether it is an article of wood or a garment or a skin or a sack, any** [*kol* <> *pantos*] **article** [*keli* <> *skenous*] **that is used for any purpose. It must be put into water** [*bo*—come/go; apply; put > *b-mayim* <> *eis hydor bapsēsetai* (*baptō*)—dipped into water], **and it shall be unclean** [*tame*—unclean; defiled; impure <> *akatharton*] **until the evening; then it shall be clean.**³⁵⁵

The Mishnah goes into astonishing detail as to how these scriptural laws were interpreted and applied within Second Temple Judaism. In perusing the hundreds of regulations found in a lengthy tractate of the order *Tohorot* (טְהוּרֹת—*Purities*), called *Kelim* (כְּלִימ—*Vessels*), it becomes clear that in meticulous keeping with the instructions given in Leviticus 11:32, essentially “**any article that was used for any purpose**” could indeed be deemed ritually impure and thereby need purification. With specific regard to vessels made of metals like copper or bronze one reads:

Metal vessels, whether they are simple or form a receptacle, are susceptible to impurity...Every metal vessel that has a name of its own is susceptible to impurity...

καὶ ἀπ' ἀγορᾶς ἐὰν μὴ ῥαντίσωνται / βαπτίσωνται οὐκ ἐσθίουσιν, καὶ ἄλλα πολλά ἐστὶν ἃ παρέλαβον κρατεῖν, βαπτισμοὺς ποτηρίων καὶ ξεστῶν καὶ χαλκίων [καὶ κλινῶν].

³⁵² J. Dale, *Johannic Baptism*, 110.

³⁵³ Leviticus 6:28 is typically denominated 6:21 in Hebrew bibles and the Septuagint.

³⁵⁴ Hebrew:

וְכִלֵּי־תְרָשׁ אֲשֶׁר תְּבַשְׁלֵבּוּ וְאִם־בְּכֵלֵי נְחֹשֶׁת בְּשִׁלְהָ וּמִרְקָ וְשִׁטְף בְּמַיִם:

(H. Van Dyke Parunak, R. Whitaker, Emanuel Tov, Alan Groves, eds., *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, [Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1990]; All Hebrew texts shown for Old Testament passages are from this source.

LXX: καὶ σκεῦος ὀστράκινον, οὐδ' ἐὰν ἐψηθῆ ἔν αὐτῷ, συντριβήσεται, ἐὰν δὲ ἐν σκεύει χαλκῷ ἐψηθῆ, ἐκτρίψει αὐτὸ καὶ ἐκκλύσει ὕδατι. (Eberhard Nestle, *Septuaginta*, [Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1996]); unless otherwise indicated, the Greek texts shown for all passages from the Septuagint are from this source.

³⁵⁵ Hebrew:

וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר־יִפְלֵעֲלוּ מֵהֶם בְּמַתְם וְטָמָא מִכֵּל־כֵּלֵי־עֵץ אִם בְּגֶד אִם־עוֹר אִם אֵץ שֶׁק־כֵּל־כֵּלֵי אֲשֶׁר־יִפְעֹשֶׁהָ מִלְּאֲכָה בְּהֵם בְּמַיִם יִוָּבֵא וְטָמָא עַד־הָעֶרֶב וְטָהַר:

LXX: καὶ πᾶν, ἐφ' ὃ ἂν ἐπιπέσῃ ἀπ' αὐτῶν τεθνηκότων αὐτῶν, ἀκάθαρτον ἔσται ἀπὸ παντὸς σκεύους ζυλίνου ἢ ἱματίου ἢ δέρματος ἢ σάκκου, πᾶν σκεῦος, ὃ ἐὰν ποιηθῆ ἔργον ἐν αὐτῷ, εἰς ὕδωρ βαφήσεται καὶ ἀκάθαρτον ἔσται ἕως ἑσπέρας καὶ καθαρὸν ἔσται.

...Measuring cups for wine or oil, and a fork-ladle, and a mustard-strainer {etc.} ...one is required to immerse {*tabal—dip*} [the vessel in its entirety, in order to purity it].³⁵⁶

As the last citation indicates, the Levitical charge that these items were to be cleansed by being “**put into water**” (*bo b-mayim / eis hydor baptō*) was also taken very literally.³⁵⁷ For reference, here are the definitions assigned the corresponding mishnaic verb *tabal* by three standard Hebrew language dictionaries:³⁵⁸

³⁵⁶ *Mishnah, Tohorot, Kelim*, 11.1, 2; 25.3; bracketing Sefaria’s; bracing is mine (cf. *Abodah Zarah*, 5:12.)

Hebrew: קְלִי מִתְּכוּת, פְּשׁוּטֵיהֶן וּמְקַבְּלֵיהֶן טָמְאִין... כָּל כְּלִי מִתְּכוּת שֶׁיֵּשׁ לוֹ שֵׁם בְּפָנָי עֲצָמוֹ... מְדוּת יֵין וְשֶׁמֶן, וְזוּמָא לְסִטְרָא, וּמִסְנָגַת שֶׁל סְרָדָל... וְצָרִיף לְהַטְבִּיל:

(<https://www.sefaria.org/texts/Mishnah>); unless otherwise indicated, English renderings and Hebrew texts shown for passages from the Mishnah are from this source (retrieved 10/12/2013 – 06/02/2015).

³⁵⁷ To appreciate how mishnaic scholars (the Tannaim) interpreted the Levitical law, it is useful to understand the hermeneutical system attributed to their rabbinic forefather, Hillel (although independently its various tenets were demonstrably in use well before this era—see: Magne Saebø, ed., *Hebrew Bible, Old Testament: History of Its Interpretation*, [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996], 266ff). Here is a basic outline:

“Rabbinic literature preserves three lists of *middot* [הַמְדוּת—literally, *measurements*; applicably, *rules*] for interpreting Scripture. ...Below is printed the list of Hillel. **1** } *Qal wahomer* [קַל וְהוֹמֵר]—An argument from the minor (*qal*) to the major (*homer*). If something applies in a less important point, it will certainly apply in the major. **2** } *Gezerah shawah* [גְּזֵירָה שׁוּוֹה]—By comparing similar expressions in two different verses it is reasoned that whatever applies in one of the verses is equally applicable in the other. **3** } *Binyan ab mikathub ’ehad* [בְּנִין אֶב מִכְתוּב אֶחָד]—When the same phrase is found in a number of verses, then what is found in one verse applies to them all. **4** } *Binyan ab mishene kethubim* [בְּנִין אֶב מִשְׁנֵי כְתוּבִים]—A principle is established by relating two verses together; once established, this principle can be applied to other verses. **5a** } *Kelal upherat* [כָּלֵל וּפְרָט]—If a law is stated in the general and then followed by a specific statement, the general law only applies in the specific statement. **5b** } The reverse is also true [*Pherat ukelal*; וּפְרָט וְכָלֵל]: if the particular instances are stated first and are followed by the general category, instances other than those are included. **6** } *Kayoze bo bemaqom ’aher* [כִּיּוֹצֵא בּוֹ מִמְּקוֹם אֲחֵר]—A difficulty in one text may be resolved by comparing it with another similar text. **7** } *Dabar halarned me’inyano* [דְּבַר הַלְמַד מֵעֵינָיו]—meaning is established by its context.” (Robert B. Sloan, Jr., Carey C. Newman, *Ancient Jewish Hermeneutics*; Bruce Corley, Steve W. Lemke, Grant I. Lovejoy, eds., *Biblical Hermeneutics: A Comprehensive Introduction to Interpreting Scripture*, [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002], 68.)

In that Hillel’s system derived meaning from context and comparing passages of holy writ it operated within the general parameters of having Scripture interpret Scripture, and so produced “for the most part...logical extensions of the plain sense [of Scripture].” (Walter C. Kaiser, Moisés Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1994], 210.) Accordingly, “...the logical and analogical character of *middot* anticipates some of what Christians now known as grammatical-historical criticism. Specifically, the way in which inaugurated eschatology governs the discussion of Old Testament citations in the New Testament is very reminiscent of the *qal wahomer*. Also: the Reformational principle of allowing a clearly understood text to interpret an obscure one is a first cousin to the *gezerah shawah*. A careful study of the Mishnah and its interpretive methods would pay rich dividends for a Christian interpreter today.” (*Ancient Jewish Hermeneutics*, 70.)

It has also been shown that, “...many of the seven hermeneutical rules which Hillel canonized for systematic interpretation and application of Scripture are used in the New Testament by Jesus and St. Paul.” (David Noel Freedman, ed., *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2000], 592.) For example, the basic tenet of *qal wahomer* is evident in various passages that revolve around the principle of “if [such and such]...then how much more [such and such]...” (e.g., Matt. 6:26–33, 7:11; Luke 12:24–28; John 7:23, 10:34–36; Rom. 5:15–21; 2 Cor. 3:7–11.) Exegetes have also proposed multiple examples where each of Hillel’s seven rules is in effect employed in the interpretation of the Old Testament throughout the four Gospels. (See: Joel Green, Scot McKnight, eds., *The Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. [Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1992], 544ff.)

³⁵⁸ Rabbi Bernhard Felsenthal (German-American; 1822–1908; author of *A Practical Grammar of the Hebrew Language: for Schools and Colleges*, [New York: L. H. Frank, 1868]) also pointed out a corroborative grammatical indicator: “It seems to me almost indisputable that the verb *tabal* [טָבַל] means to *dip* or to *immerse*. A comparison of all the passages in the Old Testament in which said verb is found...reveals the fact that in almost all of these passages the fluid is mentioned with *b* [בְּ] prefixed (*baddam*), into which the object of the act is to be *tabal*. When sprinkling or squirting is meant, the verb *zaraq* [רָקַץ], followed by the preposition *al* [לְעַ], upon, is employed.” (Cited in: J. Christian, *Immersion, The Act of Christian Baptism*, 43.) ⇒

(1) טָבַל [tābal] ...dip, bathe...transitive, dip a thing in...intransitive, dip (oneself)...³⁵⁹

2) טָבַל (tā-bāl) ...dip, plunge, soak, bathe, i.e., place a solid object into a liquid mass, with a result that some of the mass attaches to the solid object, usually for a particular use or purpose.³⁶⁰

3) טָבַל (tābal) ...dip, plunge ...the verb conveys the immersion of one item into another.³⁶¹

The Jewish convert Dr. Alfred Edersheim (1825–89; Anglican) is widely recognized as one of the leading early-modern Christian authorities on Jewish cultural and religious history.³⁶² His most acclaimed and accessible work is the multi-volume *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, in which he talked about the Mishnah’s detailed commands regarding these practices:

Only those who know the complicated arrangements about the defilements of vessels that were in any part, however small, hollow, as these are described in the *Mishnah* (Tractate *Kelim*), can form an adequate idea of the painful minuteness with which every little detail is treated. Earthen vessels that had contracted impurity were to be broken; those of wood, horn, glass, or brass immersed; while, if vessels were bought of Gentiles, they were (as the case might be) to be immersed, put into boiling water, purged with fire, or at least polished.³⁶³

Akin to Dale’s admission on the matter, although in consultation with the mishnaic evidence and thus expressed with more certainty, the Scottish Presbyterian theologian John Murray (1898–1975) conceded that *baptismous* in Mark 7:4 likely refers to immersion—at least as it pertained to the smaller articles mentioned:

There is good reason to believe that the “baptism of cups and pots and brazen vessels,” referred to in Mark 7:4, refer to immersion (cf. *Talmud ...Kelim*, Ch. 25, *Mishnah*, 3.5).³⁶⁴

A more controversial matter is how larger objects such as beds or couches may have been cleansed. On this Dale was decidedly against any possibility of immersion.

The baptism of “couches” is separated from that of “cups, pots, and brazen vessels,” because while it is quite possible or even highly probable that these small articles would be baptized (purified) by dipping, it is, also, quite improbable, not to say quite impossible, that “couches” (large enough for three persons to recline upon) would be taken up and dipped into water, or would, by any process, be entirely enveloped in water in order to their [*sic*] ceremonial purification.³⁶⁵

Historically, in the first published translation of the complete Greek New Testament into Hebrew, Elias Hutter (1553–1609; German Lutheran) typically translated both *baptō* and *baptizō* as *tabal*. (*Novum Testamentum Domini Nostri Jesu Christi*, [Nuremberg, 1599–1600], 2 vols.)

³⁵⁹ Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, Charles A. Briggs, *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977) 371.

³⁶⁰ James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew Old Testament*, (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2001).

³⁶¹ R. Laird Harris, ed., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 342.

³⁶² Of Austrian-Hungarian Jewish heritage and upbringing, Alfred Edersheim later converted to Christianity through the ministry of a Scottish missionary in Budapest. Edersheim eventually moved to England where he became a respected author and minister—first Presbyterian, later Anglican—serving in several locations across Great Britain.

³⁶³ Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (New York: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1896), 2:15.

³⁶⁴ John Murray, *Christian Baptism*, (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing, 1980), 16.

³⁶⁵ J. Dale, *Johannic Baptism*, 110.

Before examining this question directly, it is again useful to study some preliminary issues. First is the proper definition of the given Greek noun *klinē* (κλινη), or in this case the derivate *klinōn* (κλινῶν).³⁶⁶ As we have seen, without any historical reference Dale insisted it denotes “couches large enough for three persons to recline upon”. On the other hand, *The Dictionary of Biblical Languages* gives the simple meaning of a “bedroll, sleeping mat.”³⁶⁷ *Strong’s Lexicon* says it refers to “a small bed, a couch; a couch to recline on at meals; a couch on which a sick man is carried.”³⁶⁸ Still another Greek reference casts doubt on its direct connection to dining:

A relatively small and often temporary type of object on which a person may lie or recline—*cot, pallet, stretcher*. ...There is no New Testament context in which these terms refer to couches on which people reclined while eating.³⁶⁹

It is notable that except for in this one instance virtually all translations interpret *klinē* as referring to implements used specifically for general resting or sleeping.³⁷⁰ Of course while images of king-sized poster-beds and overstuffed couches from the local Furniture World may initially come to the modern Western mind, as said in the preceding dictionaries we know such things among common folk in the 1st century orient were most often relatively simple, such as cots, portable pallets, or even just a blanket-roll.³⁷¹ In the event seating used for dining is intended in Mark 7:4, a large fitting is still not necessarily in view. *The Jewish Encyclopedia* has this to say about traditional Hebrew furnishings, presenting a possible solution with its description of a modestly sized piece of furniture that often served in both capacities:

The Hebrew term *mitteh* [מִטָּה], meaning “divan” [a couch, or bench; cf. Amos 6:4] as well as “bed”, is synonymous with *eres* [עֵרֶשׂ] (Amos 3:12) and *mishkab* [מִשְׁכָּב] (2 Sam. 17:28). In olden times the Jewish bed, a plain wooden frame with feet, and a slightly raised end for the head (Gen. 47:31), probably differed little from the simple Egyptian bed. The frame, covered with *marbad* [מַרְבָּד—blanket] (Prov. 7:16), served as a bed for the old and sick during the day (Gen. 47:31...*et seq.*), while at meals people sat on it, perhaps with crossed legs (compare Ezek. 23:41; 1 Sam. 20:25).

...This resting-place, therefore, was not a bed in the accepted sense of the word, but a couch, on which the old and the sick reclined in the daytime and which served also at times as a seat during meals. ...Later on, the custom of reclining during meals (Amos 3:12, 6:4) was introduced.³⁷²

With this rudimentary information in mind, we can turn our attention to an Old Testament passage which plainly states that, just like with many smaller articles, under certain circumstances furnishings such as beds and seats could become Levitically defiled:

Leviticus 15:3, 4: And this is the law of his uncleanness for a discharge: whether his body runs with his discharge, or his body is blocked up by his discharge, it is his uncleanness.

³⁶⁶ There is again some question as to whether or not *klinōn* was in fact part of Mark’s original autograph, since it appears in some ancient Greek manuscripts while being absent from others. The NA27/UBS4 brackets *klinōn* in this passage, indicating the overall manuscript evidence either for or against its authenticity is deemed to have relatively equal standing. As such, some translations include it (e.g., ESV, NET, NKJV—translated *couches*; NAB, GNT—translated *beds*) while others do not (e.g., ASV, NASB, NCV, NIV, NLT, NRSV). The KJV rather inexplicably renders *klinōn* as *tables* (also ISV, GW). As noted, the NKJV changes the translation to *couches*.

³⁶⁷ J. Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains (Old Testament)*, #3109.

³⁶⁸ *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon*, #2825.

³⁶⁹ J. P. Louw & E. A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 1:66.

³⁷⁰ Matt. 9:2, 6; Mark 4:21, 7:30; Luke 5:18, 19, 24, 17:34; Acts 5:15; Rev. 2:22.

³⁷¹ E.g., 1 Sam. 19:15; Matt. 9:6; Mark 2:4, 9–12; Luke 5:18–19, 24; John 5:8–11; Acts 5:15, 9:34.

³⁷² *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, 4:303f, 5:531.

4 **Every bed** [*mishkab*—bed <> LXX: *koite*—(marriage) bed, couch] **on which the one with the discharge lies shall be unclean, and everything** [*kol* » *keli* <> *skeuos*—an article of any kind] **on which he sits shall be unclean.**³⁷³

Leviticus 15:19–23 gives nearly identical information regarding the ritual contamination of furnishings a menstruous woman may have sat or laid upon. Yet while these passages explicitly state that beds and seats could frequently be rendered ritually impure, no specific instructions are given as to how they were to be purified and returned to a usable state. As such pertains to the practice of religious Jews in the Second Temple era, however, the Mishnah makes clear that in keeping with the Hillelian-mishnaic hermeneutic in such matters, the comprehensive Levitical command to purify “**any article**” by putting it “**into water**” was applied very literally.

Regarding a leather pillow or cushion, once one raises their edges out of the water, the water within them is [considered] drawn. What should one do [in such a case]? One should immerse [*tabal*] them and raise them out by their undersides.

...If one immerses [*tabal*] a bed [*mishkab*], even if its legs sink into thick mud [at the bottom of an immersion pool] it is pure because the waters precede it [i.e., touches them before the mud does].³⁷⁴

Maimonides³⁷⁵ (1135–1204 AD), a later but historically important Jewish scholar, is widely recognized as one of the foremost historical authorities on the Mishnah.³⁷⁶ Maimonides’ magnum opus was in fact a massive treatise entitled *Mishnah Torah* (משנה תורה—*Repeating of the Law*³⁷⁷; written c.1170–80 AD), in which the myriad precepts of the Mishnah were reorganized and expounded in staggering detail. With specific regard to the topic at hand Maimonides made these summary statements:

Any object fit for use as a couch [*mishkab*] or seat [*moshab*—a seat], even though it is clean for Hallowed Things, still in whatever concerns the rite of purification, counts as something which a man with flux³⁷⁸ has pressed against, unless it is immersed [*tabal*] especially for the rite of purification.³⁷⁹

³⁷³ Hebrew: וְיָצָא הַכֶּלֶם אֶל־מַחְוִין לְמַחְנָה וְרָאָה הַכֶּלֶם וְהִגִּה נִרְפָּא גַּגְעֵי־הַצָּרְעַת מִן־הַצָּרְעָה: וְצִוְּהָ הַכֶּלֶם וְלָקַח לְמַטְהַר שְׂמֵי־צִצְרִים תְּזִית

LXX: καὶ οὗτος ὁ νόμος τῆς ἀκαθαρσίας αὐτοῦ· ῥέων γόννον ἐκ σώματος αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῆς ῥύσεως ἧς συνέστηκεν τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ διὰ τῆς ῥύσεως, αὕτη ἡ ἀκαθαρσία αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ· πᾶσαι αἱ ἡμέραι ῥύσεως σώματος αὐτοῦ ἢ συνέστηκεν τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ διὰ τῆς ῥύσεως ἀκαθαρσία αὐτοῦ ἐστίν. πᾶσα κοίτη ἐφ’ ἣ ἔαν κοιμηθῆ ἔπ’ αὐτῆς ὁ γονορροῦς ἀκάθαρτός ἐστιν, καὶ πᾶν σκεῦος ἐφ’ ὃ ἔαν καθίσῃ ἐπ’ αὐτὸ ὁ γονορροῦς ἀκάθαρτον ἔσται.

³⁷⁴ Mishnah, Tohorot, Miqvaot, 7:6, 7; bracketing Sefaria’s;

Hebrew: הכר והפסות של עור, כינון שהגביה שפתותיהם מן המים, המים שבתוכו שאובין. כיצד יעשה, מטבילין ומעלה אותם דרך שוליהם.. הטביל בו את המטה, אף על פי שרגליה שוקעות בטיט העבה, שהורה, מפני שהמים מקדמין:

³⁷⁵ Maimonides (pronounced mī-MŌN-ī-dēz) is the Greek name by which the medieval Jewish scholar Moseh ben-Maimon (Moses son of Maymun) is commonly referred. Born in Spain, Maimonides primarily flourished as a scholar in Morocco and Egypt, where he was also influential in various areas of science, medicine and philosophy. Maimonides is revered as “the second Moses” within much of Jewish orthodoxy.

Many Christian scholars have also acknowledged the historical relevance and value of Maimonides’ work. For example, John Lightfoot, an important English Hebraist, Cambridge theologian and a leading Westminster divine, acclaimed Maimonides “the great interpreter of the Jewish law.” (*Whole Works*, 11:55) Even in scholarly contexts Maimonides is often affably dubbed *Rambam*—a personal acronym derived from his title *rabbi* and Hebrew name.

³⁷⁶ See: William Oscar Emil Oesterley, Theodore Henry Robinson, *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*, (Whitefish: Kessinger Publishers, 2003), 366ff.

³⁷⁷ Subtitled and sometimes referred to as the *Book of the Strong Hand* (*Sefer Yad ha-Hazaka*; ספר יד החזקה).

³⁷⁸ *Flux* is an archaic term used for various discharges of fluid from the body, especially those associated with illness and disease (cf. Lev. 15:1–15).

...If an object is made of jointed work, having its boards and beams bound together, such as a bed [*mitteh*—bed, reclining couch] or the like, and it becomes unclean and needs immersion [*taba*] for heave offering, the whole of it may be immersed [*taba*] forthwith while still bound together.³⁸⁰

It is quite evident, then, even relatively large furnishings were subject to ritual immersion in ancient Jewish culture. Even the staunch non-immersionist writer Robert Halley (1796–1876; Congregationalist) felt obliged to concede the point:

Of the baptizing of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels and couches...I cannot venture to say as positively as several of my brethren do, that some of these, especially the couches, could not have been immersed. The Jews were undoubtedly most careful and particular in thoroughly washing the drapery and coverings of their seats; and if one will take the trouble to study the various pollutions of beds and couches, as they are described in Maimonides and the Talmudic tracts, he must, I think, in candor admit, that these articles of furniture were in some instances immersed in water.³⁸¹

In conclusion of the philological point under consideration, there are a number of compelling reasons for understanding that the *baptismous* of both the small and larger objects mentioned in Mark 7:4 has particular reference to *a ritual washing done by immersion*.

Hand Washings – Mark 7:3

Next to be investigated are the personal cleansings mentioned in Mark 7:3, 4. Here are some representative statements from Dale regarding the washing of hands.

The Codex Sinaiticus has *rhantizōntai* instead of *baptisōntai*.³⁸² Whether this be accepted as the better reading or not, it shows that the copyist saw no difficulty in a baptism being effected by sprinkling. For in whatsoever way the water may have been used, on this occasion, it was used to effect a baptism. So, in the hand washing, which Campbell and others say was by “pouring a little water on them,”³⁸³ the purpose was to effect a baptism. This is evident from the general custom of the

³⁷⁹ *Mishnah Torah, Parah Adummah (Laws of the Red Heifer)*, 13.2; Herbert Danby, *The Code of Maimonides: Book Ten—The Book of Cleanness*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), 136.

Hebrew: כל כלי הראוי למשכב או למושב אף ע"פ שהוא טהור לגבי הקודש הרי הוא לגבי חטאת כמדרס הזב עד שיטבילוהו לשם : (<https://www.chabad.org/library/article/jewish/Mishneh-Torah.htm>); the Hebrew text shown for all passages from Maimonides' *Mishnah Torah* are from this source.

³⁸⁰ *Mishnah Torah, She'ar Avot haTum'ah (The Laws of Other Primary Sources of Impurity)*, 12.5; (H. Danby, *The Code of Maimonides: Book Ten*, 297.)

Hebrew: כלי שהוא מפוצל ולוחותיו וקורותיו מקושרות כגון מטה וכיצא בה אם נטמא וצריך להטבילו לתרומה יש לו להטבילו כולו :

³⁸¹ Robert Halley, *The Sacraments* (London: Jackson & Wolford, 1844), 383.

³⁸² See note 350.

³⁸³ Dale is referring to the translation given part of Mark 7:4 by Dr. George Campbell (1719–96; Scottish Presbyterian). However, it is certainly notable how Campbell rendered the rest of this sentence, and his forthright explanation for having done so.

“For the Pharisees eat not until they have washed their hands, by pouring a little water upon them; and if they come from the market, by dipping them.’...For illustrating this passage, let it be observed, first, that the two verbs, rendered wash in the English translation, are different in the original. The first is *νίψονται* [*nipsōntai*], properly translated wash; the second is *βαπτίζονται* [*baptisōntai*], which limits us to a particular mode of washing; for *baptizō* denotes to plunge, to dip...This is more especially the import when the words are, as here, opposed to each other. Otherwise, *νίπτειν* [*niptein*], like the general word to wash in English, may be used for *βαπτίζειν* [*baptizein*], to dip, because the genus comprehends the species; but not conversely, *βαπτίζειν* for *νίπτειν*, the species for the genus. By this interpretation, the words which, as rendered in the common version, are unmeaning, appear both significant and emphatical; and the contrast in the Greek is preserved in the translation.” (*The Four Gospels, Translated from the Greek*, 204f). ⇒

Jews and the language used to expound it, as, also, from the spirit and phraseology of this particular passage. ...It is obvious that *baptismous* so reflects back upon the purification of the hands, and the purification from the market, as to bring them into the same class of baptisms.

...The text of the Codex Sinaiticus teaches that the baptism was by sprinkling; the received text teaches that the purification was complete, saying nothing of the manner in which it was effected.

...Between the washing of the hands...and the baptism from the market, there is made a distinction. It probably consisted in a less thorough and a more thorough purification. But the *quo modo* [method or mode] in neither case is stated. The word *baptizō* always denotes completeness of condition, however the influence may be brought to bear for its accomplishment.³⁸⁴

Dale's consideration of the verbal relationship between *baptizō* and the hand-washing in question is somewhat generic and only in consultation with selective evidence—all wrapped in his tendentious predetermination that *baptizō* can never denote a specific action. Even so his remarks do elicit some practical points for consideration.

First, upon reading the Markan passage as it appears in most English translations, there is ambiguity—indeed a tautology—in the rendering “**the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash** [*nipsōntai* (*niptō*)] **their hands, and when they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash** [*baptisōntai* (*baptizō*)]” (emphases mine). Yet as the original-language insertions show, two different words are actually used in the Greek text.

Encountering this type of grammatical distinction raises an important question, especially in deliberations such as ours: who was the author's intended readership? Based on the internal evidence of his Gospel many scholars conclude Mark's target audience was predominately Greek-speaking Gentiles, who therefore would likely not have been familiar with the myriad and complicated cleansing ceremonies observed by the Jews.³⁸⁵ As such, it is most reasonable to think Mark would have deliberately chosen certain words that would clearly communicate various details about the peculiar things he was describing, rather than simply intermixing dissimilar, if perchance to a Jew synonymous terms.

Historically, the two personal cleansings mentioned in Mark 7:4 have been interpreted in several ways, although most commentators acknowledge two distinct practices are in view. At the very least it is supposed two different methods of hand-washing are denoted, with *baptizō* referencing occasions that involved an actual dipping of the hands, and *niptō* when the ritual was done by pouring water over them.³⁸⁶ Such an understanding appears to be technically possible, as the Mishnah does impose certain requirements for pouring water onto the hands.

Campbell also went on to state: “The Hebrew תַּבַּל [*tabal*] perfectly corresponds with the Greek βαπτω and Βαπτίζω, which are synonymous, and is always rendered by one or the other of them in the Septuagint.” (Ibid, 207.)

³⁸⁴ J. Dale, *Johannic Baptism*, 93ff.

³⁸⁵ The fact that in 7:3, 4, Mark is compelled to detail the common rituals not only of the sectarian Pharisees but indeed “all the Jews”, his similar assumption that his readers may not have been familiar with a crucial belief of their rivals the Sadducees (12:18)—or even with a basic tenet of the Jewish religious calendar (15:42)—his frequent explanation of Aramaic terms (5:41; 7:11, 34; 14:36; 15:22, 34), and his concerted presentation of the truth that non-Jews are indeed beneficiaries of the gospel (7:24–30; 11:17; 13:10; cf. 15:39), have all been seen as evincing the prominence of Gentiles within Mark's intended readership. (See: Richard T. France, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament—The Gospel According to Mark*, [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1974], 245; Harold Riley, *The Making of Mark*, [Macon: Mercer University Press, 1989], 85; *Halley's Bible Handbook* (25th edition), Ed M. van der Maas, ed., [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000], 621.)

³⁸⁶ In addition to George Campbell (see note 383), another prominent personality among those holding such a view was John Lightfoot:

“The phrase, therefore, seems to be meant of the ‘immersion or plunging, of the hands only’; and the word *pygmē*, ‘fist,’ is here to be understood also in common. Those that remain at home eat not, *ean me pygmē nipsōntai*, ‘unless they wash the fist.’ But those that come from the market eat not, *ean me pygme baptisōntai* ‘unless they plunge their

A quarter [of a log, a specific unit of volume³⁸⁷] of water is to be poured onto the hands,³⁸⁸ for [the ritual washing of the hands for] one person, and even for two.³⁸⁹

Maimonides listed some circumstances that could necessitate such a procedure:

Whosoever touches with his hands anything that has incurred first-grade uncleanness, whether it be a person or a utensil or foodstuff or unclean liquid, his hands alone become unclean as far as the wrist...³⁹⁰

The mention in John's Gospel of "...stone water jars [*hydriae*], the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing [*katharismos*—cleansing; purification], each holding from twenty to thirty gallons..."³⁹¹ also accords with such a procedure having been used in apostolic times. Still, mishnaic laws in effect in 1st century Judaism indicate that when priests or other persons employed in religious service had defiled their hands, they were indeed required to immerse them. Once again, Maimonides:

...In the case of Hallowed Things, if one hand becomes unclean and touches the other, the other becomes unclean and they both need immersion [*taba*] for Hallowed Things.

...If the hands require immersion [*taba*] they may be immersed [*taba*] only in a valid immersion pool [*mikvah*] containing [at least] forty seah, for where utensils are immersed [*taba*], there the hands are immersed [*taba*]...³⁹²

It is again important to realize that the practice of hand washing practiced among Jews in the Second Temple period had its basis in the Pentateuch:

Exodus 30:17–19: The LORD said to Moses, 18 **“You shall also make a basin of bronze, with its stand of bronze, for washing** [*rahas*—wash; bathe <> LXX; *niptesthai* (*nipō*)]. **You shall put it**

fist into the water,' being ignorant and uncertain what uncleanness they came near unto in the market.” (*Whole Works*, 11:400f.)

Latin: *Intelligenda ergo videtur phrasiologia de immersione manum tantum, & vox πυγμαῖν hic etiam subaudienda, ex communi. Domi manentes non comedunt ἐὰν μὴ πυγμαῖν νίψωνται, nisi pugnum laverint. At redeuntes a soro non comedunt ἐὰν μὴ πυγμαῖν βαπτίσωνται, nisi pugnum in aquam immerserint: ignorantis & incerti, ad quamnam immunditiam appropinquaverant in sorto.* (Johannes Lightfooti, *Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae in Quatuor Evangelistas*, [Lipsiae: Jo. Benedicti Carpzovi, 1683], 619f.)

³⁸⁷ Estimates vary as to the volume of a log in different ancient cultures. In its mishnaic context Maimonides gives the somewhat vague measurement of one log equaling the volume of six eggs (*Mishnah Torah, Kelim* 17.6). Alfred Edersheim came to a seemingly congruent conclusion, though using a more scientific formulation, suggesting one log in Second Temple Judaism was .079 gallons—which would make ¼ log equal to a little less than ⅓ of a cup. (*History of the Jewish Nation*, [London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1896], 283.) While ¼ log was the minimum required, such a small amount does indicate the act was primarily ritualistic rather than hygienic in nature.

³⁸⁸ “לַיָּדַיִם”—a mishnaic Hebrew contraction that most literally means “put (water) upon the hands.”

(See: <https://www.halakhah.com/pdf/taharoth/Yadayim.pdf>, fn. 2.)

³⁸⁹ *Mishnah, Yadayim*, 1.2, 1.1; Hebrew:

מִי רִבִּיעִית נוֹתֵנִין לַיָּדַיִם, לְאֶתֶד, אֶף לְשֵׁנַיִם.

³⁹⁰ *Mishnah Torah, She'ar Avot haTum'ah*, 8.1; (H. Danby, *The Code of Maimonides: Book Ten*, 280f.)

Hebrew: כָּל הַנוֹגֵעַ בְּיָדוֹ בְּרֵאשׁוֹן לְטוּמְאָה בֵּין שֶׁהָיָה אוֹתוֹ רֵאשׁוֹן אָדָם אוֹ כְּלִי אוֹ אוֹכֵל אוֹ מְשַׁקֵּין טְמֵאִין נִטְמְאוּ יָדָיו בְּלִבָּד עַד הַפֶּרֶק:

³⁹¹ John 2:6: *New International Version*;

Greek: ...*λίθιναι ὑδρίαί...κατὰ τὸν καθαρισμὸν τῶν Ἰουδαίων κείμεναι, χωροῦσαι ἀνὰ μετρητὰς δύο ἢ τρεῖς.*

³⁹² *Mishnah Torah, She'ar Avot ha Tum'ah*, 8.7; *Mikvaot*, 11.1; (H. Danby, *The Code of Maimonides: Book Ten*, 282, 532.)

Hebrew:

לְתַרוּמָה אָבֵל לְקֹדֶשׁ אִם נִטְמְאָת יָדוֹ אַחַת וְנִגַּע בְּשֵׁנֵיהּ טִימְאָה וְשִׁתִּיהָן צְרִיכוֹת טְבִילָה לְקֹדֶשׁ:

...וְיָדַיִם שְׂצָרִיכוֹת טְבִילָה אֵין מְטְבִילִין אוֹתָן אֵלָא בְּמִקְוֵה כָּשֶׁר שֵׁישׁ בּוֹ אַרְבַּעִים סָאָה בְּמִקְוֶה שֶׁהָאָדָם טוֹבֵל בּוֹ כְּלִים יָדַיִם טוֹבֵלִין:

between the tent of meeting and the altar, and you shall put water in it, ¹⁹ with which Aaron and his sons shall wash [rahas <> nīpsetai] their hands and their feet.³⁹³

The *Jewish Encyclopedia* comments on an evident specificity contained in this passage:

Washing of the hands and feet is only prescribed by the Mosaic Law for those desiring to perform priestly functions. Scripture states that whenever...any of the subordinate priests desired to enter the sanctuary (Tabernacle) or approach the altar, they were bound to wash their hands and feet from the laver which stood between the Tabernacle and the altar (Ex. 30:19; 40:31). This rule was, of course, also observed in the Temple at Jerusalem.³⁹⁴

Nevertheless, as the *Encyclopedia Judaica* explains:

...It seems that the custom spread from the priests, who washed their hands before eating consecrated food, to the pious among the laity and finally became universal.³⁹⁵

As Edersheim pointed out, one can then appreciate why Mark so specifically and, of course, accurately termed the popularized practice of hand washing as having been observed by “**all the Jews**” based on a “**tradition of the elders**”:

It was reserved for Hillel and Shammai, the two great rival teachers and heroes of Jewish traditionalism, immediately before Christ, to fix the Rabbinic ordinance about the washing of hands (*Netilath Yadayim*), as previously described. This was one of the few points on which they were agreed, and hence emphatically ‘a tradition of the Elders,’ since these two teachers bear, in Rabbinic writings, each the designation of ‘the Elder.’³⁹⁶

Knowing that under various circumstances the ritual washing of hands was performed either by immersing or pouring water over them shows the non-modal terminology Mark used to generically describe this practice—*wash* (*nīptō*) in 7:3 and *unwashed* (*anīptōis*) in 7:2—to be most appropriate, as it is a word well-suited to comprehend a variety of methods.

Bodily Washings – Mark 7:4

Dale tentatively allowed for the two-methods-of-handwashing view of Mark 7, but again forced the limiting tenets of his theory onto the situation:

“*Baptized from the market*” indicates, by the construction, by that construction persisted in through one or more centuries, by its necessary daily recurrence, that *baptizō* has attained a secondary meaning, and that the phrase must mean, *thoroughly purified from the market.*”

...The condition of the Jew was ceremonially changed, his person entirely baptized, by dipping his hands into pure water...The Jew who came in contact with...“the market,” had his condition changed from ceremonial purity to ceremonial impurity. And in this condition he remained...until

³⁹³ Hebrew: וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לְאמֹר: וְעִשִׂיתָ כִּי־יִזְכָּר נְחֻשֶׁת לְרַחֵצָהּ וְנָתַתָּ אֹתוֹ בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה מִיְדֵי הָעָם מֵעַד וַיָּבִין חֲמֹזֵהּ וּנְתַתָּ שָׁמָּה מֵיָם: וַיִּרְחָצוּ אֶתְיָדָיו וְאֶת־רַגְלָיוּם:

LXX: *Καὶ ἐλάλησεν κύριος πρὸς Μωϋσῆν λέγων Ποίησον λουτήρα χαλκοῦν καὶ βάσιν αὐτῶ χαλκίην ὥστε νίπτεσθαι, καὶ θήσεις αὐτὸν ἀνά μέσον τῆς σκηνῆς τοῦ μαρτυρίου καὶ ἀνά μέσον τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου καὶ ἐκχεεῖς εἰς αὐτὸν ὕδωρ, καὶ νίψεται Ααρων καὶ οἱ υἱοὶ αὐτοῦ ἐξ αὐτοῦ τὰς χεῖρας καὶ τοὺς πόδας ὕδατι.*

³⁹⁴ *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, 1:69.

³⁹⁵ *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Fred Skolnik, ed., (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 2007), 1:262.

³⁹⁶ A. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, 2:13.

released from it by the ritual use of ashes or pure water...To make *baptizō* express in such cases a “dipping” involves the twofold radical error, 1. Of engrafting into the word the idea of modal action, which is entirely foreign to its nature, and 2. Of making its condition essentially evanescent [transient], which is outright murder.³⁹⁷

In contrast to Dale’s presumptive rationale, as we have seen, most writers holding the two-hand-washings theory do so on the basis that in context *baptizō* is used to specifically delineate an act of dipping the hands. While such a viewpoint does recognize and generally preserve the modal attributes historically ascribed to *baptizō*, in the absence of any specific modifiers such as *hands*, a straightforward reading of the text would seem to imply that *they* (“**the Pharisees and all the Jews**”) were the corporeal subjects of this action. A number of conversant scholars have indeed concluded as much, here being three examples:

1) Alfred Edersheim: It can only be necessary to refer in briefest manner to those other observances which orthodox Judaism had ‘received to hold’ when they connected with Gentiles. Any contact with a heathen, even the touch of his dress, might involve themselves with those eighteen decrees,³⁹⁸ intended to separate the Jew from all contact with such defilement, that on coming from the market the orthodox Jew would have to immerse.³⁹⁹

2) Heinrich Meyer⁴⁰⁰: In this case *ean me baptisōntai* [unless they baptize] is not to be understood of washing the hands (Lightfoot,⁴⁰¹ Wetstein⁴⁰²), but of *immersion*, which the word in classic Greek and in the New Testament everywhere [*durchweg*—always; without exception] denotes (cf. Beza⁴⁰³), in this case, according to the context: to take a bath. (So also Luke 11:38.) Having come from market, where they may have contracted pollution through contact with the crowd, they eat not, without having first *bathed*. The statement proceeds *by way of climax*; before eating they observe the washing of hands *always*, but the *bathing*, *when they come from market* and wish to eat.⁴⁰⁴

³⁹⁷ J. Dale, *Johannic Baptism*, 94ff.

³⁹⁸ The Eighteen Decrees were a set of strict religious laws alleged to have been enacted sometime between 40 and 70 AD, at a contentious meeting between the followers of Hillel and Shammai, with the latter prevailing. An exact accounting of these decrees is somewhat allusive, but they are known to have centered on increased strictness with regard to ritual purity, especially as relative to interacting with Gentiles. (See: Jerusalem Talmud, *Shabbat* 1:3–4.; also, Edersheim’s narrative leading up this citation [*The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, 2:9ff.]; Heinrich Graetz, ed., *History of the Jews*, [Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1893], 2:270; cf. Jacob Neusner, *The Talmud of Babylonia: An Academic Commentary*, [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996], 2.1:49ff.)

³⁹⁹ A. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, 2:15.

⁴⁰⁰ See note 323.

⁴⁰¹ See note 386.

⁴⁰² Johann Jakob Wetstein (1693–1754) was a Swiss Socinian scholar and controversial pioneer in the field of New Testament textual criticism. In his monumental and incredibly complex collation of manuscript versions, on Mark 7:3, Wetstein made the brief remark, “*Baptizesthai* is immersion of the hands in water, *niptisthai* is water poured over the hands.”;

Latin: βαπτίζεσθαι *est manus aquae immergere, νίπτισθαι manibus affundere*; [Joannis Jacobi Wetsteinii, *Novum Testamentum Graecum Editionis Receptae, cum Lectionibus Variantibus Codicum MSS., Editionum aliarum, Versionum et Patrum*, (Amsterdami: Ex officina Dommeriana, 1751), 1:585.]

⁴⁰³ Theodore Beza: “*Baptizesthai*, in this instance [Mark 7:4], is more than *cherniptein* [‘hand-washing’], because the former appears to involve the entire body, while the latter pertains only to the hands.”;

Latin: *Plus aute est βαπτίζεσθαι hoc in loco, quam χερνίπτειν, quod illud videatur de corpore unieurso, idtud de manibus duntaxat intelligedum.* (*Jesu Christi Domini Nostri Novum Testamentum*; 133.)

⁴⁰⁴ H. Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Hand-book to the Gospels of Mark and Luke*, 1:109.

German: *Dabei ist éán μή βαπτίς. nicht vom Handewasschen (Lightf., Wetst.) zu verstehen, sondern vom Eintauchen, was das Wort im Classischen und im N. T. durchweg heisst. (vrgl. Schon Beza), d. i. hier nach dem Contexte: ein Bad nehmen. So auch Luk. 11,38; Vom Markte gekommen, wo sie unter der Menschenmenge ⇒*

3) Richard T. France (1938–2012; *Anglican; Oxford scholar and translator (NIV)*: The reference then is to the need for those who have been in the marketplace, and thus exposed to various possible sources of ritual impurity, to purify themselves before eating. The washing in this case is not merely of the hands, but apparently involves immersion of the whole person.⁴⁰⁵

(As an aside, one cannot help but notice the highly-esteemed Meyer flatly agreeing with something for which immersionists are sometimes mercilessly chided by their critics⁴⁰⁶—namely, understanding the literal usage of *baptizō* throughout the New Testament and classical Greek literature as “always” referring to or at least substantially comprehending a physical immersion.)

A marked deficiency in Dale’s dealings within this entire realm of the modal question is his failure to consult the many directly pertinent and readily available Jewish resources.⁴⁰⁷ Had he done so, he may have seen that the Mishnah gives a mind-numbing litany of things a religious Jew could likely if not even knowingly contact in a marketplace that would render them ritually unclean—even from just incidentally brushing up against them.

Many of these sources defiled not only the hands but the whole person, including: dead vermin such as various insects, reptiles and rodents; anything said zoological corpses may have touched, such as an olive press or actual olives; anyone involved in the olive business, as they too may have come into contact with said vermin; any woman whose menstrual status was unsure; tax collectors; any Gentile; certain objects if there was any chance they may have been inside a building when a Gentile or tax collector or woman had entered; Jewish men who may not have been scrupulous enough about their own ritual purity; wet or dried spittle on the ground or an object if it had possibly come from a Gentile or a Samaritan woman or a mentally handicapped person; etc., etc. *ad nouseam*.⁴⁰⁸

These religious views and circumstances overlap and thus segue into the second New Testament passage where *baptizō* is used in the context of a 1st century Judaic bodily cleansing.

Bodily Washings - Luke 11:38:

Luke 11:37–39: While Jesus was speaking, a Pharisee asked him to dine with him, so he went in and reclined at table. 38 The Pharisee was astonished to see that he did not first wash [ebaptisthē (baptizō)] before dinner [aristou—a meal].⁴⁰⁹ 39 And the Lord said to him, “Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup [potēriou—cup] and of the dish [pinakos—plate; dish], but inside you are full of greed and wickedness...”⁴¹⁰

*unreine Berührungen gehabt haben können, essen sie nicht, ohne sich erst gebadet zu haben. Die Darstellung schreitet klimaktisch fort: Vor dem Essen beobachten sie die Händewaschung immer, das Baden aber, wenn sie vom Markte kommen und essen wollen. (Heinrich Meyer, *Kritisch Exegetisches Handbuch über die Evangelien des Markus und Lukas*, [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1855], 82.)*

⁴⁰⁵ R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 282.

⁴⁰⁶ As have other non-immersionists. (See texts for notes 16–19, 23–25, et al; also the Greek Orthodox in 67–78.)

⁴⁰⁷ However, Dale did take time to conduct a rather lengthy and triumphal mock trial of a rabbi cited in a Baptist periodical who had confirmed, contra Dale, that the ongoing practice of religious immersions within Orthodox Judaism had been carried over from biblical times. (*Johannic Baptism*, pp.22–31.)

Dale’s heavy reliance on various Gentile patristic writers for his conclusions on the Jewish aspect of the baptismal question (*Judaic Baptism*, pp.129–342)—a fact directly attested in the extended title of *Judaic Baptism* (see note 179)—also seems rather tenuous and misplaced.

⁴⁰⁸ Mishnah, *Tohorot*, 5–10.

⁴⁰⁹ ASV: “...**He marveled that he had not first bathed himself before dinner.**”

⁴¹⁰ Greek: Ἐν δὲ τῷ λαλῆσαι ἐρωτᾷ αὐτὸν Φαρισαῖος ὅπως ἀριστήσῃ παρ' αὐτῶ· εἰσελθὼν δὲ ἀνέπεσεν. ὁ δὲ Φαρισαῖος ἰδὼν ἐθαύμασεν ὅτι οὐ πρῶτον ἐβαπτίσθη πρὸ τοῦ ἀρίστου. εἶπεν δὲ ὁ κύριος πρὸς αὐτόν Νῦν ὑμεῖς οἱ Φαρισαῖοι τὸ ἔξωθεν τοῦ ποτηρίου καὶ τοῦ πίνακος καθαρίζετε, τὸ δὲ ἔσωθεν ὑμῶν γέμει ἀρπαγῆς καὶ πονηρίας.

[Dale]: The friends of the theory must have their equanimity not a little tried by meeting with baptism after baptism in which there is no plain, nor probable, nor possible “dipping.”

...The facts of this case are so patent and so inimical to a dipping of the body into water, that commentators (even when accepting, erroneously, *to dip* as the primary meaning of the word) have, almost unanimously, refused to recognize a dipping of the body as entering into this transaction.⁴¹¹

There is nothing really unexpected here, although Dale’s claim of near historical unanimity with his position is a rather conspicuous exaggeration. In order to reach a sound conclusion, it is again prudent to examine some basic historical factors underlying Luke’s account.

First, one needs to fully appreciate the mindset of the person Jesus was interacting with: a Pharisee. The Apostle Paul summarily described this group, to which he once belonged, as “**the strictest party of our religion**,”⁴¹² and when it came to observing cleansing rituals, they are known to have been downright fanatical.⁴¹³ This incident also revolves around a ritual observed before eating, which further defines its historical context. Here are the remarks of two scholars, one ancient one modern, concerning the Pharisees’ thinking on pre-meal purification:

[Maimonides] Although it is permissible to eat unclean foodstuffs and to drink unclean liquids, the pious of former times used to eat their common food in conditions of cleanness, and all their days they were wary of every uncleanness. And it is they who were called Pharisees, “separated ones,” and this is a higher holiness. It is the way of piety that a man keep himself separate and go apart from the rest of the people and neither touch them nor eat and drink with them.⁴¹⁴

[Jacob Neusner⁴¹⁵] ...The main point should not be missed. When we speak about the Pharisees, we speak about Jews who thought among other things that when they ate their meals at home, they should do so in the way, in general, in which the priests eat their meals of meat, meal, and wine, supplied from the leftovers of God’s meal on the altar of the Temple in Jerusalem. So some of them were priests who pretended that their homes were “little Temples.”⁴¹⁶

While some Pharisees were priests, many were not, at least in the sense of serving in an official capacity in the temple or a synagogue. Both scripture and Josephus also attest that in the mid-1st century the Levitical priesthood was somewhat dominated by their archrivals, the Sadducees.⁴¹⁷ Nonetheless, many Pharisees sanctimoniously requisitioned various practices that the written law did not really require of them. Further knowing that the Pharisees’ ritualism was modeled on that prescribed for the temple priests, one would certainly expect them to abide by this sweeping Levitical precept:

⁴¹¹ J. Dale, *Johannic Baptism*, 113, 117.

⁴¹² Acts 26:5 (cf. Philippians 3:4–6); Greek: ...την ἀκριβεστάτην αἵρεσιν τῆς ἡμετέρας θρησκείας...

⁴¹³ Cf. Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, 2.8.14 (162, 163).

⁴¹⁴ *Mishnah Torah, Tum’at Okhalin (The Laws of the Impurity of Foods)*, 16.12; (H. Danby, *The Code of Maimonides: Book Ten*, 393f.)

Hebrew: אף על פי שמותר לאכול אוכלין טמאין ולשתות משקין טמאים חסידים הראשונים היו אוכלין חולין בטהרה ונוהרין מן הטומאות כולן כל ימיהם והן הנקראים פרושים ודבר זה קדושה יתירה היא ודרך חסידות שיהיה נבדל אדם ופורש משאר העם ולא יגע בהם ולא יאכל וישתה עמהם:

⁴¹⁵ Dr. Jacob Neusner (1932–2016) was a prominent scholar specializing in ancient Jewish history and law. He was an ordained Conservative rabbi, and a prolific author and translator of historical Jewish writings into English.

⁴¹⁶ Jacob Neusner, *The Mishnah; A New Translation*, xxviii.

⁴¹⁷ Acts 5:17; Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, 20.9.1 [199];

Also see: Emil Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1891) 2:29f; Lawrence Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction*, (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1984), 522; Jacob Neusner, *Early Rabbinic Judaism*, (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 1975), 43f.

Leviticus 22:4–7: None of the offspring of Aaron who has a leprous disease or a discharge may eat of the holy things [akal—eat; qodes—a holy item <> LXX: edetai—eat; agiōn—holy (things)] until he is clean. **Whoever touches anything that is unclean through contact with the dead or a man who has had an emission of semen, ⁵ and whoever touches a swarming thing⁴¹⁸ by which he may be made unclean or a person from whom he may take uncleanness, whatever his uncleanness may be—⁶ the person who touches such a thing shall be unclean until the evening and shall not eat of the holy things unless he has bathed** [Hebrew: rahas <> lousētai (lou)] **his body in water** [b-mayim <> hydati]. **⁷ When the sun goes down, he will be clean, and after that he may eat the sacred offerings, for they are his food.**⁴¹⁹

The *Encyclopedia Judaica* describes a historical merger that transpired between the Pharisaic mindset in this matter and the standard mishnaic means of purification:

Immersion was required especially of the priests since they had to be in a state of purity in order to participate in the Temple service or eat of the “holy” things. The high priest immersed himself five times during the service of the Day of Atonement. Other individuals had to be ritually pure even to enter the Temple. However, it became customary among the Pharisees to maintain a state of purity at all times, a fact from which their Hebrew name *Perushim* (‘separated ones’) may have developed.⁴²⁰

It is significant that at the time the Pharisee invited him to dine, Jesus was interacting with a crowd which certainly would have included many ritually unclean people. Verse 29a states, “**When the crowds** [*ochlōn*—a crowd; the common people] **were increasing, he began to say...**”⁴²¹ Then in continuation of this event, verse 37 ushers in our passage: “**While Jesus was speaking, a Pharisee asked him to dine with him...**” In that Jesus was known as a religious leader—often being called rabbi⁴²²—it would be little wonder for a Pharisee to think he should subject himself to the highest standards of purification before dining, just as the host undoubtedly had.⁴²³

Another substantive clue not to be missed is Jesus’ chremamorphic likening of the pharisaic *baptizō* (v.38) to the ritualistic cleansing of cups and dishes (v.39). As we have seen, there is every reason to believe such purifications were effected by total immersion. The understanding that immersion is envisioned in the Lukan passage is also consistent with the previously established point that the *baptisōntai* “before eating” in Mark 7:4 most plausibly has reference to that mode as well. In the following excerpt, the English Baptist theologian John Gill (1697–1771) again cited Maimonides, as well as a distinguished Reformed historian on the matter:

⁴¹⁸ “Swarming things” has reference to various fish, insects, reptiles, and rodents; see Lev. 11:10, 29–46 cf. *Mishnah, Nedarim*, 2.1.

⁴¹⁹ Hebrew: איש מנגר אהרן והוא צרוע או נב בקדשים לא יאכל עד אשר יטהר והנגע בקל-טמא נפשו או איש אשר-תצא ממנו שבת-זרע: או-איש אשר יגע בקל-שך אשר יגע בקדש או באדם אשר יגע בטמא-לו לכל טמאתו: גפף אשר תגע-בו וטמא עד-הערב ול יאכל מן-קדשים כי אס-רתך בשוה במים: וגם השמש וטהר ואסר יאכל מן-קדשים כי להמו הוא

LXX: *καὶ ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ σπέρματος Ααρὼν τοῦ ἱερέως, καὶ οὗτος λεπρᾷ ἢ γονορρυΐς, τῶν ἁγίων οὐκ ἔδεται ἕως ἂν καθαρισθῇ· καὶ ὁ ἀπτόμενος πάσης ἀκαθαρσίας ψυχῆς, ἢ ἄνθρωπος ᾧ ἂν ἐξέλθῃ ἐξ αὐτοῦ κοίτη σπέρματος, ὅστις ἂν ἄψηται παντὸς ἐρπετοῦ ἀκαθάρτου ὃ μιανεῖ αὐτόν, ἢ ἐπ’ ἀνθρώπῳ ἐν ᾧ μιανεῖ αὐτόν κατὰ πᾶσαν ἀκαθαρσίαν αὐτοῦ, ψυχὴ ἣτις ἂν ἄψηται αὐτῶν ἀκάθαρτος ἔσται ἕως ἑσπέρας· οὐκ ἔδεται ἀπὸ τῶν ἁγίων, ἐὰν μὴ λούσῃται τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ ὕδατι. καὶ δὴ ὁ ἥλιος, καὶ καθαρὸς ἔσται· καὶ τότε φάγεται τῶν ἁγίων, ὅτι ἄρτος ἐστὶν αὐτοῦ.*

⁴²⁰ *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 1:126.

⁴²¹ Greek: *Τῶν δὲ ὄχλων ἐπαθροισμένων ἤρξατο λέγειν...*

⁴²² That is, “teacher”—Matt. 26:49; Mark 10:51; 11:21; John 1:49; 3:2.

⁴²³ Having said this, there is one thing we can be certain of: the Pharisee’s expectation that Jesus should bathe himself in this situation was an extra-biblical surmise. Jesus kept the Law perfectly (Gal. 4:4, 5; John 8:46, 55; Mark 7:5–7; Matt. 5:17; 1 Pet. 2:21, 22; Heb. 4:15)—keeping in mind that he did not serve in the capacity of a Levitical priest (Heb. 7:13–17, 8:1–4; 9:11, 12; cf. Luke 5:14), and thus was not subject to the Aaronic ordinances in Lev. 22.

...For the Pharisees, upon touching the common people or their clothes, as they returned from market, or from any court of judicature, were obliged to immerse themselves in water before they ate; and so the Samaritan Jews.

“If the Pharisees”, says Maimonides “touched but the garments of the common people, they were defiled all one as if they had touched a profluvius⁴²⁴ person, and needed immersion [*tabal*],”⁴²⁵ or were obliged to it.

...And Scaliger,⁴²⁶ from the Jews observes that “the more superstitious part of them, everyday, before they sat down to meat, dipped the whole body; hence the Pharisees admiration at Christ...Luke 11:38.”^{427 428}

The English scholar Roger Booth aptly summarized why it is most reasonable to understand that a full bodily immersion is in view in Luke 11:38:

The aorist passive *ebaptisthe* literally means “was dipped (or immersed)”, which implies the whole body. We think Luke means immersion of the whole body since he uses the verb *baptizō* in describing John’s baptizing in his chapter 3, and John had adapted the Jewish ritual *tebilah* [*tabal*] in which the body was immersed. This verb is an intensive or iterative form of the verb *baptō*, both of which mean to dip or immerse.

...He [an ultra-religious Jew known as a *haber*] would also consider his body presumptively impure after a visit to a market or other busy public place because of its possible defilement by accidental contact with, for example, the clothes of an ‘*am-ha’ares* [someone ignorant of or careless toward purity laws] ...or a menstruous woman (Lev. 15:19f). The *haber* probably routinely immersed every morning and after passing through a crowded public place.

Thus the interpretation...of *ebaptisato* at Luke 11:38 as “immersed himself” is credible on the basis that the host Pharisee (a *haber*) was expressing mock surprise (in an effort to recruit Jesus) that Jesus had not immersed himself in a *miqveh*, like a *haber*, after a journey to his host presumably through a public place where he might have been defiled. This practice of the *haberim* also supports the accuracy of Mark 7:4, a custom of not eating on return from market unless *baptisontai*...⁴²⁹

Mikvot

[Dale] ...The baptism [in Luke 11:38] ...must be added to the long list of those that have gone before in which no shadow of evidence for a dipping could be traced. ...On this occasion being, at mealtime, near the house of a Pharisee, he is invited by him to dine...The Pharisee is surprised that he has not first been baptized (purified). The facts of this case point to certain well-assured conclusions: 1. The Pharisee must have expected the anticipated baptism to take place in his house. ...2. Provision must have been made in the Pharisee's house for this baptism; otherwise he could not have marveled at the neglect.⁴³⁰

⁴²⁴ *Profluvius* is an archaic word meaning *to flow copiously* (a.k.a. *flux*). In this particular context it refers to someone who experienced any discharge of fluid from the body that rendered them ritually unclean (cf. Lev. 15).

⁴²⁵ Maimonides, *Commentary on the Mishnah* [not to be confused with his *Mishnah Torah*]; *Mish. Chagigah*, 2.7; Judeo-Arabic: וענין מדרס לפרושים כי הם כשהיו נוגעים בבגדיהם נטמאו כאילו נגעו במדרס הזב וצריכין טבילה : (*Thesaurus Antiquitatum Sacrarum Complectens Selectissima Clarissimorum virorum Opuscula in quibus Hebraeorum*, [Venetiis: Joannem Gabrielem Herthz, 1759], 22:888.)

⁴²⁶ Joseph Justus Scaliger (1540–1609) was a French Reformed chronologist and Greek linguist.

⁴²⁷ Latin: *Iudaei vero superstitiosiores non pedes tantum, sed & corpus totum intingebant...quare Pharisaeus ille, qui Iesum ad caenam inuitauerat, mirabatur eum, antequam totum corpus abluissent, discubuisse...Lucae xi.* (Iosephi Scaligeri, *Opus de Emendatione Temporum*, [Colognae: Typis Roverianis 1629], 571.)

⁴²⁸ John Gill, *A Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*, (London: W. Winterbotham, 1796), 3:312.

⁴²⁹ Roger P. Booth, *Jesus and the Laws of Purity: Tradition History and Legal History in Mark 7* {*Library of New Testament Studies*}, (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986), 24, 200.

⁴³⁰ J. Dale, *Johannic Baptism*, 115f.

As Booth alluded to above, however, the Mishnah contains a large tractate entitled *Mikveh*,⁴³¹ which both prescribes and describes where religious bathings were performed. Maimonides:

Of a still higher grade [than places like simple holes dug in the ground, rain ponds and storage cisterns] is a pool [*mikveh*] containing [at least] forty seah⁴³² of water that is not drawn: in it any person who is unclean may immerse [*taba*] himself (and be restored to cleanness)—save only a man with flux⁴³³—and in it may [also] be immersed [*taba*] any unclean utensil, and hands that need to be immersed [*taba*] for Hallowed Things, as we have explained.⁴³⁴

Dr. William Grasham (1930–2016; Restorationist) traveled extensively throughout Israel in order to conduct research on ancient mikvot. He subsequently wrote an article relating how archeologists have uncovered numerous examples that date from apostolic times:

It is noteworthy that visitors to archaeological sites in Israel today can easily observe that all of the pre-A.D. 70 synagogues that have been discovered—at the Herodium, Masada, and Gamla—had immersion pools in close proximity for the purificatory washings of those who attended their services.⁴³⁵

Over three hundred stepped-and-plastered immersion pools, called *miqvaot* in Hebrew (singular, *mikvah*), have been discovered in Israel. Of these, about one hundred fifty have been found in Jerusalem dating from the first century B.C. to the end of the Second Temple period (A.D. 70).

...Forty-eight *miqvaot* of various sizes have been uncovered just below the southern wall of the Temple Mount adjacent to the Rabbis' Teaching Steps. They were once enclosed within a large building with private facilities for the purification rites of both men and women.⁴³⁶ ...About sixty

⁴³¹ Hebrew, מקוואה, which means “a gathering of water”. *Mikvah* is used in Isa. 22:11 (typically translated *reservoir*) and *mikveh* (*collection; gathering; mass*) in places such as Gen. 1:10, Ex. 7:19 and Lev. 11:36. It is also variously transliterated *miqva*, *mikve*, *miqwa*, *miqweh*; plural, *mikvot*, *mikva'ot*, *mikvoth*, *mikves*, et. al.

⁴³² There is again uncertainty as to what the volume of a *seah* may have been. Some sources suppose it equaled approximately 1.9 gallons—according to which 40 seahs would be about 75 gallons (e.g., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986], 3:353).

However, Maimonides indicated that 40 seahs equaled the volume of three cubic cubits (H. Danby, *The Code of Maimonides: Book Ten*, 509), which both *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (8:588) and *Encyclopedia Judaica* (4:225) recognize as being around 120 gallons.

⁴³³ See notes 378 and 424.

⁴³⁴ *Mishnah Torah, Mikvaot (Pools of Water)*, 9.5; (H. Danby, *The Code of Maimonides—Book Ten*, 525.)

Hebrew: למעלה מהן מקוה שיש בו מ' סאה מים שאינם שאובין שבו טובל כל אדם טמא חוץ מן הזב הזכר ובו מטבילין את כל הכלים הטמאים ואת הידים שמתבילין לקדש כמו שביארנו:

⁴³⁵ The Jewish historian Emil Schürer (1844–1910; German Lutheran) similarly observed:

“Synagogues were built by preference outside the towns and near rivers, or on the seashore for the sake of giving everyone a convenient opportunity for performing such Levitical purification as might be necessary before attending public worship.” (*A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, 2:2.69.)

German: *Man erbaute die Synagogen gern außerhalb der Städte, in der Nähe von Flüssen oder am Meeresstrande, um jedem vor dem Besuch des Gottesdienstes bequeme Gelegenheit zur Vornahme der nötigen levitischen Reinigungen zu geben. (Geschichte des Jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi, [Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1907], 2:519.)*

There is actually some intriguing if circumstantial evidence of this arrangement in the New Testament: “**And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer...**” (Acts 16:13a; cf. 17:2)—whereat Lydia and her household were then baptized (16:15).

Greek: ἢ τε ἡμέρα τῶν σαββάτων ἐξήλθομεν ἔξω τῆς πόλης παρὰ ποταμὸν οὗ ἐνομιζόμεν προσευχὴν εἶναι.

⁴³⁶ Josephus wrote of the Temple Mount's provisions: “The inward parts had the largeness and form of a palace, it being parted into all kinds of rooms and conveniences such as courts, and places for bathing [*balaneia*—bathing facilities], and broad spaces for camps...” (*The Wars of the Jews*, 5.5.8 [241]; W. Whiston, *Works of Josephus*, 708.)

Greek: τὸ δ' ἔνδον βασιλείων εἶχε χώραν καὶ διάθεσιν: μεμέριστο γὰρ εἰς πᾶσαν οἰκῶν ἰδέαν τε καὶ χρῆσιν περιστοὰ τε καὶ βαλανεῖα καὶ στρατοπέδων ἀνλαῖς πλατεῖαις... (I. Bekker, *Flavii Iosephi Opera Omnia*, 6:28f.)

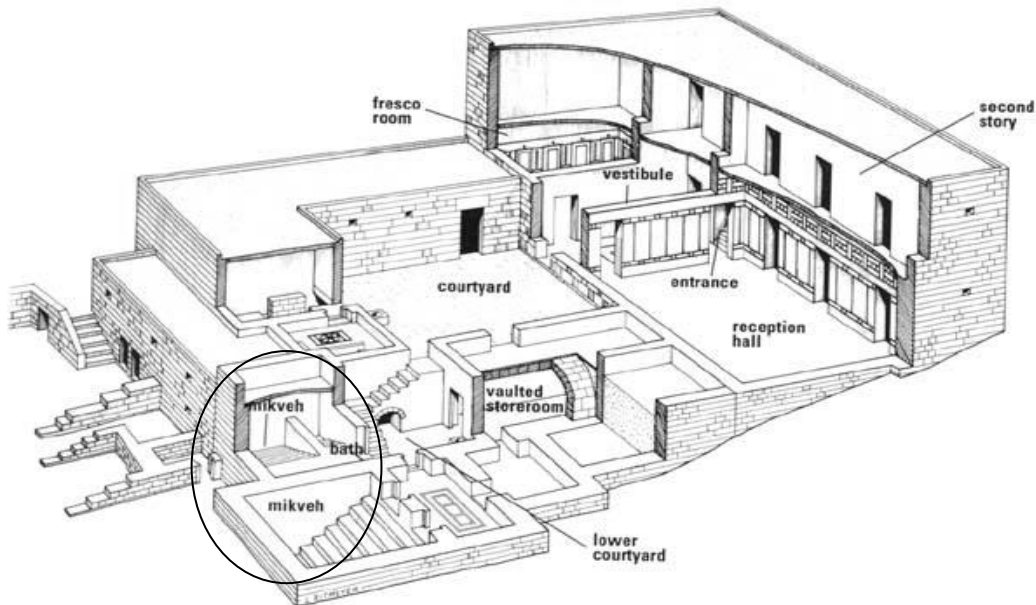
miqvaot have been found in the Upper City excavations of wealthy Jewish homes in the western part of Jerusalem. Professor Nahman Avigad of the Hebrew University reports finding at least one *miqveh* in each house and sometimes more.^{437 438}



(Fig. 1) A *miqveh* from the 1st century AD—one of several dozen that have been excavated on the southern Temple Mount.



(Fig. 2) A large *miqveh* in a 1st century Jerusalem residence.



(Fig. 3) A sketch depicting what a large house excavated in an affluent area of 1st century Jerusalem may have looked like. It contained two separate *miqvot*, likely to segregate men and women.

(Image courtesy of Biblical Archaeological Society, Washington, D.C.)

⁴³⁷ Nahman Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1983), 139f; Avigad indicates that in one case nine *miqvot* were found in a single residence. (Also see: Howard F. Vos, ed., *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Manners and Customs*, [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999], 444.)

⁴³⁸ Bill Grasham, *Archaeology and Christian Baptism; Restoration Quarterly*, (Abilene: 2001), 43.2; also see, Jonathan D. Lawrence, *Washing in Water: Trajectories of Ritual Bathing in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Literature*, (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 155ff; cf. *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 4:449.

Dale may charitably be given at least a partial pass for not having been able to take into account modern archaeological discoveries.⁴³⁹ Yet, ultimately, there is in fact abundant literary and archaeological evidence indicating that 1st century Jewish culture was both religiously disposed⁴⁴⁰ and materially well-equipped to observe frequent bodily immersions in water.⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁹ While Dale did not specifically raise this objection (although see *Christic Baptism*, 155ff), it is not uncommon for modern non-immersionist authors to suppose—even after the widely published discoveries of these mikvot—that a lack of water, not to mention adequate facilities, in desert-bound ancient Jerusalem would have prevented the 3000 converts at Pentecost from having been baptized by immersion (Acts 2:41). Beside the evidence of the mikvot themselves (which were surely not constructed just to remain empty), various historical sources may be consulted on the matter. In describing the temple in Jerusalem, a pseudo-Aristeas (c.2nd century BC) wrote:

“And there is an inexhaustible supply of water, because an abundant natural spring gushes up within the temple area. There are moreover wonderful and indescribable cisterns underground, as they pointed out to me, at a distance of five furlongs all around the site of the temple, and each of them has countless pipes so that the different streams converge together.” (Abraham Holz, *The Holy City: Jews on Jerusalem*, [New York: W. W. Norton, 1970], 49.)

Greek: ὕδατος δὲ ἀνέκλειπτός ἐστι σύστασις, ὡς ἂν καὶ πηγῆς ἔσωθεν πολυρρύτου φυσικῶς ἐπιρρεούσης, ἔτι δὲ θαυμασίων καὶ ἀδιηγήτων ὑποδοχείων ὑπαρχόντων ὑπὸ γῆν, καθὼς ἀπέφαινον πέντε σταδίων κυκλόθεν τῆς κατὰ τὸ ἱερὸν καταβολῆς καὶ ἐκάστου τούτων σύριγγας ἀναριθμούς, καθ’ ἕκαστον μέρος ἑαυτὰ συναπτόντων τῶν ρευμάτων; (H. Swete, *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek*, [Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1902], 535.)

By all indication pseudo-Aristeas was referring to the Gihon Spring, which is located about 500 feet directly south of the Temple Mount in the adjacent Kidron Valley: “‘Gihon’ very likely comes from the root ‘gy,’ ‘gush,’ with the relative ending ‘on,’ hence ‘the great gusher,’ so named from the fact that it gushes for a period of about forty minutes, at intervals of six to eight hours, depending on the season. Its flow is about 1200 cubic meters (42,400 cubic ft. = 317,000 U.S. gal.), less in the dry season.” (*The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 2:1002f.) That means this single spring still produces around 1,000,000 gallons of fresh water daily.

Herod the Great (74–4 BC) is known for having launched a number of colossal building programs during his governance of Israel (37–4 BC). Most notable among these was the so-called Second Temple (cf. John 2:20), but he also commissioned a massive renovation and even further enhancement of Jerusalem’s water infrastructure. (See: C. A. Evans, Stanley E. Porter, Jr., eds., *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, [Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000], 125ff.) In the 1860’s the British War Department conducted an Ordnance Survey of Jerusalem, led by a Capt. Charles W. Wilson, which included an evaluation of its ancient water-works. Alfred Edersheim extensively cited the survey’s findings, which further corroborate pseudo-Aristeas’ account:

“The ‘low-level’ aqueduct, which supplied the Temple, derived its waters from three sources—from the hills about Hebron, from Etham, and from the three pools of Solomon. Its total length was over forty miles. The amount of water it conveyed may be gathered from the fact that the surplusage of the waters of Etham is calculated, when drained into the lower pool of Gihon, to have presented when full, ‘an area of nearly four acres of water.’

“And, as if this had not been sufficient, ‘the ground is perfectly honeycombed with a series of remarkable rock-hewn cisterns, in which the water brought by an aqueduct from Solomon’s Pools, near Bethlehem, was stored. The cisterns appear to have been connected by a system of channels cut out of the rock; so that when one was full the surplus water ran into the next, and so on, till the final overflow was carried off by a channel into the Kidron. One of the cisterns—that known as the Great Sea*—would contain two million gallons; and the total number of gallons which could be stored probably exceeded ten million.”

(Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple, Its Ministries and Services*, (London: James Clark & Co., 1889), 2.55.)

*The apocryphal book Wisdom of Ben Sira records that during the time of the high priest Simon I (3rd century BC), “...the [Temple] cistern to receive water, being in compass [*perimetron*—circumference] as the sea [*thalassēs*—sea], was covered in plates of brass.” (50:3); Greek: ἐν ἡμέραις αὐτοῦ ἠλαττώθη ἀποδοχεῖον ὑδάτων, λάκκος ὡσεὶ θαλάσσης τὸ περίμετρον; (*The Apocrypha: Greek and English*, [London: S. Bagster, 1871], 119.)

⁴⁴⁰ The Essenes were another 1st century Jewish sect that in terms of performing religious cleansings was evidently as rigorous as the Pharisees. Josephus related that, like the Pharisees, the Essenes “bathe [*louo*] their bodies in cold water...” before entering their “dining room, as into a certain holy temple.”

(*The Wars of the Jews*, 2.8.5 [129]; W. Whiston, *Works of Josephus*, 2:243) Greek: ἀπολούνται τὸ σῶμα ψυχροῖς ὕδασιν...εἰς ἅγιόν τι τέμενος παραγίνονται τὸ δειπνήτριον. (I. Bekker, *Flavii Iosephi Opera Omnia*, 5:148).

See also: Jehon Grist, *Fifty Years of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, (Berkley: Lehrhaus Judaica, 2001), 3; David A. deSilva, *An Introduction to the New Testament—Contexts, Methods and Ministry Formation*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 84ff. W. A. Elwell, B. J. Beitzel, eds., *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing, 1989) 1:599; E. Schurer, *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, 2.2, 209f.; ⇒

Together, these historical informants place beyond reasonable doubt the understanding that, in accordance with their normative meaning, *baptizō* and *baptismos* in Mark 7:4 and Luke 11:38 indicate purifications that were performed by immersion in water.

Various *Baptismos* – Hebrews 9:10

Hebrews 9:6, 9b–14a 19–22: These preparations having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties. ...

^{9b} According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, ¹⁰ but deal only with food and drink and various [*diaphoroi*—varying; different] washings [*baptismois* (*baptismos*)], regulations for the body [*sarx*—flesh; the body] imposed until the time of reformation.

¹¹ But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) ¹² he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. ¹³ For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling [*rantizousa* (*rantizō*)] of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ...

...¹⁹ For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled [*erantisen* (*rantizō*)] both the book itself and all the people, ²⁰ saying, “This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you.” ²¹ And in the same way he sprinkled [*erantisen*] with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. ²² Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.⁴⁴²

Hartmut Stegemann, *The Library of Qumran: On the Essenes, Qumran, John the Baptist, and Jesus*, (Grand Rapids & Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 41ff., 217ff.

⁴⁴¹ In the mid-2nd century (c.160 AD) the early Christian apologist Justin Martyr alluded to the existence and use of mikvot or similar facilities within the religious Jewish communities that he would have been familiar with (Ephesus and Rome):

“But the cisterns [*lakkous*—a pit; a cistern; reservoir] which you have dug for yourselves are broken and profitless to you. For what is the use of that baptism [*baptismatos*] which cleanses the flesh and body alone? Baptize [*baptisthete*] the soul from wrath and from covetousness, from envy, and from hatred; and, lo! the body is pure.” (*Dialogue with Trypho*, 14; ANF 2:104.)

Greek: οὗς δὲ ὑμεῖς ὠρύζατε λάκκους ἑαυτοῖς, συντετριμμένοι εἰσὶ καὶ οὐδὲν ὑμῖν χρήσιμοι. τί γὰρ ὄφελος ἐκείνου τοῦ βαπτίσματος, ὃ τὴν σάρκα καὶ μόνον τὸ σῶμα φαιδρύνει; βαπτίσθητε τὴν ψυχὴν ἀπὸ ὀργῆς καὶ ἀπὸ πλεονεξίας, ἀπὸ φθόνου, ἀπὸ μίσους· καὶ ἰδοὺ τὸ σῶμα καθαρὸν ἔστι. (PG 6:504)

By relating the process to a physical water ritual that involved a bodily “baptism” in a “cistern”, Justin was obviously making a wordplay on the indictment in Jeremiah 2:13:

“...for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns [LXX: *lakkous*; Hebrew: *bōrōw*—cistern; pit] for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.”

LXX: ὅτι δύο καὶ πονηρὰ ἐποίησεν ὁ λαός μου· ἐμὲ ἐνκατέλιπον, πηγὴν ὕδατος ζωῆς, καὶ ὄρυξαν ἑαυτοῖς λάκκους συντετριμμένους οἱ οὐ δυνήσονται ὕδωρ συνέχειν.

Hebrew: כִּי־שְׁתַּיִם רְעוּת עָשָׂה אֱתֵי עַמִּי אֶתִּי עַזְבּוּ מִקְּוֵה | מַיִם חַיִּים לְחַבֵּץ הֵם בְּאֵרוֹת בְּאֵרוֹת בְּאֵרֵי אֶשְׁרָא לֹא־יִכְלוּ הַמַּיִם:

⁴⁴² Greek: Τούτων δὲ οὕτως κατεσκευασμένων, εἰς μὲν τὴν πρώτην σκηνὴν διὰ παντὸς εἰσίσαισι οἱ ἱερεῖς τὰς λατρείας ἐπιτελοῦντες...

καθ' ἣν δῶρά τε καὶ θυσία προσφέρονται μὴ δυνάμεναι κατὰ συνείδησιν τελειῶσαι τὸν λατρεύοντα, μόνον ἐπὶ βρώμασιν καὶ πόμασιν καὶ διαφόροις βαπτισμοῖς, δικαιώματα σαρκὸς μέχρι καιροῦ διορθώσεως ἐπικείμενα. Χριστὸς δὲ παραγενόμενος ἀρχιερεὺς τῶν γενομένων ἀγαθῶν διὰ τῆς μείζονος καὶ τελειοτέρας σκηνῆς οὐ χειροποιήτου, τοῦτ' ἔστιν οὐ ταύτης τῆς κτίσεως, οὐδὲ δι' αἵματος τράγων καὶ μόσχων διὰ δὲ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος, εἰσήλθεν ἐφάπαξ εἰς τὰ =>

[Dale]: It is with great pleasure that I present the following just views of Professor J. H. Godwin... [1809–89; English Congregationalist]:

John was both a prophet and priest. As prophet he preached, and as priest he used a rite of purification similar to those used by the priests. All public purifications with water, and all in which one person acted on another, were by sprinkling or affusion. These and only these were appointed by the law, and were called baptisms (Heb. 9:10)...⁴⁴³

...That the “diverse baptizings” are included in the “carnal ordinances,” (ordinances of the flesh,) is a matter of universal acknowledgment. It is also certain, that “the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifying to the *purifying* of the *flesh*” is an exposition of the “ordinances of *the flesh*.” Now, the “ordinances of the flesh” embrace “meats, and drinks, and diverse baptizings;” and if “the sprinkling of the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer,” docs not enter into “meats and drinks,” it must be found in “diverse baptizings.”

...The sprinklings and the baptizings are the same thing under diversity of designation. The *sprinkling* expresses the mode in which the agency was employed, and the *baptizing* indicates the controlling influence attendant upon the agency so applied...⁴⁴⁴

At first blush Dale’s argument may appear sound, but once again he failed to account for much of the relevant information. On the most basic level, the implication that pouring and sprinkling were the only way Levitical water purifications were performed is not accurate. While the Old Testament did prescribe those methods for applying various liquid solutions that were used in many cleansing rituals, these were not the only procedures commanded. Here is an outline of the various modal actions the written law specified be performed on people:

Sprinkling (נָזַף - *nazah*—*sprinkle*; or, זָרַק - *zarak*—*throw; cast*): **1**) Sprinkling the ashes of a red heifer mixed with water was used in the purification of those who had come into contact with a dead body or grave.⁴⁴⁵ **2**) On the occasion of inaugurating the Levitical priesthood, the priests were also sprinkled with this mixture,⁴⁴⁶ as they were with blood and oil.⁴⁴⁷

The sacrificial blood of bulls or goats was also sometimes sprinkled on people, namely, **3**) when the Mosaic covenant was inaugurated, and **4**) when Levitical priests were consecrated.⁴⁴⁸ Sprinkling the blood of a sacrificial bird mixed with water was used **5**) in the cleansing of those

ἄγια, αἰώνιαν λύτρωσιν εὐράμενος. εἰ γὰρ τὸ αἷμα τράγων καὶ ταύρων καὶ σποδὸς δαμάλεως ῥαντίζουσα τοὺς κεκοινωνημένους ἀγιάζει πρὸς τὴν τῆς σαρκὸς καθαρότητα, πόσω μᾶλλον τὸ αἷμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ...

...λαληθείσης γὰρ πάσης ἐντολῆς κατὰ τὸν νόμον ὑπὸ Μωυσέως παντὶ τῷ λαῷ, λαβὼν τὸ αἷμα τῶν μόσχων καὶ τῶν τράγων μετὰ ὕδατος καὶ ἐρίου κοκκίνου καὶ ὑσσώπου αὐτὸ τε τὸ βιβλίον καὶ πάντα τὸν λαὸν ἐράντισεν, λέγων Τοῦτο τὸ αἷμα τῆς διαθήκης ἧς ἐνετείλατο πρὸς ὑμᾶς ὁ θεός. καὶ τὴν σκηνὴν δὲ καὶ πάντα τὰ σκεῦη τῆς λειτουργίας τῷ αἵματι ὁμοίως ἐράντισεν. καὶ σχεδὸν ἐν αἵματι πάντα καθαρίζεται κατὰ τὸν νόμον, καὶ χωρὶς αἱματεκχυσίας οὐ γίνεται ἄφεσις.

⁴⁴³ J. Dale, *Johannic Baptism*, 66; citing: John Hensley Godwin, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark: A New Translation with Critical Notes*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1869), 2.

While Dale did not continue further in his citation of Godwin, there is every reason to believe he would be agreeable to what the professor went on to say:

“The same name [*baptize*] was given to the common purifications of the Jews. (Mark 7:4; Luke 11:38.) There is nothing in any of the narratives of the New Testament to lead to the supposition that, either by John or by the disciples of Jesus, any persons were ever baptized except in the way in which the priests were accustomed to baptize people in public, by the sprinkling of water.” (Ibid.; also see text for note 628.)

⁴⁴⁴ J. Dale, *Judaic Baptism*, 385f.

⁴⁴⁵ Num. 19:13, 18–21 (cf. Heb. 9:13).

⁴⁴⁶ Num. 8:7.

⁴⁴⁷ Ex. 29:21.

⁴⁴⁸ Ex. 24:8, 29:21; Lev. 8:30 (cf. Heb. 9:13, 19; 10:22).

recovering from leprous skin diseases.⁴⁴⁹ Notably, pure water was never sprinkled as part of any Old Testament purification or dedicatory ritual.⁴⁵⁰

Pouring (יָצַק - *yatsaq*—*pour; flow*): Oil was actually the only fluid that was poured on a person's body in the course of a Levitical ritual, with such being done **1)** in the cleansing of those recovering from leprous diseases⁴⁵¹ and **2)** in the consecration of priests.⁴⁵²

In addition, **3)** the regular washing of the priests' hands and feet with water almost certainly involved pouring.⁴⁵³ Similar to the limitation seen with sprinkling, no Old Testament ritual expressly involved pouring water, or a water-mixture on a person's head or torso.

Bathing (רָחַץ - *rahas*—*bathe; wash*): Significantly, every category of cleansing that involved pouring or sprinkling a purificatory substance on a person—as well as several that did not—also required the subject to bathe themselves in water.⁴⁵⁴ In terms of general classification, bathing oneself in water was prescribed in seven different circumstances:

1) In the consecration of priests,⁴⁵⁵ **2)** as part of the priests' ongoing purifications—such as before putting on their vestments, during certain sacrificial rituals⁴⁵⁶ and sometimes before eating,⁴⁵⁷ **3)** in cleansing those who had touched a corpse or grave,⁴⁵⁸ **4)** in cleansing those recovered from leprous diseases of the skin,⁴⁵⁹ **5)** in cleansing those who had experienced various bodily discharges,⁴⁶⁰ **6)** in cleansing those who had touched other ritually contaminated persons or objects,⁴⁶¹ and **7)** in purifying those who had eaten carrion or other unclean meat.⁴⁶²

⁴⁴⁹ Lev. 14:7, 51.

⁴⁵⁰ Friedrich Lampe (1683–1729; German Reformed) drew attention to this fact: “The sprinkling of water alone was never instituted, Rather, it was always mixed either with blood or ashes.”;

Latin: *Accedit, quom nula aspersio sola aqua institueretur. Nam aut sanguinis aut cineris aliquid immixtum erat. (Commentarius Analytico-Exegeticus tam Evangelii Secund. Joannem, [Amsterdami: A. Schoonenburg, 1724], 566.)*

⁴⁵¹ Lev. 14:18, 29.

⁴⁵² Ex. 29:7; 40:13, 15; Lev. 8:12, 30; 21:10.

⁴⁵³ Ex. 30:17–21; 40:30–31; cf. 2 Kings 3:11.

⁴⁵⁴ In his landmark commentary on the Pentateuch, the highly-venerated Rabbi Solomon Yitzhaki (1040–1105)—best known by the personal acronym Rashi (derived from *Rabban shel Yisrael*, “The Rabbi of Israel”)—wrote:

“[Ex. 24:6] *in basins*; there were two basins, one for holding the half of the blood from the burnt offering and the other for holding the half of the blood from the peace offerings, in order to sprinkle it [both bloods] on the people. From this our Rabbis have inferred that our ancestors entered into the covenant with God by means of circumcision, immersion [*tabal*] and sprinkling of blood—and while immersion is not mentioned in this passage it must have taken place, for no sprinkling is effective without immersion [*tabal*] accompanying it (cf. Tosafot Yevamot 46b*).”

(Morris Rosenbaum, Abraham M. Silbermann, trans., *Pentateuch with Targum Onkelos, Haphtaroth and Prayers for Sabbath and Rashi's Commentary: Exodus*, [New York: Hebrew Publishing Co., 1930], 2:192.)

Hebrew: באגנת. שתי אננות, אֶחָד לְחֻצֵי דָם עוֹלָה וְאֶחָד לְחֻצֵי דָם שְׁלָמִים לְהִזֹּת אוֹתָם עַל הָעַם. וּמִפְּאֵן לְמַדּוֹ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁנִּכְנָסוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ לְבְרִית בְּמִילָה וְטְבִילָה וְהִנָּחַת דָּמִים, שְׁאִין הַנָּחָה בְּלֹא טְבִילָה (כְּרִיתוֹת ט'):

(Abraham Berliner, *Raschi: der Kommentar des Salomo b. Isak über den Pentateuch*, [Frankfurt a.M.: J. Kaufmann, 1905], 166.

*This cross-reference refers to the standard orthodox commentary on the Talmud, the Tosafot (on Yevamot 46b). In a discussion of the mishnaic interpretation of Exodus 19:10 it is remarked: “It is learned there is no sprinkling without immersion [*tabal*].” (Hebrew: דָּאִין הוּזָה בְּלֹא טְבִילָה; *Ibid.*) This principle is also stated in the Talmud itself (Keritot 9a): “There is no sprinkling [of sacrificial blood] without immersion.” (Hebrew: דָּאִין הוּזָה בְּלֹא טְבִילָה; *Ibid.*)

⁴⁵⁵ Ex. 29:4, 40:12; Lev. 8:6.

⁴⁵⁶ Lev. 16:4, 24, 26, 28; Num. 19:7, 8.

⁴⁵⁷ Lev. 22:6.

⁴⁵⁸ Num. 19:19.

⁴⁵⁹ Lev. 14:8, 9.

⁴⁶⁰ Lev. 15:5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 16, 18, 21, 22, 27; Deut. 23:11.

⁴⁶¹ Lev. 15:7, 26, 27.

As the above accounting shows, the allegation made by Godwin and Dale that sprinkling and pouring were modally dominant is plainly erroneous. Rather, it must be said that bathing was the most prevalent action employed in Levitical cleansings. Again, it was also the only mode involved in the remediation of every major category of cultic impurity. Even rituals that put an aspect of primacy, and as such may be said to have revolved around the sprinkling of a sacrificial element, still prominently included the requirement for participants to bathe themselves. These bathings were normally the conclusional act within a larger, multifaceted process. As indicated above, the Hebrew word invariably used to denote the act of *bathing* in these cases is *rahas*.⁴⁶³

1) רָחַץ ...*wash, wash off, away, bathe*... trans.; *wash* (with water)...intrans.; *wash, bathe* (oneself).⁴⁶⁴

2) רָחַץ (*rāhas*) *Wash, bathe*, i.e., remove dirt and impurities using water and possibly other cleansing agents, either immersed in a body of water, or with lesser amounts of water, used both as normal personal hygiene and as ceremonial ritual.

...*Be abundant*, formally, washed, i.e., have an abundant amount of a quantity, as a figurative extension of washing oneself in a large mass of liquid.⁴⁶⁵

3) רָחַץ (*rāhas*) *wash*...This root refers to ritual washings and is cognate philologically, although not semantically, to Akkadian [*an extinct Semitic language from which Aramaic evolved*] *rahbasu, to overflow, to flood*. It is cognate to Egyptian and Ugaritic [*another extinct Semitic language*] *rhs* with the same meaning. ...This washing would normally take a great deal of water...⁴⁶⁶

While *rahas* may not directly specify a particular mode of washing, it apparently stipulates a process involving a significant amount of water.⁴⁶⁷ To such effect, and in agreement with the unanimous Jewish-mishnaic interpretation in the matter, many Christian scholars from various eras, church backgrounds and academic disciplines have concluded that in its Levitical context *rahas* indicates a washing done by immersion, here being a sample of ten:⁴⁶⁸

1) **Antoine Calmet** (1672–1757; *French Catholic*): The priests and Levites, before they exercised their ministry, washed themselves, (Ex. 29:4, Lev. 8:6). All legal pollutions were cleansed by baptism, or by plunging into water. ...Generally, people dipped themselves entirely under the water, and this is the most simple notion of the word “baptize.”⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶² Lev. 17:15, 16.

⁴⁶³ Also transliterated *rachats, rahat*, et al.

⁴⁶⁴ *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 934.

⁴⁶⁵ *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew (Old Testament)*, #8175.

⁴⁶⁶ *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 843 (#2150b).

⁴⁶⁷ It should also be considered that there is another Hebrew term often used to specify a copious flowing, pouring out, or rinsing off, רָחַץ – *shataph*, meaning just that: to “overflow; rinse off”. It is used of the Levitical cleansing of certain items and the hands (see texts for notes 354, 488). In scripture it is most frequently used to metaphorically convey the idea of an inrushing torrent or flood (e.g., Job 14:19; Psa. 69:2, 15, 124:4; Songs. 8:7; Isa. 30:28, 43:2; Jer. 47:4) or a torrential rain (e.g., Ezk. 13:11, 13). In 1 Kings 22:38 there is a juxtaposition of the “washing” (רָחַץ) – *shataph* <> LXX: ἀπένιψαν – *apenipsan* [*nipto*]) of Ahab’s blood-soaked chariot next to a pool, in which local prostitutes “bathed” themselves (רָחַץ – *rahas* <> ἐλούσαντο – *elousanto* [*louo*]).

⁴⁶⁸ Many modern Jewish translations of these Levitical passages into English also render *rahas* as *immerse*. (E.g.; Philip E. Goble, *The Orthodox Jewish Bible*, [Milton: AFI International, 2003]; D. Feinstein, *The Chumash; Complete Tanach with Rashi*, [New York: The Judaica Press, 1998]; Aryeh Kaplan, *The Living Torah*, [New York: Maznaim Publishing Corp., 1981].)

One version that translates *rahas* as “wash” nonetheless notes: “The Hebrew verb *rahat* can mean simply ‘to wash,’ but in these laws it is evident that the whole body is to be immersed.” (Robert Alter, *The Five Books of Moses: A Translation with Commentary*, [New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2004], 607.)

⁴⁶⁹ Charles Taylor, *Calmet’s Dictionary of the Holy Bible*, (London: Holdsworth & Ball, 1832), 148. ⇒

2) **John Lightfoot** (1602–75; *English Presbyterian; Westminster divine*): That the baptism of John was by plunging the body (after the same manner as the washing of [Leviticall] unclean persons, and the baptism of proselytes was), seems to appear from those things which are related of him.⁴⁷⁰

3) **James MacKnight** (1721–1800; *Scottish Presbyterian*): In the Levitical ritual many baptisms, or immersions of the body in water, were enjoined as emblematic of the purity of mind which is necessary to the worshipping of God acceptably.⁴⁷¹

4) **Robert Jamieson** (1802–80; *Scottish Presbyterian*): “Wash his flesh with water” [Lev. 22:6]—Any Israelite who had contracted a defilement of such a nature as debarred him from the enjoyment of his wonted privileges, and had been legally cleansed from the disqualifying impurity, was bound to indicate his state of recovery by the immersion of his whole person in water.⁴⁷²

5) **Hermann Cremer** (1834–1903; *German Lutheran*): *Baptizō*...to immerse, to submerge...The peculiar New Testament and Christian use of the word—to denote immersion, submersion for a religious purpose = to baptize...may be pretty clearly traced back to the Levitical washings, Hebrew *rahas*, Lev. 14:8, 9, 15:5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11...[ff.], 17:15...Num. 19:7, 19...for which LXX = *louesthai*.⁴⁷³

6) **Alfred Edersheim**: What John preached, that he also symbolized by a rite which, though not in itself, yet in its application, was wholly new. Hitherto the Law had it, that those who had contracted Levitical defilement were to immerse before offering sacrifice.⁴⁷⁴

7) **Ethelbert Bullinger** (1837–1913; *Anglican*): {paraphrasing Cremer}—*Baptizō*...to make a thing “dipped” or “dyed.” “To immerse” for a religious purpose, may be traced back to the Levitical washings, see Lev. 14:8–9; etc. (out of which arose the baptism of proselytes), which were connected with the purification which followed on and completed the expiation from sin...

By “Baptism” therefore we must understand an immersion, whose design like that of the Levitical washings and purifications was united with the washing away of sin.⁴⁷⁵

8) **Ezra Gould** (1841–1900; *Episcopalian*): {Commenting on John’s baptism, Mark 1:4} *Baptisma metanoias*—“a baptism of repentance.” This rite of immersion in water signified the complete inward purification of the subject. It took up into a symbolical rite the figurative washings of such passages

French: *Les Pretres & Lévités n'entrent point la premiere fois dans l'exercice de leur ministere, qu'après s'être lave tout le corps dans l'eau. Toutes les souillures légales se nettoient par le bapteme, ou en se plongeant dans l'eau...*

Pour l'ordinaire on se plongeoit entierement dans l'eau, & c'est la notion la plus simple & la plus naturelle du mot baptiser.

(Augustin Calmet, *Dictionnaire Historique, Critique, Chronologique, Goographique et Littera de la Bible*, [Toulouse: A. Nismes, 1783], 1:425.)

⁴⁷⁰ J. Lightfoot, *Whole Works*, 11:63; for the Latin see note 232.

⁴⁷¹ James MacKnight, *A New Literal Translation, from the Original Greek, of all the Apostolical Epistles*, (Philadelphia: Thomas Wardle, 1841), 531, 532.

⁴⁷² R. Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, D. Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, On the Old and New Testaments*, (New York: S. S. Scranton & Co., 1875), 1:89.

⁴⁷³ H. Cremer, *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek*, 126.

German: Βαπτίζω...eintauchen, untertauchen...*Der eigenüml. neutestamentl. u. christl. gebrauch zur bz. einer eintauchung, untertauchung zu religiosem zwecke = taufen...lasst sich wohl mit Sicherheit auf d. levit. Waschungen zuruchsuren, hebr. רָחַץ; Lev. 14, 8f; 15, 5ff. 16. 18. 21ff. 27; 17, 15; Num. 19, 7. 19...wofür LXX = λούεσθαι.*

(*Biblich-Theologisches Wörterbuch der Neutestamentlichen Gracitat*, 86.)

⁴⁷⁴ A. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, 1:273.

⁴⁷⁵ Ethelbert W. Bullinger, *A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament*, (London: Longman’s, Green & Co., 1886), 81.

as Isa. 1:16, 4:4; Jer. 4:14; Ezek. 36:25; Zech. 13:1; Ps. 51:2. Outwardly, it had its counterpart in the Levitical washings of the law (Ex. 29:4; Lev. 14:8, 9, 15:5, 8, 10, 13 [ff.], 16:26, 28, 17:15...).⁴⁷⁶

9) Herbert Danby (1889–1953; *Anglican*): The description of these [Levitical] uncleannesses leads logically to a catalogue [in the Mishnah] of the objects which are, and the objects which are not, susceptible to them, and then to an account of the means, namely, immersion, ordained by Scripture for freeing persons and things from these uncleannesses.⁴⁷⁷

10) Michael J. Kruger (*Presbyterian; Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity, Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte, NC*): ...Bathing (by immersion) was required for a number of Levitical impurities ...Lev. 14:8–9...15:13...Num. 19...Lev. 15:16...17:15...15:5–8, 11–12...21–22...⁴⁷⁸

Importantly, in the Old Testament itself we in fact find a clear case where in a quasi-Levitical context⁴⁷⁹ the instruction to *rahas* (LXX *louō*) was properly understood to mean *tabal* (*baptizō*):

2 Kings 5:10, 14: And Elisha sent a messenger to him [the leprous Syrian general, Naaman], saying, “Go and wash [rahas <> LXX; lousai (louō)] in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean.”

...¹⁴ **So he went down and dipped [tabal <> ebaptisat (baptizō)] himself seven times in the Jordan [b-Yarden—in the Jordan (River) <> en to Iordanē],⁴⁸⁰ according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.⁴⁸¹**

In keeping with the grammatical relationship seen in this passage, the Septuagint consistently translates *rahas* into certain Greek words based on its direct object and context. This provides valuable information on how that term would have been understood and put into practice in the apostolic era. Such, of course, would also correspond with what the author of Hebrews would have intended to express in order to effectively communicate with his immediate audience of 1st century Jewish Christians. Whenever a particular part of the human anatomy is specified (or

⁴⁷⁶ Ezra Palmer Gould, *The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures; The Gospel of Mark*, (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1896), 6.

⁴⁷⁷ H. Danby, *The Code of Maimonides, Book Ten*, xxxiv.

⁴⁷⁸ Michael J. Kruger, *The Gospel of the Savior: An Analysis of P. Oxy. 840 and its Place in the Gospel Traditions of Early Christianity*, (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2005), 128.

⁴⁷⁹ Leviticus 14:8a: “**And he [the leper] who is to be cleansed shall wash [kabas <> plunei] his clothes and shave off all his hair and bathe [rahas <> lousetai (louō)] himself in water [b-mayim <> en hydati], and he shall be clean.**”

Hebrew:

... וכבס המטהר את-בגדיו וגלה את-פל-שערו ורחץ במים וטהר...

LXX: *καὶ πλυνεῖ ὁ καθαρισθεὶς τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ, καὶ ζυρηθήσεται αὐτοῦ πᾶσαν τὴν τρίχα, καὶ λούσεται ἐν ὕδατι, καὶ καθαρὸς ἔσται.*

Naaman’s seven-fold immersion was perhaps a subsidiary contraction of the seven-day-long process prescribed in the Levitical purification of lepers (Lev. 13:4–6, 26–27, 31–34). Accordingly, the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament—Abridged*, notes: “Naaman’s dipping in the Jordan in 2 Kings 5:14 possibly has some sacramental significance.” (p.93.)

⁴⁸⁰ NRSV: “**So he went down and immersed himself seven times in the Jordan...**”

In his acclaimed translation of the Old Testament into Latin (preferred by the likes of Ussher, Donne and Milton), Immanuel Tremellius (1510–80), an Italian Jewish convert to Reformed Christianity, translated *tabal* in this passage as “*immersit*.” (*Testamenti Veteris Biblia Sacra*, [Frankfort: Andr. Wecheli, 1579], vol. 1, in loc. cit.)

⁴⁸¹ Hebrew:

... וישלח אליו אלישע מלאך לאמר הלך ורחץ שבע פעמים בירדן וישב בשער לה וטהר...
וירד ויטבל בירדן שבע פעמים כדבר איש האלהים וישב בשער גער קטן ויטהר:

LXX: *καὶ ἀπέστειλεν Ἐλειαῖε ἄγγελον πρὸς αὐτὸν λέγων Πορευθεὶς λούσαι ἐπτάκις ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ, καὶ ἐπιστρέψει ἡ σὰρξ σου σοὶ καὶ καθαρῶσθῃ... καὶ κατέβη Ναυμὰν καὶ ἐβαπτίσαστο ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ ἐπτάκι κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμα Ἐλειαῖε· καὶ ἐπέστρεψεν ἡ σὰρξ αὐτοῦ ὡς σὰρξ παιδαρίου μικροῦ, καὶ ἐκαθαρίσθη.*

directly implied) as the subject of the washing, such as one’s hands or feet, the Septuagint renders *rahas* as *niptō*,⁴⁸² which, as we saw with respect to Mark 7:3, is a Greek term indicating just that—the washing of a specified part of the body. However, when it is used in direct reference to the catalog of corporeal Levitical cleansings, *rahas* is always rendered *louō*,⁴⁸³ which lexicons uniformly agree is regularly used to denote the washing of a person’s entire body.

1) **λούειν** [*λούω—louō*] is normally used for the complete cleansing of the body...in the sense “to wash,” “to bathe” ...In the Old Testament [LXX] *λούειν*...is the regular translation of *רחץ* [*rahas*].⁴⁸⁴

2) **λούω**; *louō* ...to use water to cleanse a body of physical impurity, *wash*, as a rule of the whole body, *bathe*.⁴⁸⁵

Here is a joint appraisal by the noted philologist Richard Trench (1807–86; Anglican):

3) **πλύνω** [*plunō*], **νίπτω** [*niptō*], **λούω** [*louō*]—We have but the one English word, to “wash,” with which to render these three Greek. We must needs confess here to a certain poverty, seeing that the three have severally a propriety of their own—one which the writers of the New Testament always observe, and could not be promiscuously and interchangeably used.

Thus, *plunein* is always to wash inanimate things, as distinguished from living objects or persons; garments most frequently.

...*Niptein* and *louein*, on the other hand, express the washing of living persons: although with this difference that *niptein*...almost always express the washing of a part of the body—the hands (Mark 7:3), the face (Matt. 7:17), the eyes (John 13:5).

...*Louein*, which is not so much “to wash,” as “to bathe,” and *louesthai*...“to bathe oneself,” imply always, not the bathing of a part of the body, but of the whole; *leloumenoi to soma* [“*our bodies washed*”], (Heb.10:22).⁴⁸⁶

Niptō and *louō* are used in these distinct senses in the Gospel of John, and all three verbs are distinguished in a single verse in the Septuagint, showing the normative role of each:

John 13:10a: Jesus said to him [Peter], ‘The one who has bathed [leloumenos (louō)] does not need to wash [nipsasthai (niptō)], except for his feet, but is completely clean...⁴⁸⁷

[LXX] **Leviticus 15:11: Anyone whom the one with the discharge touches without having rinsed [Greek: *neniptai* (*niptō*) <> Hebrew: *shataph*—rinse, overflow] his hands in water [— <> *b-mayim*] shall wash [plunein (*plunō*) <> *kabas*] his clothes and bathe himself [louseitai (*louō*) <> *rahas*] in water [hydati <> *b-mayim*] and be unclean until the evening.**⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸² E.g., Gen. 43:31; Ex. 30:18ff; Lev. 15:11; Ps. 25:6, 57:11, 72:13.

⁴⁸³ E.g., Ex. 29:4, 40:12; Lev. 8:6, 14:8, 9, 15:5ff, 16:4, 24, 26, 28, 17:15; Num. 19:7, 8, 19.

⁴⁸⁴ G. Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 4:295, 300;

German: *steht* λούειν *meist von der Gesamtreinigung des Körpers...gewöhnlich* *med sich waschen, sich baden...Im AT ist* λούειν *die durchgängige Übersetzung von* רחץ...

(Kittel, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, 4:298, 302)

⁴⁸⁵ *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature* (BDAG), 603.

⁴⁸⁶ Richard Chenevix Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, (Cambridge: MacMillan & Co., 1858), 189f.

⁴⁸⁷ Greek: λέγει αὐτῷ [ὁ] Ἰησοῦς Ὁ λελουμένος οὐκ ἔχει χρείαν εἰ μὴ τοὺς πόδας νίψασθαι, ἀλλ' ἔστιν καθαρὸς ὅλος.

⁴⁸⁸ LXX: καὶ ὅσων ἐὰν ἄψηται ὁ γονορροῆς καὶ τὰς χεῖρας οὐ νένιπτται, πλυνεῖ τὰ ἱμάτια καὶ λούσεται τὸ σῶμα ὕδατι, καὶ ἀκάθαρτος ἔσται ἕως ἑσπέρας.

Hebrew:

וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר יַגְעִיבֵּל הַיָּבִיב וְיִדְּוֵי לֹא־שִׁטְטָה בְּמַיִם וְכִסְּסוּ בְּגָדָיו וְרָחַץ בְּמַיִם וְטָמְא עַד־הָעֶרֶב:

Another Septuagintal passage, in the apocryphal Wisdom of Ben Sira (a.k.a. Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus), proverbially refers to the Levitical cleansing of those who had touched a corpse or grave (Num. 19:19—*rahas*; LXX *louō*), in which *louō* and *baptizō* are used synonymously:⁴⁸⁹

Wisdom of Ben Sira 34:30 (NRSV): If one washes [*baptizomenos*] after touching a corpse, and touches it again, what has been gained by washing [*loutro*]?⁴⁹⁰

Alongside the written record of the Mishnah, the empirical discovery of so many 1st century mikvot leaves no reasonable doubt as to how *rahas* was interpreted in the Second Temple era.⁴⁹¹ Maimonides gave two summaries of the mishnaic teaching with regard to Pentateuchal bathings:

That purification from any [*kol*—every; all] uncleanness be by immersion [*tabal*] in the water of a *mikveh*, as it is said, “He shall bathe all his flesh [*rahas kol basar*] in water” (Leviticus 15:16⁴⁹²).⁴⁹³

⁴⁸⁹ Ben Sira was originally written in Hebrew by the Alexandrian sage Yeshua ben Sira (Joshua son of Sirach), in c.180 BC. The author’s grandson translated the work into Greek in 132 BC, after which it was incorporated into the Septuagint. This passage, however, is not in any of the partial Hebrew manuscripts that have so far been recovered. (See, P. C. Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in the Original Hebrew*, [Atlanta: Soc. of Biblical Literature, 2006].)

Still, Dr. Rudolph Smend (1851–1913; German Lutheran; Professor of Biblical Science and Semitic Languages at the University of Göttingen) made note of the logical correspondence between the Greek verb *baptizō* in Ben Sira 34:30 and the Hebrew terminology used in the Old Testament passage that the proverb is plainly drawing on:

“*Baptizomenos*...is assumed to be put for *rahas*... Num. 19:19ff.”; German: βαπτίζομενος...zu vermuten ist פָּרַח ...Num. 19, 19ff.; (*Die Weisheit des Jesus Sirach*, [Berlin: Verlag von Georg Reimer, 1906], 311.)

⁴⁹⁰ Greek: βαπτίζομενος ἀπὸ νεκροῦ καὶ πάλιν ἀπτόμενος αὐτοῦ τί ὠφέλησεν ἐν τῷ λουτρῷ αὐτοῦ.

Latin (Vulgate): *Qui baptizatur a mortuo, et iterum tangit eum, quid proficit lavatio illius?* (Petri Sabatier, ed., *Bibliorum Sacrorum Latinae Versiones Antiquae, seu Vetus Italica*, [Remis: Reginaldum Florentain, 1743], 2:475.)

⁴⁹¹ Josephus gave this description of how the *rahas/louō* prescribed in Deut. 23:10–11 was carried out in his time:

“...He that ejaculates in his sleep, if he is immersed in cold water* [*kathēis*—‘place’; ‘put’; ‘sit’—*auton eis hydōr psuchron*—‘himself in/into cold water’], has the same privilege with those who have lawfully had sexual relations with their wives.” (*The Antiquities of the Jews*, 3.11.3 [263]; W. Whiston, *Works of Josephus*, 134);

*cf: “...by submerging himself in cold water...” (Steve Mason, Louis Feldman, *Flavius Josephus, Translation and Commentary: Judean Antiquities 1–4*, [Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2000], 309.)

Greek: ὅς δ’ ἂν κατὰ τοὺς ὕπνους ἀποκρίνη γονήν, καθέις αὐτὸν εἰς ὕδωρ ψυχρὸν ὁμοίως τοῖς κατὰ νόμον γυναικὶ πλησιάζουσιν ἐξουσίαν ἔχει. (I. Bekker, *Flavii Iosephi Opera Omnia*, 1:371)

⁴⁹² It is interesting to consider the mishnaic hermeneutic (see note 357) logically behind making Leviticus 15:16 the basis for such a universal rule. The first factor is that among all of the Levitically prescribed *rahas*’ this is the most explicit in terms of designating the intended extent of the act. While some passages only employ the finite verb *rahas* (bathe—e.g., Lev. 8:6, 14:8, 15:6ff.), others include its direct object and thus use the phrase *rahas basar* (bathe their body—e.g., Lev. 14:9, 15:13, 16:4ff.). It is only with regard to the purification of a man who had a discharge of semen in Leviticus 15:16 that the word *kal* (all; whole) is also added (*rahas kal basar*—bathe their whole body).

The second relative factor is the different degrees of severity various forms of Levitical defilement were historically ascribed, of which Maimonides conveyed the following gradation: 1) Corpse or grave uncleanness, 2) leprous skin conditions, 3) bodily discharges related to disease, menstruation or childbirth, 4) eating unclean meat, 5) coming into contact with a ritually unclean person or various unclean items or creatures, and 6) seminal issues. (See: H. Danby, *The Code of Maimonides*, xxxiv; cf., Shemueal Safrai, ed., *The Literature of the Sages: Oral Tora, Halakha, Mishna, Tosefta, Talmud, External Tractates*, [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987], 124f.)

The hermeneutic principle that would inherently come into play here is *qal wahomer*: what applies in a less important case will certainly apply in those more important. In this particular circumstance, the fact that the most detailed command to *rahas kol basar* is given in connection with the lowest grade of defilement would be taken as an indication that the same extensive procedure was also applicable in all such matters of greater consequence. In other words, in the more serious cases it would simply “go without saying.”

The practical equivalency of all these phrases can also be derived from how they are interchangeably used in reference to the same or very similar situations. For example, while Lev. 15:16 uses the most detailed phrase *rahas kal basar*, verse 18 describes the same procedure using just *rahas*—as does Deut. 23:10–11. In Lev. 17:15–16, the washing of those who had eaten unclean meat is designated both as *rahas* and *rahas basar*, as is the bathing of ⇒

Wherever “washing of the flesh” [*rahas basar*] or “cleansing of garments” [*kabas*—wash, launder—*beqed*—clothes; cf. Ex. 19:10; Lev. 14:8, 9; Num 8:7, 21] from uncleanness is spoken of in Scripture, it means nothing else but the immersion [*tabal*] of the whole person [*kal*—all – *gaph*—self] or object in an immersion pool [*mikveh*];

And insofar as it is said of the man with flux “and hath not rinsed [*shataph*] his hands in water” [Lev. 15:11] it means that he should immerse [*tabal*] his whole person [*kal guphah*—entire body].

And the same rule applies to others who are unclean—for even if a person has wholly immersed himself [*tabal kal*], all but the tip of his little finger, he continues to be unclean.⁴⁹⁴

As to how the preceding information logically pertains to the passage under consideration, Dale insisted that the word *baptismos* in Hebrews 9:10 refers directly and specifically to the various *rantizō*'s found in subsequent verses (they are “called baptisms”). However, disallowing the untenable premise that Levitical purifications always and only involved pouring or sprinkling, this is a very difficult claim to credibly establish.

The case has already been made that in Mark 7:4 the *baptismos* of items “put in water” almost certainly refers to a washing done by dipping. Nor is there anything in the context of other occurrences of *baptismos* that would support assigning it a different meaning.⁴⁹⁵ Greek lexicons also regularly indicate that the modal attribute native to the verb *baptizō* is characteristically retained in the usage of *baptismos*.

1) **Βαπτισμός** [*Baptismos*]: *Immersion, dipping into*. Properly, and according to its etymology, it denotes washing that is performed by immersion.⁴⁹⁶

2) **Βαπτισμός** ...*Plunging, immersion*; Mark 7:4, 8, Heb. 9:10.⁴⁹⁷

lepers in Lev. 14:8–9. In Lev. 22:3–7, the bathing of priests who were contaminated from various sources of defilement—leprosy, bodily discharges or contact with an unclean object or person—is conveyed by the single phrase *rahas basar*. These verbal correspondences then evoke the principle of *gezerah shawah*—comparing similar expressions in two different verses establishes that what is prescribed in one is equally applicable in the other.

⁴⁹³ Maimonides, *Mishna Torah; Positive Commands*, 109; (H. Danby, *The Code of Maimonides—Book Ten*, 496.)

Hebrew: להיות הטהרה מכל הטמאות בטבילה במי מקוה, שנאמר "ורחץ במים את כל בשרו" (ויקרא טו, זט).

⁴⁹⁴ Maimonides, *Mishnah Torah; Mikvaot* 1.2; (Ibid. 497f.)

Hebrew: כל מקום שנאמר בתורה רחיצת בשר וכיבוס בגדים מן הטומאה אינו אלא טבילת כל הגוף במקוה וזה שנאמר בזב וידיו לא שטף במים כלומר שיטבול כל גופו והוא הדין לשאר הטמאין שאם טבל כולו חוץ מראש אצבע הקטנה עדיין הוא בטומאתו וכל:

⁴⁹⁵ *Baptismos* is used four times in the New Testament (Mark 7:4 [8]; Col. 2:12; Heb. 6:2; 9:10. It is also rarely used in classical Greek literature—once literally, and otherwise in a metaphorical sense that conveys a virtual immersion or smothering. (See, G. Kittle, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 1:306.) In Jewish literature, while *baptismos* is not found in the Septuagint, Josephus used it twice in reference to John's water baptism:

“Now, some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John, that was called the Baptist [*baptistou*]; for Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism [*baptismō*]; For that the washing [*baptisin (baptismos)*] (with water) would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, not in order to the putting away (or the remission) of some sins (only), but for the purification of the body; supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness.” (*Antiquities of the Jews*, 18.5.2 [116, 117]; W. Whiston, *Works of Josephus*.)

Greek: Τις δὲ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐδόκει ὀλωλέναι τὸν Ἡρώδου στρατὸν ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ μάλα δίκαιως τινυμένον κατὰ ποιήν Ἰωάννου τοῦ ἐπικαλουμένου βαπτιστοῦ. κτείνει γὰρ δὴ τοῦτον Ἡρώδης ἀγαθὸν ἄνδρα καὶ τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις κελύοντα ἀρετὴν ἐπασκοῦσιν καὶ τὰ πρὸς ἀλλήλους δικαιοσύνη καὶ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν εὐσεβείᾳ χρωμένοις βαπτισμῶ συνιέναι: οὕτω γὰρ δὴ καὶ τὴν βάπτισιν ἀποδεκτὴν αὐτῶ φανεῖσθαι μὴ ἐπὶ τινων ἁμαρτάδων παραιτήσει χρωμένων, ἀλλ' ἐφ' ἀγνείᾳ τοῦ σώματος, ἅτε δὴ καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς δικαιοσύνη προεκεκαθαρμένης.

(Louis H. Feldman, *Josephus: Jewish Antiquities; Books 18–19*, [Cambridge: Harvard U. Press, 1965], 80f.)

⁴⁹⁶ P. Mintert; *Lexicon Graeco-Latinum*; Latin: “βαπτισμος...*baptismus, immersio, intintio*. [*Proprie & ex sua origine denotat lotionem, qua sit immersione.*]”; (Ibid.)

3) **Βαπτισμός; βαπτισμα** [*Baptisma*]: *Immersion or baptism, Baptismos* signifying the act alone and *Baptisma* the act with the result, and therefore the institution.⁴⁹⁸

4) **Βαπτισμός** ...Dipping in water, immersion, Mark 7:4, Heb. 9:10.⁴⁹⁹

5) **Βαπτισμός** ...A religious technical term related to ceremonial rites of purification by the use of water... *act of dipping, immersion*.⁵⁰⁰

In that a large amount of liquid would be necessary to plunge a sizable object or bathe a person, the last two entries specify that *baptismos* would most naturally be used to denote purificatory procedures wherein water was the active agency. While virtually all lexicons clearly imply this elemental connection, here are two more examples where it is expressly stated:⁵⁰¹

6) **Βαπτισμός** ...*Water-rite for purposes of purification, washing, cleansing*..⁵⁰²

7) **Βαπτισμός** ...A washing, purification effected by means of water...of the washings prescribed by the Mosaic law, Heb. 9:10.⁵⁰³

None of these standard Greek lexicons relate *baptismos* with either the action of sprinkling or the element of blood, and as such do not deduce either a direct or synonymic connection between the washings in Hebrews 9:10 and the several sprinklings in verses 13–21.⁵⁰⁴ Historically, many Bible commentators have maintained the same differential.⁵⁰⁵ For example, the German-Dutch

⁴⁹⁷ E. Sophocles, *A Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*, 298.

⁴⁹⁸ G. Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 1:545.

German: Βαπτισμός, βαπτισμα: *Das Untertauchen, die Taufe, wobei Βαπτισμός den Akt an sich, βαπτισμα den Akt mit Einschluß des Resultats und daher die Institution bezeichnet.*

(G. Kittle, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, 1:543)

⁴⁹⁹ H. Liddell, R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 306.

⁵⁰⁰ Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*; (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 4:87.

⁵⁰¹ See also: *The Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, (1:195); Kenneth Wuest, *Studies in the Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament: Hebrews*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1945, 70); R. L. Thomas, *Greek Dictionary of the New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance*, (La Habra: The Lockman Foundation, 1998, #909).

⁵⁰² *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* {BDAG}, 165.

⁵⁰³ J. Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 95.

⁵⁰⁴ Likewise, English Bible versions offering cross-referenced editions that specifically tag the washings in Hebrews 9:10 regularly direct readers to passages involving purifications done with water. For example:

The *Classic Reference Edition* of the ESV (Wheaton: Good News Publishers, 2001) links the washings in Heb. 9:10 to the representative passages of Mark 7:4 (and, somewhat oddly, the variant reading of verse 8) and Lev. 11:25. The cross-referenced edition of the NASB (Anaheim: The Lockman Foundation, 1995) points to Lev. 11:25, Num. 19:13, and Mark 7:4, and that of the NKJV (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1982), to Num. 19:7.

The popular *Thompson Chain-Reference* study system, originally devised by the Methodist scholar Dr. Frank Charles Thompson (1858–1940), links the washings in Hebrews 9:10 to the water rituals found in Ex. 30:20, 40:12, Lev. 14:8, 16:26, 22:6, and Num. 19:7 (Indianapolis: The B. B. Kirkbride Bible Co., Inc., 1990; topic #961).

⁵⁰⁵ There are several Greek patristic writings which also convey the understanding that these Old Testament *baptisms* and *sprinklings* were distinct procedures.

1) In listing some of the rituals required under the Levitical economy, the *Apostolic Constitutions* (c.4th century) notes there were “purifications, continual baptisms [or, immersions—*sunechē baptismata*], sprinklings [*rantismous*], and various other expiations...” (6:20);

Greek: ...καθαρισμούς, συνεχή βαπτισματα, ραντισμούς, ἀγνείας τοιάσδε... (PG 1:968)

2) Theodoret (393–457 AD; Bishop of Cyrus, Syria), similarly wrote: “They [unclean persons] were immersed [or, baptized—*ebaptizonto*], and [*kai*] purified by sprinklings [*perirrantēriois*].” (*Expositions on Hebrews*, 9:10); ⇒

Reformed linguist and Hebraist, Jacob Alting (1618–79), wrote:

“Washings” [Heb. 9:10], *diaphorius baptismous*, that is, various immersions. For *baptismos* means immersion, where the entire body is submerged, while that word is never used of sprinkling. In Greek, the Septuagint uses the word *baptō* or *baptizō* for *tabal*—*dipped, dipped into, immersed* so *baptismos* to the Hebrews is *tabal*.

The word *nazah*, sprinkle, is never translated by *baptizō*, the latter which conveys abundance. Instead they use *rhainō*, *perirrainō* [etc.]...*sprinkle*. The word *tabal*, *wash*, is frequently used, either by itself, or together with *body* and *entire body*, which is baptism.

...Moreover, these baptisms were very numerous...” [Alting then proceeds to list most of the Levitical references given earlier on page 97 under the heading “bathing”.]⁵⁰⁶

In his translation of the New Testament, Dr. James MacKnight (1721–1800; Scottish Presbyterian) rendered *baptismos* in Hebrews 9:10 “immersions” and attached this commentary:

...He [an ancient Israelite] worshipped only with meats, and drinks, and divers immersions, and rites whose efficacy was to cleanse, not the conscience, but the body of the worshipper, to fit him for the society of the people of God on earth; and which were imposed only until the worship of God should be reformed.⁵⁰⁷

More recently Paul Ellingworth (1931–2018), a noted expositor on the book of Hebrews,⁵⁰⁸ made these observations concerning the scope of rituals that are mentioned in Hebrews 9:⁵⁰⁹

The author must still refer here [verse 10], as in verse 9, to Old Testament rules for diet and purification, and not to pagan rites. It is, however, true that for the moment, the author’s attention has turned from the Day of Atonement, and indeed from any kind of sacrifice, to the wider range of cultic regulations; the main Old Testament background is now Leviticus 11 rather than Leviticus 16. Leviticus 11, concerned mainly with food, also contains several references to purification with

Greek: *Οὗτοι γὰρ ἐβαπτίζοντο, καὶ τοῖς περιρραντηριοῖς ἀπεκαθαίροντο.* (PG 82:741)

3) A writing often spuriously attributed to Justin Martyr (though most likely from the 4th or 5th century) states that under the Mosaic Law ritual impurity was remedied by “...some sprinklings [*rantismois tisi*] and [*kai*] animal sacrifices and [*kai*] various baptisms [or, immersions—*diaphorais baptismatōn*] ...” (*Questions and Responses on Orthodoxy* [QRO], 97);

Greek: *...ραντισμοὶς τισὶ καὶ θυσίαις ἀλόγων καὶ διαφοραῖς βαπτισμάτων...* (PG 6:1340)

Dale actually cited the last passage (3), yet irrepressibly insisted, “It is probable that the writer intended to include the ‘sprinklings’ and ‘the sacrifices’ [!] among the diversities of baptism.” (*Judaic Baptism*, 382.)

⁵⁰⁶ Jacob Alting, *Expositions on Hebrews 9*;

Latin: *Lotiones, διαφόροις βαπτισμοῖς, vocat, immersiones varias. Nam βαπτισμος immersio est, quando totum corpus immergitur, nunquam autem dicitur de adspersione. Graeci LXX usurant τὸ βαπτω vel βαπτίζω pro בָּבַטְטִין, intinxit, immersit, unde βαπτισμος Hebraeis בִּבְטָטִין,*

(verbim בִּבְטָטִין adspersit non vertunt unquam βαπτίζω, quia plus dicit, sed ujus loco ponunt βαπτω, περιρραίνω...adsperso.) Usurpatur frequenter verbum בָּבַטְטִין lavit vel solem, vel addita voce carnis, & totius carnis, qui baptismus est. ...Baptismi porro illi fuerunt multiplices...”

(Jacobi Alting, *Opera Omnia Theologica*, [Amstelaedami: Gerardus Borstius, 1686], 4.3:260.)

⁵⁰⁷ J. MacKnight, *A New Literal Translation from the Original Greek, of all the Apostolical Epistles*, 545.

⁵⁰⁸ Dr. Paul Ellingworth (1931–2018) was a lecturer in New Testament at the University of Aberdeen (Scotland). He co-authored (with Eugene A. Nida) *A Translator’s Handbook on the Letter to the Hebrews* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1983), and wrote the volumes on Hebrews in both the *Epworth Commentaries* (*The Epistle to the Hebrews*, London: Epworth Press, 1991), and *The New International Greek Testament Commentary* series (*The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1993).

⁵⁰⁹ *The Westminster Annotations* (on Matt. 3:6) also includes this vague but nonetheless notable remark: “‘Were baptized.’ Washed by dipping in Jordan, as Mark 7:4; Heb. 9:10.”

water.⁵¹⁰ ...The present phrase [*dikaiome sarx*—“regulations for the body”—in 9:10] is expanded and clarified in 9:13, but with blood rather than water as the agent of cleansing.⁵¹¹

In considering this passage the well-known biblical scholar F. F. Bruce (1910–90) wrote:

As regards the “various ablutions,” not only had the high priest to “bathe his body in water,” after performing the ritual of the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:24), but similar purifications were prescribed for a great variety of actual or ceremonial defilements. Again, these purifications undoubtedly had great hygienic value, but when they were given religious value there was always the danger that those who practiced them might be tempted to think of religious duty exclusively, or at least excessively, in terms of externalities.⁵¹²

Upon conducting a comprehensive survey of the various terms used to designate or describe religious purifications found throughout both early pagan and Jewish writings, and particularly those having water as the active agency, the Dutch-Catholic scholar and Greek linguist Dr. Joseph Ysebaert (1925–2006) concluded:

Data from the New Testament, where Jewish authors speak of the purification rites among their compatriots, supplement our conclusions on one point especially. It now appears that *baptismos* was the Jewish noun corresponding to *baptizein* in the middle voice.

In two of the three places the meaning of the noun is quite clear:⁵¹³ *Baptismos potēriōn kai xestōn kai chalkiōn* Mark 7:4, *brōmasin kai pomasin kai diaphorais baptismous* Heb. 9:10. On analogy with the Jewish usage of the verb, the noun indicates the cleansing by immersion of both the body and of vessels. It differs from the noun as used in pagan antiquity in that it contains no connotation of a perishing.⁵¹⁴

Again, from a hermeneutical standpoint it is important to recognize that in each literal occurrence of *baptismos* outside of Hebrews 9, not only is pure water implicated as the physical element in view, but they all involve themes and circumstances in which it is most logical and historically consistent to conclude that immersion is the action in view (as opposed to some hypothetical “lesser” procedure for bathing one’s entire body never actually alluded to in Jewish or other historical sources). To then insist that in this particular case *baptismos* must refer to sprinkling blood,⁵¹⁵ even though it is not grammatically normal or, in light of the overall regimen

⁵¹⁰ None of the water cleansings in Leviticus 11 involved sprinkling or pouring (vv. 25, 28, 32, 40).

⁵¹¹ Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1993), 442, 444.

⁵¹² Fredrick Fyvie Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1997), 209f.

⁵¹³ The third, less clear case is *βαπτισμῶν* (*baptismōn*) in Heb. 6:2. Ultimately, Ysebaert concludes that occurrence must have the same meaning as it does a little later on in 9:10, also noting that such would have been the natural assumption of the text’s immediate audience. (See reference below, pp. 29-32.)

⁵¹⁴ Joseph Ysebaert, *Greek Baptismal Terminology: Its Origins and Early Development* {*Christianorum Primaeva, Studia ad Sermonem Graecum Pertinentia*, Vol. 1}, (Nijmegen: Decker & Van de Vegt, 1962), 28.

⁵¹⁵ It might be argued that under the given rubric at least the sprinkling mentioned in Heb. 9:19 (corresponding with Ex. 24:6-8) could be included in the *baptismos* of verse 10, as it involved water. It would, however, be arbitrary and problematic to suppose that the *baptismos* in question is semantically linked to certain *rantizō* (those involving blood or ashes mixed with water) but not others (those involving only blood or oil).

It is also pretty clear that in Heb. 9:19 blood is the principal cleansing agent in view (cf. 9:22). In context (as the choice of wording and punctuation in the ESV and most other English translations convey), the constituents of water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, each undoubtedly having their own symbolic significance, primarily functioned as facilitators for applying the blood. ⇒

of Levitical cleansing procedures, contextually necessary to do so, would be to impose an anomalous meaning on the word. Such treatment would essentially make it a *hapax legomenon*⁵¹⁶ of sorts, only not in terms of occurrence but in the even more unlikely realm of definition. This would in turn discount a foundational principal of grammatical-historical interpretation, namely, that whenever the ordinary meaning of a word is wholly admissible no other meaning need or generally should be sought.

Having said all this, it is both consistent and conventional to understand *baptismos* in Hebrews 9:10 as *categorically comprehending* all Levitical purifications for the body, *inclusive* of the subsequently noted sprinklings, by way of serving as a *synecdoche*. In this case it stands in *representation* of that entire genus, while the grammatical definition of the word itself remains constant and literal.⁵¹⁷ When it is recognized that *rahas* was actually the most common, as well as the concluding action prescribed in virtually all personal Levitical cleansing processes, and knowing the prominence purificatory immersions manifestly held at the time Hebrews was written, this would indeed be an optimal term for the author of Hebrews to have chosen to serve in such an archetypal role.⁵¹⁸

In this operative construct “**various**” alludes to the different, though virtually all-inclusive *situations* or *circumstances* under the Levitical law for which cleansing one’s self required *rahas/louō/bathing* (associatively corresponding with the purification of most inanimate objects by *tabal/baptō/ dipping*), rather than aberrantly being used to indiscriminately designate any and every *action* involved within the overall course of those procedures. Such a generalized,

This is supported by the fact that *blood, water, wool, and hyssop* are all part of the same primary clause, but in which *blood* is the main compliment—that is, it directly relates to the *what* aspect of the clause—in this instance, ⇒ the act of sprinkling. The other three components jointly comprise an adjunct, which generally pertains to the *when, where, why, or, as in this case, how* aspect of the clause.

(See: S. Porter, M. O’Donnell, J. Reed, R. Tan, *Open Text.org Syntactically Analyzed Greek New Testament*, [Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 2006].)

⁵¹⁶ *Hapax legomenon* is a transliteration of the Greek ἅπαξ λεγόμενον—“(something) being said (only) once”.

⁵¹⁷ *Synecdoche* is a transliteration of the Greek συνεκδοχή, meaning “simultaneous understanding.” An essentially equivalent concept is expressed by the Latin phrase *pars pro toto*, “a part put for a whole”. (*Synecdoche* can also refer to the converse concept of *totum pro parte*, “a whole put for a part”.)

A mundane example of a synecdoche could be the mere comment, “I painted the house”, whereas in many cases such a statement would intentionally comprehend and represent much more: “I power-washed, scraped, primed, and applied two coats of paint to the house.” Yet the common definition of the verb “painted” is unaltered in such usage.

A more sportive case is seen in simply calling a car “wheels”, which is obviously representative of the entire vehicle. Yet this expression does not set aside the literality or otherwise redefine the word “wheel”.

Biblically, most of the Ten Commandments are given as categorical synecdoches (cf. WLC Q. 98–148). For instance, attentive Christians will realize that the very simply put commands to not murder or commit adultery (Ex. 20:13, 14) are representative statements that also inherently prohibit many other sins related to these particular actions—including those committed in the mental realm (Matt. 5:21ff). Yet again, even in this markedly extended application the words “murder” and “adultery” remain literal and their normal lexical definitions are unchanged.

In the New Testament, the petition “**give us this day our daily bread**” (Matt. 6:11; Luke 11:3) in the Lord’s Prayer is a synecdoche indicating dependence on, and looking to God to provide all of our needs, both material and spiritual (cf. Matt. 7:11; Luke 11:13; James 1:5, 17; 4:2, 3). Yet once more there is no reason to suppose the word “bread” here is anything but literal, while being categorically representative.

⁵¹⁸ The Old Testament also employs various synecdochal expressions for purification, individually using both *bathing* and *sprinkling* (figuratively) to categorically represent the general concept of *cleansing*.

“**Wash** [Hebrew: *rahas* <> LXX: *louo*] **yourselves; make yourselves clean** [*zakah* <> *katharoi*];” (Isa. 1:16a; cf. Ps. 51:2, 7b; Zech. 13:1)

Hebrew: רָחַץ צִדְקָתְךָ וְזָבָח; LXX: *λούσασθε καὶ καθαροὶ γίνεσθε*.

“**I will sprinkle** [*zaraq* <> *raino*] **clean water on you and you shall be clean** [*taher* <> *katharon*]...” (Ez. 36:25; cf. Ps. 51:7a; Isa. 52:15)

Hebrew: וְרָחַץ עֲלֵיכֶם מֵי־טְהוֹרִים; LXX: *καὶ ῥανθῶ ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς καθαρὸν ὕδωρ, καὶ καθαρισθήσεσθε...*

representative role also accords with the use of the descriptor “**food and drink**” that accompanies “**various washings**”, which plainly represents all of the Levitical dietary laws (and perhaps some procedural rules associated with those directives). The two together then represent the complete classis of Old Testament “**regulations for the body**”.⁵¹⁹

By extension, in light of all these findings, it would be very difficult to then reason that even though by all indication *baptizō* and *baptismos* were employed by New Testament writers to specify Jewish religious rituals that were accomplished by an immersion in water, Johannic or Christian water *baptizō/baptismos/baptisma* in that same epoch were nonetheless performed differently.

With regard to the fact that Western Bibles commonly translate *baptizō* and *baptismos* into various forms or equivalencies of *wash*—and in English nearly always so in the case of Hebrews 9:10—Dr. Hendrikus Berkhof (1914–1995; Dutch neo-Reformed) offered the following supportive appraisal:

In its original New Testament use the word *baptismos* simply meant ‘immersion’ or ‘washing.’ The ecclesiastical practice this word denoted was also called ‘washing’ (*loutron*). We go back to that term because it suggests both ‘immersion’ and ‘washing’ and is a reminder of the substance and purport of this ecclesiastical rite.

...In its literal meaning *baptein* occurs in the New Testament in Luke 16:24; John 13:26; Rev. 19:13. In its negative sense *baptizein* is used only twice in the New Testament, in a statement of Jesus (Mark 10:39; Luke 12:50); for the rest it always has a neutral connotation which is not often found in the Greek world: ‘dip in’ or ‘immerse’ in the sense of ‘bathing’ or ‘washing,’ particularly of ritual cleansings. That is also how Judaism of that time used it.

In the New Testament *baptizesthai* thus denotes ‘to wash oneself’ (middle [voice]) or ‘to be washed’ (passive). Accordingly, the nouns *baptisma* and *baptismos* are to be translated as ‘cleansing’ or ‘washing’ (cf. Mark 7:4; Heb. 6:2; 9:10), with the original meaning of ‘immersion’ always being presupposed. Therefore, *apolouein* and *loutron* are used as parallels (Acts 22:16; 1 Cor. 6:11; Eph. 5:26; Titus 3:5; Heb. 10:22).⁵²⁰

⁵¹⁹ The classification of *baptismois* in Hebrews 9:10 as a regulation “**for the body**” suggests a semantic connection (although juxtapositionally) with the phrase “**our bodies washed [louo] with pure water**” (*λελουσμένοι τὸ σῶμα ὕδατι καθαρῷ*) in Hebrews 10:22.

In a similar vein, the various Levitical sprinklings mentioned later in chapter 9 perhaps have a notional correspondence with the figurative “**hearts sprinkled [rantizō] clean**” (*ῥεπαντισμένοι τὰς καρδίας*) that is jointly put forward in 10:22.

⁵²⁰ Hendrikus Berkhof, *Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Study of the Faith*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002), 354f.

Dutch:
(Hendrikus Berkhof, *Christelijk Geloof*, [],)

Chapter 10 - *Baptizō*'s Figurative Usage

As hard as Dr. Hadley (Professor of Greek at Yale) was on Dale's methodology and conclusions in general, he was supremely critical of the inexpressive, indeed dismayingly technical form to which Dale's system reduced *baptizō*'s figurative usage. This depreciation arises from the underlying fact that Dale's theory is at odds with the normal understanding of metaphorical language itself. While this might seem a minor or secondary issue within the larger scope of things, as we will show, it most certainly is not. As such it will be considered at some length.

To set the stage, here is a concise statement outlining Dale's view of figurative language, and how it specifically pertained to the ancient usage of *baptizō*:

Figure becomes worn out by constant use. Any word which, originally metaphorical in its use, has secured for itself a well-defined meaning, diverse from literal use, lays aside the character of figure and takes its place among literal words.

Baptizō through daily and long-continued use, has secured a secondary use, conveying an idea derived, but dissociated, from the primary use, which gives it a status of its own without recurring to the source whence it sprang.⁵²¹

Some initial observations: First, insinuating that *baptizō* was "originally metaphorical in its use" is a rather curious starting point, and as a dubious notion only begs the question. Of more direct relevance is knowing that when a word has both a figurative and literal sense in its native and ongoing usage (as opposed to the inherited utility of some interlingual loanwords), as all acknowledge is the case with *baptizō*, then the figurative is necessarily borrowed from the literal.

Second, it is only by insisting on such "dissociation" from its primary meaning that figurative *baptizō* passages can so blandly be read as only prosaically conveying the "exertion of a controlling influence." As a result, Dale's theory effectively destroys the natural vibrancy of figurative speech that is so common, distinct and highly prized in all languages.

It is also important to realize just how frequently Greek scholars ascribe a figurative or metaphorical meaning in *baptizō*'s ancient usage. Nearly one-third of all of its occurrences in pagan, Jewish and early Christian writings alike are typically placed in this category. As such, many of the problems of unnatural and dubious interpretation that will be shown here, adversely affect a similarly large percentage of all the cases treated throughout Dale's series.

With these things in mind, here is Hadley's response to Dale's theory that the figurative aspect of *baptizō* was lost in the course of its historical development:

But the Greek *baptizō*, like the English *immerse*, is used in many cases where there is no literal, physical submergence. Mr. Dale has not overlooked these uses; he gives them a great deal of space and of attention; but it is much to be regretted, and it is the great defect of the book, that his treatment of them is in important respects unnatural and arbitrary.

...Very few, we think, will agree with the author of this work in the extent to which he assumes a complete obliteration of primary meanings and a consequent loss of the figurative character. He will not allow that such expressions as "immersed in ignorance," "immersed in debt," "immersed in care," "immersed in study," "immersed in business," "immersed in politics"...have anything properly figurative about them: they were figurative once (or similar expressions were so), but they have long ceased to be figurative; they denote simply the general idea of a "controlling influence" (so "immersed in ignorance," "immersed in debt"), or else some specific kind of controlling influence, as "thorough mental occupation" (so "immersed in care," "immersed in business," etc.).

⁵²¹ J. Dale, *Johannic Baptism*, 395.

In like manner he denies the figurative character of such an expression as “drowned in sleep”: It only means (he says) “that the influence of sleep is exerted over its object in a controlling degree” [*Classic*, 118]; and of such an expression as “buried in wine” (Virgil, “*vinoque sepultus*” [*Aeneid*, 3.630]): Here (he tells us) “picture-figure fails; influence is the only and most sufficient source of explanation” [*Classic*, 231].

It is hardly necessary to remark how completely these and numberless similar expressions are by this treatment divested of the poetic liveliness and brilliancy which belong to them, and reduced to a *caput mortuum* [“dead head”] of abstract meaning. Our author confesses it himself. “‘Immersed in ignorance’ directly and prosaically declares that those spoken of are under the controlling influence of ignorance.” [*Classic*, 207]

But are the two expressions “immersed in ignorance” and “under the controlling influence of ignorance” absolutely equivalent? Do they make exactly the same impression on the mind? Does not the latter seem a colorless abstraction by the side of the former, and how can this difference be explained without recognizing the fact that in the word “immersed” there is some suggestion of its primary meaning, and so something of a figurative character? Quoting the Shakespearian lines,

What is a drunken man like, fool?
Like a drown’d man, a fool, and a madman:
One draught, above heat, makes him a fool;
The second mads him, and a third drowns him.⁵²²

—he contends that the word *drowns* in the fourth line is used not figuratively but “literally, in the secondary sense of suspending the exercise of every faculty.” [*Classic*, 119]

He does not see that he is arguing against Shakespeare. A comparison of the second line shows that “drowns him” here signifies “makes him LIKE a drown’d man,” “puts him into a condition analogous to that of one literally drowned,” or, in other words, “figuratively drowns him.”

These principles the author applies to the Greek word *baptizō*. Thus in “baptized (immersed) by grief, wantonness, debts, affairs,” and the like, he regards the participle as expressing simply and directly the general idea of a “controlling influence, without mersion either in fact or figure.” We use *immersed* here to represent the Greek *baptized*, because *mersed*, which Mr. Dale employs, is scarcely English,⁵²³ and the slight force of the *im-* (in-) has no bearing on the point in question.

“Immersed by grief” is in accordance with Greek idiom, which treats the immersing element as the *means* rather than the *place* of immersion.⁵²⁴

Dr. Kendrick (Baptist) echoed many of Hadley’s criticisms, while also noting Dale virtually never rendered *baptizō* by the verbal term he insisted was most universally appropriate.

The general doctrine is that *baptizō* loses its primary meaning of literal “intusposition” or “mersion,” and (just as *baptō* passes over from the primary meaning of “dip” into the secondary but equally literal one of “dye”) passes over into the simple generic idea of “controlling influence,” without either any literal, or any figurative “mersion.” Whether he means to be understood that it can ever be translated “to influence controllingly” does not appear. He never so renders it himself,

⁵²² Shakespeare, *Twelfth-Night*, 1.5.

⁵²³ *Merse* was Dale’s suggestion for the single best English term equivalent to *baptizō*, for the following reasons: “[There may be times when it is]...best to use a single word, to represent the single Greek word, throughout the whole extent and under all of the modifications of its meaning. The best word, probably, all things considered, is *Merse*...Nor is it without advantage that the word, in this uncompounded form, has no common use. We shall find, on this account, greater facility in associating with it any modification of thought, desirable, above what would be the case with im-merse” (*Classic Baptism*, 134.)

As Dale admitted and similar to his regular use of *intusposition*—and in line with Hadley’s criticism of it—most dictionaries do not list *merse* as an actual word (e.g., *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed.).

⁵²⁴ J. Hadley, *The New Englander & Yale Review* (1867), 26:751f; all emphases Hadley’s.

although it would seem that that which is the proper meaning of the word ought to be competent for its translation. Neither has he given the actual renderings *stupefy*, *pollute*, *purify*, which he tells us are occasionally entirely adequate for its translation [*Classic Baptism*, 135].

...We do not suppose that he would find a scholar or man of taste in Christendom, who would regard the position as worth the trouble of refuting. Suppose we should be told that words of so decided and striking physical import as the English “plunge,” or “immerse,” had in English only a very few examples of figurative use; and that in nearly all the cases in which there was no literal plunging, or literal immersion, all reference to the primary idea was lost, and “plunged in sleep,” “drowned in care,” “immersed in study,” were simply prosaic statements of a “controlling influence.” Who would not instantly reject the statement as absurd?

And not a whit less absurd is the affirmation when applied to the Greek *baptō* and *baptizō*. *Baptizō*, like our words “immerse,” “whelm,” “plunge,” is a strong word; the physical act which it denotes is one that admits of being, and with the mind's love of analogies, inevitably would be, employed in a great variety of figurative uses. In some the figure would be retained in full force; in others it would be more slight. But to have all these figurative uses at once swept away, and all the tinge of rhetorical and poetic imagery which not only “Baptist writers,” but every man of taste who ever read Greek has recognized, exchanged for a “controlling influence”—involves an absurdity too great to need a moment's argumentation.

Mr. Dale himself by rendering in every instance “merse,” has contradicted his own theory, unless his uniform rendering is either intentionally false, or intentionally unmeaning. If “merse” is the best rendering which he could give in all these cases, or if it is a justifiable rendering, then his own examples falsify his theory—for “merse” can be used in no such latitude of signification as he claims for *baptizō*. If we can “baptize” a man with “one drop of prussic acid,” [*Classic Baptism*, 135] we cannot “merse” him in that remarkable way. It cannot be proved that “immerse”—we discard the barbarism “merse”—ever entirely loses sight of its primary import.

Put Dale's principle to this simple test. He has been accustomed, perhaps, to exercises in rendering English into Greek. He takes this English sentence: “The sun exercises a controlling influence over the motions of the planets”—would he deem himself authorized to render the verb with its object by *baptizō*? And if he did, would anybody understand him? So of ten thousand similar cases.⁵²⁵

Dr. Jacob Ditzler (1831–1918; Methodist) surmised that Dale's aberrant conclusions in this area would seem to have arisen from the equally peculiar premise that even communal Greek words like *baptizō* typically originated among the highly erudite and sophisticated orders of society, rather than arising from common speech:⁵²⁶

We think Mr. Dale altogether wrong in his assuming that “permanent influence” was dreamed of by those [ancient writers] who used *baptizō*. ...His treatment rests on the supposition that words originate with learned, deeply-metaphysical scholars, with these abstruse and remote meanings implied. Nothing is further from the facts.⁵²⁷

As previously mentioned, it seems obvious that in order for figurative language to be coherent its intended meaning must be rooted in a well-known literalism, thus making it readily

⁵²⁵ A. C. Kendrick, *Baptist Quarterly* (1869), 3:153ff.

⁵²⁶ While making clear he disagreed with the position that a total immersion is necessary for a proper Christian baptism, an unidentified reviewer (although presumably associated with Yale University) of the Baptist scholar David Ford's critique of Dale's series (*Studies on the Baptismal Question*; see note 61) similarly stated:

“The author [Ford] disposes of much sophistical reasoning, as well as mistaken history and erroneous philology, which have been in vogue among the polemics on the other side [i.e., non-immersionists]” (*The New Englander and Yale Review*, [New Haven: 1880], 39:149.)

⁵²⁷ Jacob Ditzler, *Baptism*, (Nashville: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1886), 221.

recognizable by how the term is normally employed. Despite Dale's plea to the contrary with regard to *baptizō*,⁵²⁸ many hermeneutical textbooks emphasize this point, along with the importance of determining the main point of comparison intended in a figurative expression.

[Joseph Muenscher; 1798–1884; *evangelical Episcopalian*]: The most common and by far the most important division or distinction of words in respect to their meaning, is into literal or grammatical, and figurative or tropical...

When a word originally appropriated to one thing, comes to be applied to another, which bears some real or fancied resemblance to it, as there is in such a case a turning of it to a new use, we say a trope is employed. ...When other meanings become by usage attached to a word, besides the primary and principal meaning, they are all denominated *improper* or *secondary* senses, of whatever number or kind they may be.

...[e.g.] When the property of “hardness” is applied to a stone, the expression is used literally in its proper and natural sense; but when it is applied to the heart, it is used figuratively, or in an improper or tropical acceptance. The sense, however, allowing for the change of subject, is virtually the same, its application only being transferred from a physical to a moral quality.⁵²⁹

[Louis Berkhof; 1873–1957; *American-Dutch Reformed*]: It is of the greatest importance that the interpreter have a clear conception of the things on which the figures are based, or from which they are borrowed, since the tropical use of words is founded on certain resemblances or relations.

...The interpreter should make a point to discover the principal idea, the *tertium comparationis*, without placing too much importance on the details.⁵³⁰

[Mal Couch; 1938–2013; *American evangelical*] Interpreters can assume that all literary devices depend on the literal, normal stratum of language. Parables, types, allegories, symbols, and figurative speech presume a level of understanding in the audience. For example, the parable of the sower is understood only within the context of literal “farm” language. The symbolism of a lion is based upon what is asserted about lions in literal speech.⁵³¹

As facts would have it, in the same way in which Shakespeare plainly provided the intended *tertium comparationis* in Hadley's citation of him (“*like* a drown'd man”⁵³²), there are numerous cases in ancient Greek literature where the exact terms of comparison for *baptizō*'s figurative usage are expressly given. Here are two initial examples, both from 1st century classical authors, used in the context of when a person's mental or emotional faculties are said to be *baptizō*-ed:

1) Plutarch: For being anxious that their children should speedily excel in all things, they [overbearing parents] impose on them excessive labors. ...For as [osper—just as; exactly alike] plants are nourished by a moderate amount of water [*hydasi*], but are choked [*pnigetai*—drowned] by too much [*pollois*—to a great or excessive extent], in the same manner [*auton tropon*] a soul grows by proportionate labors, but is overwhelmed [or “drowned”—*baptizetai*] by such as are excessive.⁵³³

⁵²⁸ “[The figurative use of *baptizō* has acquired] a status of its own without recurring to the source whence it sprang.” (J. Dale, *Johannic Baptism*, 395; see text for note 522)

⁵²⁹ Joseph Muenscher, *Manual of Biblical Interpretation*, (Gambier: Joseph Muenscher, 1865), 101f.

⁵³⁰ Louis Berkhof, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1994), 85f.

⁵³¹ Mal Couch, *An Introduction to Classical Evangelical Hermeneutics*, (Grand Rapids: Kregel Pub., 2000), 61.

⁵³² See text for note 525.

⁵³³ *On the Education of Children*, 13; T. Conant, *The Meaning and Use of Baptizein*, 65f.

Greek: *Σπεύδοντες γάρ τόνυς παίδαυ εν πάσι τάχιον προφτεῖται, πονουυ αὐτοῖυ υπερμέτρουυ επιβαλλουυιν...Ωυπερ γάρ τά φυτά τοῖυ μὲν μετρίοιυ ὕδαυι τρεφεται, τοῖυ δέ πολλοῖυ πνίγεται, τόν αὐτόν τρόπον ψυχή τοῖυ μὲν συμμέτροιυ αὐξεται πόνοιυ, τοῖυ δ' υπερβάλλουυι βαπτίζεται; (Ibid.)*

2) **Chariton:** Dyonisius was indeed seized by a tempest [*kateilēpto*—a strong storm—in this case, his passion for a beautiful woman], being overwhelmed [*ebaptizeto*] even to the soul; yet, being a well-cultured man, he struggled to rise above [*anakuptein*—to rise up forcefully] the passion, as though [*kathaper*—even as; like to] from beneath a mighty wave [*trikumiais*—an exceptionally large wave; a swell].⁵³⁴

The Greek philosopher Libanius (c.314–394 AD) specified the literal basis for when *baptizō* was used to metaphorically describe the severe effects that adverse circumstances can have on a city,⁵³⁵ in this particular case the depletion of an essential commodity:

3) He [a municipal magistrate] implored the bakers’ guild to be more equitable, but did not think it wise to employ any forcible measures. For he feared to do so would spark a widespread desertion among their ranks, which would quickly cause the city to go under [or, “sink”; *ebaptizeto*], just like [*kathaper*] a ship when abandoned [*eklipontōn*—deceased; abandoned] by its sailors.⁵³⁶

The Greek statesman and historian Cassius Dio (c.155–229 AD), speaking of the fragility of political fortune when those so employed face strong opposition and strife, wrote:

4) Borne along in the midst of troubled and unstable conditions they differ little [*diapherousin*—vary; be different from - *micron*], if at all [*mallon de ouden*—literally, “rather, not at all”], from sailors in a storm, but are tossed up and down, [*cheimazomenōn*—those “tempest-tossed”], now hither, now thither; and if they make the slightest mistake, they are sure to sink [*baptizontai*].⁵³⁷

Another common circumstance in which *baptizō* was employed in classical literature was to describe the state of drunkenness. The general frame and tenor of these passages leave little doubt that this metaphorical application was once again rooted in the idea of a person’s faculties being overwhelmed or smothered *as if in or under a liquid*. While I have not found where a pagan Greek author explicitly compared this effect with a literal circumstance, the grammarian Athenaeus (c.2nd century AD) vicariously alluded to such.

5) You seem (*dokeite*) to me, O guests, to be strangely flooded [*katēntlēsthai*—flooded over; covered] with vehement words, and overwhelmed [*bebaptisthai* (*baptizō*)] with undiluted wine. For a man taking draughts of wine, as (*ōs*) a horse does of water, talks like a Scythian,⁵³⁸ not knowing even *koppa*,⁵³⁹ and [then] lies speechless, plunged [*kolumbēsas*—plunge; dive; swim underwater] in the cask.⁵⁴⁰

⁵³⁴ *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, 2.4; (cf. T. Conant, *The Meaning & Use of Baptizein*, 46.)

Greek: Διονύσιος δέ, ἀνὴρ πεπαιδευμένος, κατείληπτο μὲν ὑπὸ χειμῶνος, καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν εβαπτίζετο ὁμῶς δὲ ἀνακύπτειν ἐβιάζετο, καθάπερ ἐκ τρικυμίας, τοῦ πάθους; (Ibid.)

⁵³⁵ Josephus employed *baptizō* several times in a similar metaphorical sense with respect to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. (*Jewish Wars*, 2.20.1 [556]; 3.7.15 [196]; 4.3.3 [137]).

⁵³⁶ *Life of Libanius*; (cf. T. Conant, *The Meaning and Use of Baptizein*, 44.)

Greek: Παρεκάλει μὲν τὸ τῶν σιτοποιῶν ἔθνος εἶναι δικαιοτέρους. ἀνάγκας δὲ οὐκ [?]ετο δεῖν ἐπάγειν, δεδιώς τὴν ἐπὶ πλείον ἀπόδρασιν ὡς ἂν εὐθύς ἐβαπτίζετο τὸ ἄστυ, καθάπερ ναῦς ἐκλιπόντων τῶν ναυτῶν; (Ibid.)

⁵³⁷ *Roman History*, 38.27; Earnest Cary, *Dio’s Roman History*, (London: William Heinemann, 1914), 3:255.

Greek: ἄτε γὰρ ἐν τεταραγμένοις καὶ ἀκαταστάτοις πράγμασι φερόμενοι μικρὸν, μᾶλλον δὲ οὐδὲν, τῶν χειμαζομένων διαφέρουσιν, ἀλλ’ ἄνω τε καὶ κατω, τοτέ μὲν δεῦρο τοτέ δὲ ἐκείσε, ἀπτοῦσι κὰν ἄρα τι καὶ τὸ βαρχύτατον σφαλῶσι, παντελῶς βαπτίζονται; (Ibid, 254)

⁵³⁸ Properly, a person from Scythia, a large region north of Persia. However, in ancient Greek culture the term “Scythian” was used as a derogatory term for any especially crude or uncultured person.

⁵³⁹ *Koppa* (or *Qoppa*—Ϟ or Ϙ) is an obsolete letter in the Greek alphabet which in time was replaced by *Kappa* (Κ). It seems to be used here in the hyperbolic sense of “unable to even comprehend sounds as basic as ‘ck.’”

⁵⁴⁰ *Philosopher’s Banquet*, 5.64; T. Conant, *The Meaning and Use of Baptizein*, 70. ⇒

On the other hand, the Jewish philosopher Philo was quite direct concerning the natural *tertium comparationis* in the context of imbibing:

6) ...Those who live soberly and are content with little have superior wisdom. To the contrary, those who are constantly glutted with food and drink are not so intelligent, having their reasoning overwhelmed [or, "buried"—*baptizomenou* (*baptizō*)], as it were [*ate*—as if; just as], by such things overlying [*epiousei*—to set upon; to be over⁵⁴¹] it.⁵⁴²

Two Greek-speaking early church fathers were even more explicit in linking the state of inebriation with the concept of being plunged into or completely covered by water:

7) **Basil of Ceasarea** (c.330–379): Few are more pitiable than those tempest-tossed [*cheimazomenōn*—storm-tossed] on the seas, who are overwhelmed [*epibaptizonta* (*baptizō*)] by the waves [*kumata*—waves] and succumb to the billows [*kludōnos*—rough waves]. So too are [*outō dē*—the same] these souls driven and churned beneath harmful waves [*upobruchioi*—under water (often in an ominous sense)], being drowned [*bebaptismenai* (*baptizō*)] in wine.⁵⁴³

8) **Chrysostom**: For as [*kathaper*] a ship that has become filled with water [*uperantlon*—full of water; overflowing] is presently submerged and made to go deep under [*katabaptizetai* (*kata* [downward]+*baptizō*)] the waves [*upobruchion*]—so does [*outō*] a man who engages in gluttony and drunkenness plunge down into the deep [*kata krēmnon*—precipice; edge; abyss], having his reasoning plied [*ergazetai*—to work or labor] beneath stormy waves [*upobruchion*].⁵⁴⁴

Notably, we also find a prominent Latin author just prior to the apostolic period employing a kindred figure of speech. In describing the indolent state in which the Greeks found the city of Troy upon craftily infiltrating it, the poet Virgil (70–19 BC) wrote,

...they assault the city, buried [*sepultam*] in sleep and wine.⁵⁴⁵

Hence, we are not at all left to wonder what the intended *tertium comparationis* is when it comes to *baptizō*'s figurative usage. Regardless of societal, physical or emotive context, it is consistently a borrowing of the idea of being completely covered by or submerged in water. The duration of such a condition is sometimes not specified, yet when afforded a natural reading is readily discernable from the given connections. As such, to so overtly disregard and even deny

Greek: Δοκεῖτέ μοι, ἄνδρες δαιτυμόνες, σφοδροῖς κατηντλήσθαι λόγοις παρά προσδοκίαν βεβαπτίσθαι τε τῷ ἀκρατῷ, Ἄνῆρ γὰρ ἔλκων οἶνον ὡς ὕδωρ ἵππος Σκυθιστὶ φωνεῖ, οὐδὲ κόππα γινώσκων, κεῖται δ' ἀναυδος ἐν πίθῳ κολυμβήσας; (Ibid.)

⁵⁴¹ See, H. Liddell, R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 614.

⁵⁴² *On Providence*, 2.67; (cf. T. Conant, *The Meaning and Use of Baptizein*, 65f.)

Greek: τοὺς μὲν νήφοντας καὶ ὀλιγοδαίς συνετωτέρους εἶναι, τοὺς δὲ ποτῶν ἀεὶ καὶ σιτίων ἐμπιπ-λαμένους ἡκίστα φρονίμους, ἅτε βαπτίζομενου τοῖς ἐπιούσι τοῦ λογισμοῦ; (Ibid.)

⁵⁴³ *Discourses*, 14.4 (*Against Drunkards*); (cf. T. Conant, *The Meaning and Use of Baptizein*, 47f.)

Greek: Ὑλεινότεροι τῶν ἐν πελάγει χεημαζομένων, οὐς ἄλλα ἐξ ἄλλων διαδεχόμενα καὶ ἐπιβαπτίζοντα κύματα ἀναφέρειν οὐκ ἐπιτρέπει τοῦ κλύδωνος, οὕτω δὴ καὶ τούτων αἱ ψυχαὶ ὑποβρύχιοι φέρονται βεβαπτισμένα τῷ οἴνω; (PG 31:451.)

⁵⁴⁴ *Homilies*, 12 (*Discourse on Gluttony and Drunkenness*); (cf. T. Conant, *The Meaning and Use of Baptizein*, 77f.)

Greek: Καθάπερ γὰρ πλοῖον ὑέραντλον γεγονός ταχέως καταβαπτίζεται καὶ ὑποβρύχιον γίνεται, οὕτω καὶ ἄνθρωπος, ὅταν τῇ ἀδηφαγίᾳ καὶ μέθῃ ἑαυτὸν ἐκδώ, κατὰ κρημνὸν ἀπεισι, καὶ ὑποβρύχιον ἐργάζεται τὸν λογισμόν; (PG 63:651.)

⁵⁴⁵ *Aeneid*, 2.265; Malcolm Campbell, *The Works of Virgil*, (New York: E. Duyckinck, 1803), 1:257;

Latin: ...*invadunt urbem somno vinoque sepultam*; (Ibid.)

the vivid picture associations comparative terms like *osper*, *kathaper*, *ate*, *ōs* and *outō* expressly summon the reader to envision, is indeed “arguing against Shakespeare”—or in this case, against a broad range of ancient Greek writers who deliberately supplied the intended correlation.

In a recent study of early Christian water baptism—in which almost all pertinent historical sources are considered—the patristic scholar Dr. Everett Ferguson made these observations:

Continuing with Plutarch [1st century AD], we find that he represents classical usage of *baptizō* not only in a literal sense with reference to ships sinking, persons drowning, objects submerged, and dipping in a liquid...but also in a metaphorical sense of being overwhelmed whether with drunkenness, affairs of life, or debts.

I conclude this sampling with the philosopher Plotinus [3rd century AD]. He speaks of a “mind swamped (overwhelmed, *baptistheis*) either by illness or magical arts” (*Enneads* 1.4.9). He describes the soul as immersed in the body: “Soul yet plunged [*bebaptismene*] in the body is to sink [*katadunai*] in matter and be filled with it” (1.18.13). “Part of us is held by the body, as one has his feet in water but the rest of the body above it, we lift ourselves up by the part that is not submerged [*baptisthenti*] in the body” (6.9.8). This statement from a third-century writer shows that the literal meaning of immersion (and that in water) was not far away even in the metaphorical uses.⁵⁴⁶

In an implicit though palpable refutation of Dale’s theory in this matter, Ferguson states that while in a certain sense some lingual qualities that Dale articulated are technically admissible, they nonetheless oppose the universally accepted associations in *baptizō*’s figurative usage, and so disfigure the natural pictorial qualities one would expect.⁵⁴⁷

These passages show that the metaphorical use of *baptizō* involved a derived sense “to influence,” but a particular kind of influence. The verb expresses that something exercises a controlling influence that brings about a change of condition. This derived metaphorical sense does not mean that *baptizō* came to mean “to influence controllingly however that was affected.” [cf. *Classic*, 135; *Johannic*, 21; *Christic*, 308] Rather the point of departure for the metaphorical usage was the completeness or thoroughness of the action expressed in submersion.⁵⁴⁸

Approaching our topic from its converse angle, the natural and most apparent way in which a word is used figuratively has direct bearing on how it is properly understood in its literal usage—again, because the two are inherently interwoven. In his extensive treatise on early Greek baptismal terminology, in which, by obvious right and necessity, *baptizō*’s historical usage is scrutinized in great detail, Dr. Ysebaert goes so far as to insist that recognizing the natural metaphorical import of *baptizō* is not only helpful, but in fact the surest means of ascertaining its literal meaning.

The indications that in the New Testament the use of *baptizein* still implied the meaning of an immersion are not found where baptism is directly referred to. ... [Rather, we] find the indications precisely in those places where *baptizein* is used in the metaphorical sense in order to *compare something with* baptism.

A first example of this is provided by the expression *baptizein (en) pneumati agio* [“baptized (with/in) the Holy Spirit”—Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5]. ...The verb is here

⁵⁴⁶ E. Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 52, 55.

⁵⁴⁷ It is notable that while Dr. Ferguson was indeed aware of Dale’s work, in a direct sense he only minimally remarked of it: “...The usefulness of Dale’s large collection of source material is marred by use of outdated editions, repetitious polemic, and a tendentious effort to impose secondary and derived meanings on the usage of the words.” (E. Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 38, fn.1.)

⁵⁴⁸ E. Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 54.

used metaphorically for an immersion in Spirit and fire as in a liquid. It has its Jewish meaning of “to immerse” with an allusion to the technical meaning “to baptize.” This play upon both meanings is only possible if one still bears the literal meaning in mind along with the technical.

A similar case is found in Paul when he compares Christian baptism with the crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites. ...1 Corinthians 10:2. Paul refers to Christian baptism and in thus far thinks of the technical term for it. At the same time, however, he remains conscience of the literal meaning. This appears from the fact that he finds a point of similarity between the crossing and Christian baptism in that the Israelites were “immersed” in the cloud and in the sea. In actual fact the Jews were neither in the cloud nor in the water but by making this comparison the apostle shows that for him the verb was not yet completely technical.

A third example is found in the question and answer of Christ to the sons of Zebedee...Luke 12:50. Christ is speaking of His death but the difficulty is how He can metaphorically speak of it as of a baptism. Here too we must take it that Christ, using *tbl* [*tabal*] in Aramaic, alludes both to its profane meaning of “to immerse” and to the sacral meaning of “to baptize.” He then compares his death with a baptism as an immersion in the sea, the realm of death.⁵⁴⁹

Here Dr. Ysebaert identified the three New Testament contexts where *baptizō* has almost universally been understood to have a figurative or representative meaning, yet each of which Dale’s theory once more obliged him to substantially oppose. It is both interesting and useful to then examine the way Dale handled the relevant passages as compared to their historical comprehension. In so doing we will first show the scripture passage, followed by some relevant remarks from Dale. We will then give broad demonstration of the historical view as expressed by various prominent and (excepting those writing prior to the Reformation) non-immersionist biblical scholars.

A. Baptism with/in the Holy Spirit

Acts 1:4–5: And while staying with them he [Jesus] ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; 5 for John baptized [ebaptisen (baptizō)] with water [hydati], but you will be baptized [baptisthēsesthe (baptizō)] with [en] the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”⁵⁵⁰ [cf. Matt. 3:11–12; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33]

[Dale - first noting the “Baptist” theory concerning this passage]: “The baptism of the Spirit is a figurative expression, explicable on the principle of a reference to immersion.”

“The baptism of the Spirit,” interpreted by parallel phraseology of Scripture, must mean that baptism of which the Spirit is the teacher or the executive; but the Scriptures do not represent the Spirit as a teacher of a baptism, while it does represent him as the executor of baptism. This phrase, therefore, can only represent the Spirit as the executor of baptism. But the [Baptist] theory teaches a baptism in the Spirit as the receiving element, and not by the Spirit as the executor; it therefore teaches a doctrine unknown to the Scripture...

...Baptism is never used to express “abundance;” its idea is always that of *power*. A cup of wine will baptize by its intoxicating power...cloven tongues as of fire have power symbolly to baptize. ...A baptism has nothing to do with abundance, but is a resultant condition effected by some pervading, assimilating, and controlling influence.

⁵⁴⁹ Joseph Ysebaert, *Greek Baptismal Terminology*, 42f.

⁵⁵⁰ Greek: *καὶ συναλιζόμενος παρήγγειλεν αὐτοῖς ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων μὴ χωρίζεσθαι ἀλλὰ περιμένειν τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πατρὸς ἣν ἠκούσατέ μου, ὅτι Ἰωάννης μὲν ἐβάπτισεν ὕδατι, ὑμεῖς δὲ ἐν πνεύματι βαπτισθήσεσθε ἀγίῳ οὐ μετὰ πολλὰς ταύτας ἡμέρας.*

...The baptism of the Spirit, then, is an effect produced in the soul without a dipping, without an immersing, without anything *like* either. ...In other words, it is admitted that the terms baptize and baptism have ceased to express dipping, or immersing, or “anything like” them, and does directly express an effect like to the effect of physical baptism, in whatever way such may be produced.⁵⁵¹

“Baptism is never used to express ‘abundance’” is a key statement here (although would not a “controlling influence” reasonably constitute a species of abundance?). Yet many non-Baptist scholars have indeed understood *baptizō* as being used in this context to convey just that—the exceptionally abundant or overwhelming extent of the Gift. The lexical exegesis of the early Greek-speaking fathers (1, 2, cf. 3) is especially notable as it so explicitly refutes Dale.

1) Cyril of Jerusalem (c.313–386): But He came down to clothe the Apostles with power, and to baptize [*baptisē* (*baptizō*)] them; for the Lord says, “ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost [*baptisthēsethe* (*baptizō*) *en pneumatō*] not many days hence.”

This grace was not in part, but His power was in full perfection [*autotelōs*—literally “self-perfect”]; for as [*ōspeī*] he who plunges into the waters [*endunōn*—sink; plunge—*en tois hydati*] and is baptized [*baptizomenos*] is encompassed [*periballetai*—cover; surround] on all sides [*pantechothen*—everywhere] by the waters, so were they also baptized [*ebaptisthēsan*] completely [*olotelōs*—wholly; altogether] by the Holy Ghost. The water however flows round [*pericheitai*—to spread over] the outside only, but the Spirit baptizes [*baptizei*] also the soul within, and that completely [*aparaleiptōs*—uninterrupted; completely].⁵⁵²

2) Chrysostom: When he [John the Baptist] said, “He shall baptize [*baptisei*] you with the Holy Ghost,” at once, by the very figure of speech [*metaphora*—metaphorical; *lexeōs*—speech], declared the abundance [*dapsiles*—abundance; plenty] of the grace, (for he said not, “He will give [*dōsei*—give] you the Holy Ghost,” but “He will baptize [*baptisei*] you with the Holy Ghost”).⁵⁵³

3) Theophylact (c.1050–1107; *Orthodox archbishop of Achrida, Bulgaria*): The very term [*lexis*] “be baptized” [*baptisthēnai* (*baptizō*)], signifies the abundance [*dapsileian*] and, as it were, the riches of the participation of the Holy Spirit; as also [*ōs kai*], as perceived by the senses, he who is immersed in water [*baptizomenos en hydati*] in that manner bathes [*brechōn*—bathe; drench] the whole body [*olon to sōma*], while he who simply receives [*lambanontos*—receive; have given to] water is not wetted [*hygrainomenou*—wet; moisten] all over [*olon tōn topōn*].⁵⁵⁴

4) Edward Leigh (1602–71; *English Presbyterian and Westminster divine*): To baptize in [Matthew chapter 3] verse 11 means *dip, immerse, submerge* you; that is, he will *dip* you in the ocean of his grace, as opposed to the mere sprinklings that were in place under the Law.⁵⁵⁵

⁵⁵¹ J. Dale, *Christic and Patristic Baptism*, 62ff.

⁵⁵² *Continuation of the Discourse on the Holy Ghost*, 17.14; NPNF2, 7:127.

Greek: Κατήρχετο δέ, ἵνα ἐνδύσῃ δύναμιν καὶ ἵνα βαπτίσῃ τοὺς ἀποστόλους. Λέγει γὰρ ὁ Κύριος ‘Ὑμεῖς βαπτισθήσεσθε ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ οὐ μετὰ πολλὰς ταύτας ἡμέρας οὐ μερική ἢ χάρις, ἀλλὰ αὐτοτελής ὡσπερ γὰρ ὁ ἐνδύνων ἐν τοῖς ὕδασι καὶ βαπτιζόμενος, πανταχόθεν ὑπὸ τῶν ὑδάτων περιβάλλεται. οὕτω καὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος ἐβαπτίσθησαν ὀλοτελῶς. ‘Ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν ὕδωρ ἐξῶθεν περιχεῖται, τὸ δὲ Πνεῦμα καὶ τὴν ἐνδοθεν ψυχὴν βαπτίζει ἀπαρλείπτως; (PG 33:985)

⁵⁵³ *Homilies on Matthew*, 11.6; NPNF1, 10:71.

Greek: Βαπτίσει ὑμᾶς ἐν Πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ αὐτὴ τῆ μεταφορὰ τῆς λέξεως τὸ δαμιλές τῆς χάριτος ἐμφαίνων οὐ γὰρ εἶπι, Δώσει ὑμῖν Πνεῦμα ἁγιον, ἀλλὰ βαπτίσει ὑμᾶς ἐν Πνεύματι ἁγίῳ; (PG 57:197)

⁵⁵⁴ *Commentary on Acts* [1:5]; (cf. T. Conant, *The Meaning and Use of Baptizein*, 110).

Greek: Ἡ βαπτισθῆναι λέξις, τὴν δαμιλιαν, καὶ οἰονεὶ τὸν πλοῦτον τῆς μετοσίας τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος οημαίνει. ὡς καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ αἰσθητοῦ ἔχει τι ὁ βαπτιζόμενος ἐν ὕδατι, ὅλον τὸ σῶμα βρέχων, τοῦ λαμβάνοντος ἀπλῶς ὕδωρ οὐ πάντως ὕγραίνονμένου ἐξ ὅλων τῶν τόπων; (PG 125:512)

⁵⁵⁵ *Annotations on the New Testament*, on Matt. 3:11. ⇒

5) **Ezekiel Hopkins** (c.1634–90; *evangelical Anglican*): John Baptist, St. Matt. 3:11, speaking of Christ, tells them, that he should baptize them *with the Holy Ghost and with fire-*, that is, he should baptize them with the Holy Ghost, working as fire: for, as fire eats out and consumes the rust and dross of metals; so those, that are baptized with the Spirit, are as it were plunged into that heavenly flame, whose searching energy devours all their dross, tin, and base alloy.⁵⁵⁶

6) **Herman Witsius** (1636–1708; *Dutch Reformed*): That great fiery impartation of the Holy Spirit is called a *Baptism*, on account of its abundance.⁵⁵⁷

7) **Nicolaus Gurtlerus** (1654–1711; *German Reformed*): *Baptizein* is a Greek word that doubtless means *to immerse, to dip*; and *baptismos* and *baptisma* denote an *immersion, dipping*.

...*Baptismos en Pneumati hagio*, “baptism in the Holy Spirit,” is immersion into the pure waters of the Holy Spirit, relating to the diverse and abundant [*abundans*] gifts that He bestows; for to receive the Holy Spirit poured out is, as it were, to be immersed in Him.⁵⁵⁸

8) **Jacques L'enfant** (1661–1728; *French Reformed*): “With water; with the Holy Spirit; with fire.” Greek: “*in water; in the Holy Spirit; in fire.*” These words well express the ceremony of baptism, which was anciently performed by plunging (*plongant*) the entire body in water, like the abundant (*l'abondante*) giving of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.⁵⁵⁹

9) **Conrad Iken** (1689–1753; *German Reformed*): We begin by noting, as all agree, that the basic sense of the Greek word *baptismos* indicates the immersion of an object or person into something...

Here as well [Matt. 3:11], according to the same simplicity of the term, the *baptism of fire*, or as such is done in fire, must signify the sending or immersion into fire; and all the more so in this case, since *to baptize in the Holy Spirit and in fire* is not only connected with, but at the same time contrasted to being *baptized in water*.⁵⁶⁰

Latin: *Vers. 11. Baptizo*) i.e. *mergo, demergo, submergo vos: Vos in oceanum eius Gratiae intingo, qui adspargini sub Lege usitatae oppositus est*; (Edward Leigh, *In Universum Novum Testamentum; Annotationes Philologicae & Theologicae*, [Leipzig: Wolfgang Deer, 1732], 16.)

⁵⁵⁶ *The Works of the Right Reverend Father in God, Ezekiel Hopkins, D. D.*, Josiah Pratt, ed., (London: C. Whittingham, 1809), 2:469.

⁵⁵⁷ *De Vita Johannis Baptistae*, LXI;

Latin: *Communicatio larga Spiritus istius ignei Baptismus vocatur, propter ubertatem*. (Hermanni Witsii, *Miscellaneorum Sacrorum*, (Herbornae Nassoviorum: Iohannis Andreae, 1692), 2:535.

⁵⁵⁸ *Institutiones Theologicae*, 33.108f;

Latin: βαπτίζειν *Graecis sine dubio est immergere, intingeret, & βαπτισμός, βάπτισμα, immersio, intinctus... βαπτισμός ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ, baptismus in Spiritu S. est immersio in aquas mundas Spiritus Sancti, dives & abundans donorum illius communicatio: nam super quem Spiritus S. effundatur, is in eum quasi immergitur*: (Nicolaus Gurtlerus, *J. Calvini's Institutiones Theologicae*, [Halle: Sumptu novi Bibliopolii, 1721], 840.)

⁵⁵⁹ *Notes Literalis le Nouveau Testament* (Matt. 3:11);

French: *D'eau - du St. Esprit - de feu*) *Gr. dans l'eau – dans le St. Esprit - dans le feu. Ce qui exprime fort bien la ceremonie du Baptême, qui se faisoit en plongeant entierement dans l'eau, & l'abondante effusion du St. Esprit le jour de la Pentecote.*; (Jacques L'enfant, *Le Nouveau Testament de Notre Seigneur Jesus-Christ*, [Amsterdam: Pierre Humbert, 1718], 1:11.)

⁵⁶⁰ *De Baptismo Spiritus et Ignis, ad Matth. III.ii. coll. Luc. III.16*;

Latin: *In antecessum velim, id simplici verborum sensui maxime convenire, cum graeca vox Βαπτισμός immersionem rei aut personae in aliquid, denotet...*

Atque adeo & hic baptismus ignis, aut igne factus, immisionem aut immersionem in ignem ad similen finem, secundum eandem litterae simplicitatem innuere debeat; id que tanto magis, quia hic βαπτισσει ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρί non tantum conjungitur, sed & τῷ βαπτισσει ὕδατι opponitur;

(Conradi Ikenii, *Dissertationes Philologico-Theologicae, in diversa Sacri Codicis utriusque Instrumenti Loca*, [Lugduni Batavorum: Cornelium Haak, 1749], 1:325.)

Alfred Edersheim made these interesting comments with specific regard to the “fire” aspect of Christ’s bestowal of baptism, as prophesied by John:

10) His Baptism would not be of preparatory repentance and with water, but the Divine Baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire—in the Spirit Who sanctified, and the Divine Light which purified, and so effectively qualified for the “Kingdom.”

...The expression “baptism of fire” was certainly not unknown to the Jews. In Sanhedrin 39a⁵⁶¹ we read of an immersion of God in fire, based on Isaiah 66:15. An immersion or baptism of fire is proved from Numbers 31:23.⁵⁶²

B. The Israelites’ Baptism “in the Cloud and in the Sea”

1 Corinthians 10:1–4a: I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under [hupo—under; by] **the cloud, and all passed** [dilēthon—to pass through] **through** [dia—by; through] **the sea** [thalassēs—sea], **and all were baptized** [ebaptisanto (baptizō)] **into** [eis] **Moses in** [en] **the cloud** [nephelē] **and in** [en] **the sea** [thalassē], **and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink.**⁵⁶³

[Dale - noting the “Baptist” error]: This,—“the going down of the Israelites into the sea, their being covered by the cloud, and their issuing out on the other side, resembled the baptism of believers.” That is to say, “the going down” and “the issuing out” “resemble” the act of dipping into water.

... Historical facts do not allow the adverse translation—“in the cloud, in the sea.” There is no historical evidence to show that the millions of Israel were now, or were at any other time, “in the cloud.” There is historical evidence to the contrary.

There is no historical evidence to show that Paul uses *en tē thalassē*, out of its usual sense including water, but excludes water, and limits his meaning to the *bed* of the sea.⁵⁶⁴

Dale’s overly literalistic concept of figurative language is very manifest here: since the Old Testament’s account of the Israelites’ experience does not describe a literal, physical envelopment “in” the cloud and sea, apparently the teams of scholars behind every major English Bible translation have categorically erred in their “adverse” rendering of Paul’s reference.

⁵⁶¹ Talmud, Sanhedrin 39a:

“Rabbi Abbahu said to him: He [God] immersed in fire [*b’nura tabal*], as it is written: ‘**For, behold, the Lord will come in fire**’ (Isaiah 66:15*). The heretic said to him: But is immersion in fire [*b’nura tabal*] effective? Rabbi Abbahu said to him: On the contrary, the main form of immersion is in fire [*b’nura tabal*], as it is written with regard to the removal of non-kosher substances absorbed in a vessel: ‘**And all that abides not the fire you shall make to go through the water**’ (Numbers 31:23**), indicating that fire purifies more than water does.”

Hebrew: א"ל בנורא טביל דכתיב (ישעיהו טו, טו) כי הנה ה' באש יבא ומי שלקא טבילותא בנורא א"ל אדרבה עיקר טבילותא בנורא הוא דכתיב (במדבר לא, כג) וכל אשר לא יבא באש תעבירו במים

(<https://www.sefaria.org/william-davidson-talmud>; viewed 11/12/2020.)

* Hebrew: כִּי־הִנֵּה יְהוָה בָּאֵשׁ; LXX: ἰδοὺ γὰρ κύριος ὡς πῦρ ἦξει

Full verse: “...everything that can stand the fire, you shall pass through** [Hebrew: *abar*—pass through <> LXX: *dieleusetai*—pass through] **the fire, and it shall be clean. Nevertheless, it shall also be purified with the water for impurity. And whatever cannot stand the fire, you shall pass through** [*abar* <> *dieleusetai*] **the water.**”

Hebrew: כִּלְי־דְבָר אֲשֶׁר־יָבִיא בָאֵשׁ וְנִטְהַר אֵף בְּמִי נִדָּה וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָבִיא בָאֵשׁ תַּעֲבִירוּ בַּמַּיִם; LXX: πάν πρᾶγμα διελύσεται ἐν πυρὶ, καὶ καθαρισθήσεται, ἀλλ' ἢ τῷ ὕδατι τοῦ ἁγνισμοῦ ἁγνισθήσεται· καὶ πάντα ὅσα ἐὰν μὴ διαπορεύηται διὰ πυρός, διελύσεται δι' ὕδατος.

⁵⁶² A. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, 2:272f; fn. 6.

⁵⁶³ Greek: Οὐ θέλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν πάντες ὑπὸ τὴν νεφέλην ἦσαν καὶ πάντες διὰ τῆς θαλάσσης διήλθον καὶ πάντες εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν ἐβαπτίσαντο ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ καὶ ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ καὶ πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν βρῶμα ἔφαγον καὶ πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν ἔπιον πόμα ἔπιον.

⁵⁶⁴ J. Dale, *Judaic Baptism*, 294, 308f.

Again, most theologians, whether immersionists or otherwise, have consistently seen Paul's language as having a distinctly metaphorical character, wherein a certain aspect of the Red Sea crossing is being likened to a familiar feature in apostolic water baptism.

1) Origen (c.185–254; *early theologian from Alexandria*): What the Jews supposed to be a crossing of the Sea, Paul calls a baptism [*baptismum*]. ...He calls this “baptism in Moses consummated in the cloud and in the sea,” that you also who are baptized [*baptizaris*] in Christ, in water [*in aqua*] and the Holy Spirit, might know that the Egyptians [evil spirits] are following you and wish to recall you to their service.

...These attempt to follow, but you descend into the water [*descendis in aquam*] and come out unimpaired, the filth of sins having been washed away. You ascend [*ascendis*] “a new man” prepared to “sing a new song.” But the Egyptians who follow you are drowned [*demurgentur*] in the abyss.⁵⁶⁵

2) Augustine: Baptism [*Baptismus*] is signified by the sign of the cross, that is, by the water in which you were immersed [*aqua ubi tingimini*] and through which you pass [*transitis*], as it were [*et quasi*], in the Red Sea. Your sins are your enemies. They follow you, but only up to the Red Sea. When you have entered, you will escape; they will be destroyed, just as the Egyptians were engulfed by the waters [*aqua cooperuit*—cover], while the Israelites escaped on dry land.⁵⁶⁶

3) Philip Melancthon (1497–1560) *German Lutheran*: The sign [in baptism] is the immersion [*immergi*] in water. ...It is a fact that by baptism is signified a transition through death to life, and from this can be seen its function. There is a submersion [*demersio*] of the old Adam into death, and a revival of the new.

...This meaning will very easily be understood from a type. Baptism was foreshadowed in the Israelites' crossing of the Arabian Gulf. What other than death did they enter when they committed themselves? By faith they were crossing through the waters, and through death, until they came out. In this historical account what baptism signifies actually took place, namely, the Israelites passed from death into life.⁵⁶⁷

4) Zacharias Ursinus (1534–83; *German Reformed; chief author of the Heidelberg Catechism*): The ceremony connected with baptism intimates deliverance from our varied afflictions. We are immersed, but not drowned, or suffocated. It is in respect to this end that baptism is compared to the flood [1 Peter 3:20]. ...We may here appropriately refer to that passage of Paul, where he compares the

⁵⁶⁵ *Homilies on Exodus*, 5.1, 5; Ronald E. Heine, *Origin: Homilies on Genesis and Exodus*, (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1982) 276, 283f.

Latin: *Quod Judeai transistum maris putant, Paulus baptismum vocal...Baptismum hoc nominat in Moyse consummatum in nube et in mari, ut et to qui baptizaris in Christo, in aqua et in Spiritu sancto, scias insectaria quidem post te Aegyptios, et velle to revocare ad servitium suum...Quae conantur quidem te insequi, sed tu descendis in aquam et evades incolumis; atque ablutis sordibus peccatorum, homo novus ascendis, paratus ad cantandum canticum novum. Aegyptii vero post te insequentes, demurgentur abyssum;* (PG [sic] 12:326, 330f.)

⁵⁶⁶ *Sermons*, 213.8; W. Harmless, *Augustine & the Catechumenate*, 282. ⇒

Latin: *Ideo signo Christi signatur Baptismus, id est, aqua ubi tingimini, et quasi in mari Rubro transitis. Peccata vestra, hostes vestri sunt. Sequuntur, sed usque ad mare. Cum vos intraveritis, evadetis, illa delebuntur: quomodo evadentibus per siccum Israelitis, aqua cooperuit Aegyptios;* (PL 38:1064.)

⁵⁶⁷ *Communes rerum Theologicarum; De Baptismo*; Wilhelm Pauck, *Melancthon and Bucer*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1969), 136.

Latin: *Signum est, immergi in aquam...Significari baptismo (nam hinc usus eius cognoscetur) constat transitum per mortem ad vitam estque demersio veteris Adae in mortem et exsuscitatio novi...Intelligetur haec significatio ex typo facillime. Adumbratus est baptismus transitu Israelitarum per sinum Arabicum. Quid aliud illi quam mortem ingrediebantur, cum aquis se committerent? Transibant fide per aquas, per mortem, dum evaderent. In ea historia gesta res est, quam baptismus significat, nempe per mortem ad vitam transierunt Israelitae. (Philippi Melanthonis, *Loci Theologici: ad Fidem Editionis Principis*, MDXXI, [Leipzig: Dykiano, 1860], 116.)*

passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea to baptism. “All were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea,” (1 Corinthians 10:2).⁵⁶⁸

5) Thomas Gataker (1574–1654; *episcopal Puritan; Westminster divine*): There is a great correspondence between the [Israelites’] going down into the bottom and through the middle of the sea and then coming up onto dry ground, and the rite of Christian baptism as it was administered in ancient times. For the baptized went down into the water, and then came up out of it—of which going down and coming up express mention is made in the dipping of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:38, 39).

...So it must have seemed when passing through the waters of the sea, which were higher than their heads, that they were being surrounded and buried, so to speak, and then raised up again as they emerged and escaped to the opposite shore.⁵⁶⁹

6) Heinrich Meyer: *En tō nephelē* [in the cloud] ...*en* is local, as is *baptizein en hydati*, Matt. 3:11, indicating the element in which, by immersion and emergence, the baptism was effected. Just as the convert was baptized in water with reference to Christ, so also that Old Testament analogy of baptism, which presents itself in the people of Israel at the passage of the Red Sea with reference to Moses, was effected in the cloud *under* which they were, and in the sea *through* which they passed.

...We may add, that there is room enough for the play of typico-allegorical interpretation, to allow the circumstance to be kept out of account that the Israelites went dry through the sea...⁵⁷⁰

7) Henry Alford (1810–71; *Anglican*): “Received baptism to Moses”; entered by the act of such immersion into a solemn covenant with God, and became His church under the law as given by Moses, God’s servant—just as we Christians by our baptism are bound in a solemn covenant with God, and enter His church under the Gospel as brought in by Christ. ...The allegory is obviously not to be pressed minutely: for neither did they enter the cloud, nor were they wetted by the waters of the sea; but they “passed under” both, as the baptized passes under the water.⁵⁷¹

⁵⁶⁸ *Of Baptism* [Q.69], 2.5; George Washington Willard, trans., *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharius Ursinus, on the Heidelberg Catechism*, (Columbus: Scott & Bascom, 1852), 360f.

Latin: *Liberationem ex cruce declarat ipsa baptismi caeremonia. Nom nos immergimur quidem: sed nom submergimur, aut suffocamur. Huius sinis respectu baptismus diluuii comparatur.*

...*Huc etiam pertinet Pauli locus, ubi transistum maris rubri baptismo confert: Omnes in Mose baptizati sunt nube & mari, etc. 1 Cor. 10. 2;*

(David Pareus, *Corpus Doctrinae Orthodoxae sive, Catecheticarum Expiacationum D. Zachariae Ursini*, [Geneva: Samuel Crispin, 1616], 2:433f.)

⁵⁶⁹ *Adversaria Miscellanea*, 4;

Latin: *Magnum habet convenientiam ille in maris intima insimaque descensus, ex eodem ascensus denuo in aridam, cum baptismi christiani ritu, prout is primis temporibus administrabatur. Siquidem inter baptizandum in aquas descendebant, & ex eisdem denuo ascendebant: Cujus καταδυσίως κί αναδυσίως in Eunuchi Aethiopsis tinctioe mentio expressia reperitur, Act. viii 38, 39.*

...*Ita maris illius aquis capitibus ipsis transeuntium altius extantibus obruti ac sepulti quodammodo poterunt videri & emergere ac resurgere denuo, cum ad littus objectum exeuntes evasissent;* (Thomas Gataker, *Adversaria Miscellanea inqibus Sacrae Scripturae Primo*, [London: Apud sa. Gellibrand, 1659], 30.)

⁵⁷⁰ Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Hand-book to the Epistles to the Corinthians*, (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1884), 219.

German: *ἐν τῷ νεφ.) ἐν ist ortlich, wie bei βαπτίζειν ἐν ὕδατι Matth. 3, 11...das Element bezeichnend in welchem der Vollzug der Taufe durch Ein - und Hervortauchen geschah. Wie der Täufling im Wasser in Bezug auf Christum getauft wird, so hat sich jenes alttestamentl. Vorbild der Taufe, welches sich am Volke Israel bei dessen Durchgang durch's rothe Meer in Bezug auf Mose darstellt, in der Wolke, unter welcher sie waren, und in dem Meere, durch welches sie gingen, vollzogen.*

...*Dabei ist übrigens der Spielraum der typisch allegorischen Anschauung weit genug, um von dem Umstande, dass die Israelitin trocken...durch's Meer gingen, abzusehen.* (Heinrich Meyer, *Kritisch Exegetisches Handbuch uber den ersten Brief an die Korinther*, [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1870], 263f.)

⁵⁷¹ Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament*, (London: Deighton, Bell & Co., 1877), 2:522f.

8) **Thomas Lindsay** (1843–1914: *Scottish Presbyterian*): Complete surrounding with water suits better [than sprinkling or pouring] the metaphors of burial in Romans 6:4 and Colossians 2:12, and of being surrounded by cloud in 1 Corinthians 10:2.⁵⁷²

C. Jesus' Baptism of Suffering (Passion)

Mark 10:37, 38: **And they** [the disciples James and John] **said to him**, “**Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.**”³⁸ **Jesus said to them**, “**You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or [ē—or; and; rather than] to be baptized [baptisthēnai] with the baptism [baptisma] with which I am baptized [baptizomai]?⁵⁷³** [cf. Matt. 20:22; Luke 12:50]

[Dale]: It is not a mark of interpretative wisdom to take the glowing poetical forms of the Psalms and incorporate them in the calmer prosaic statements of the Gospels. Nothing could more justly and more vividly delineate persistent and oppressive sorrows than the language of David; but there is no approach to any such picturing by Matthew, Mark, Luke or John, when they speak of the sufferings of their Lord. David might fitly so write as a poet. The writers of the gospels were not poets; they were historians. There is neither statement nor implication in any language used by them of “waves,” “billows,” “water-spouts” or “waters.”

The unutterable woes of the Redeemer of a lost world are expressed under the simplest and quietest of figures, the drinking from a cup, while the result of that drinking penetrating and pervading his whole being “even unto death,” is expressed as a *baptisma*; a term never employed either in profane or sacred writings to express a *covering in water*. It would be a “blunder” perhaps “worse than a crime” to displace the sublimely simple language of the Gospels in order to make room for the “waves,” and “billows,” and “water-spouts” of the Psalms...

...Christ was baptized into death, into penal death, into that death which was demanded by the broken law. And how was he baptized into death? Was it by being dipped into water? Or, by drinking the cup held to his lips by a Father's hand, in which were melted down, the humiliation of “taking upon him the form of a servant,” the bearing of the name of “Nazarene” and Beelzebub, the endurance of buffetings and stripes, the nails, and the thorns, and the spear, and the averted face of his ever-loving Father? All this he “drank,” and by it was “baptized” into penal and atoning death.⁵⁷⁴

One might well gather from Dale's remarks that he believed the historical nature of the Gospels prevents them from ever using figurative language, or even relaying verbal utterances of such. Explicitly, Dale denied that Jesus' use of the term *baptism/baptize* in connection with his human suffering was semantically or conceptually related to the Old Testament's frequent use of the idea of vast and turbulent waters to figuratively describe extreme trial or anguish.⁵⁷⁵ Yet once again this apathetic disassociation is bleakly opposed to the historical consensus. Dale's stance also seems markedly impassive towards a harrowing co-description from the Savior himself.

Matthew 26:38a (NIV): **Then he** [Jesus] **said to them** [his disciples], “**My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow [perilupos—peri; encompass; surround; swallow up—lupē; sorrow; grief] to the point of death.**”⁵⁷⁶

⁵⁷² G. Bromiley, ed., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 1:419.

⁵⁷³ Greek: οἱ δὲ εἶπαν αὐτῷ· δός ἡμῖν ἵνα εἰς σου ἐκ δεξιῶν καὶ εἰς ἐξ ἄριστερῶν καθίσωμεν ἐν τῇ δόξῃ σου. ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· οὐκ οἶδατε τί αἰτεῖσθε. δύνασθε πιεῖν τὸ ποτήριον ὃ ἐγὼ πίνω ἢ τὸ βάπτισμα ὃ ἐγὼ βαπτίζομαι βαπτισθῆναι.

⁵⁷⁴ J. Dale, *Christic and Patristic Baptism*, 37f, 251.

⁵⁷⁵ Cf., Psalm 42:7*, 69:2*, 88:7*; Isaiah 30:28, 43:2; Jer. 47:2; Ezek. 26:19; Dan. 9:26; Jonah 2:3.

*Virtually all orthodox Christian theologians take these Psalms as vicariously alluding to Christ's sufferings.

⁵⁷⁶ Greek: τότε λέγει αὐτοῖς· περίλπος ἐστὶν ἡ ψυχή μου ἕως θανάτου.

Nonetheless, Dale essentially conflated the *cup* and the *baptism* into a single concept, claiming the latter simply expressed the effect of an experience denoted by the former. For one thing, however, such a notion somewhat discounts the use of the particle *ē* (“or”) in the text, which typically calls attention to some distinction between two proximate terms or ideas.⁵⁷⁷ Here are some examples of what the nearly universal interpretation of the *baptism* portion of Jesus’ saying has been—which, in Dale’s estimate, has resulted from a lack of “interpretive wisdom”:

1) Lancelot Andrewes (1555–1626; *Anglican bishop, translator, and co-editor of the 1611 KJV*): For after this was past [Jesus’ water baptism], He spake of another “baptism He was to be baptized with”.

...And so He was baptized. And He had *trinam mersionem*; 1. One in “Gethsemane”, 2. one in “Gabbatha” [Pilate’s judgment hall], 3. and a third in “Golgotha”.

...For the baptism of blood that was due to every one of us, and each of us to have been baptized in his own blood, to have had three such immersions; that hath Christ quit of us.⁵⁷⁸

2) Zacharias Ursinus: Baptism was instituted to signify our taking of the cross, and to afford comfort concerning the preservation and deliverance of the church from all her afflictions. Those who are baptized are plunged, as it were, in affliction; but with the full assurance of deliverance. It is for this reason that Christ speaks of afflictions under the name of baptism. “Are ye able to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” (Matt. 20:22).⁵⁷⁹

3) Matthew Poole (1624–79; *English Presbyterian*): Afflictions are ordinarily compared in Scripture to waters. To be *baptized* is to be dipped in water: metaphorically, to be plunged in afflictions.⁵⁸⁰

4) Edward Reynolds (1599–1676; *English Presbyterian and Westminster divine*): Now as waters signify afflictions, so there are two words which signify suffering of afflictions, with relation thereunto...and they are both applied to Christ (Matthew 20:22): “Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”

He that drinketh hath the water in him; he that is dipped or plunged, hath the water about him. So it notes the universality of the wrath which Christ suffered.⁵⁸¹

5) The Westminster Annotations: “With the baptism.” A comparison taken from the manner of baptizing them by dipping them over head and ears in the water.⁵⁸²

⁵⁷⁷ While they are most appropriately joined in this context, an immense distinction between suffering even the deepest human sorrow and bearing the full weight of the righteous wrath of Almighty God must be recognized here. Importantly, the latter cataclysm, that of wrath, is often metaphorically represented in scripture as being stored up and dispensed from a cup (e.g., Jer. 25:15; Isaiah 9:6–7; Hab. 2:16; Rev. 16:19; et al.). Both afflictions, in their utmost extremes, were singularly experienced and inimitably endured on believers’ behalf by the only God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ. (See, Isaiah 51:17, 53 in toto; Rom. 4:25, 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; et al.)

⁵⁷⁸ Lancelot Andrewes, *Ninety-Six Sermons*, (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1841), 3:247f.

⁵⁷⁹ *Of Baptism*, 2.5; G. Willard, *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharius Ursinus, on the Heidelberg Catechism*, 360.

Latin: *Est significatio immersionis in crucem, & consolatione de conseruatione & liberatione ecclesiae ex ea: baptizatos videlicet mergi in afflictiones, sed & certo ex illis emergere. Hinc afflictiones vocantur baptisma: Potest eodem baptizate baptizari, quo ego baptizor?*

(D. Pareus, *Corpus Doctrinae Orthodoxae sive, Catecheticarum Explicationum D. Zachariae Ursini*, 2.433.)

⁵⁸⁰ Mathew Poole, *Annotations upon the Holy Bible*, (London: T. Parkhurst, 1700), vol. 2; on Matt. 20:22.

Latin: *Baptismi autem nomen refero ad metaphoram illam, qua afflictiones in S.S. saepe comparantur gurgitibus aquarum, quibus veluti submerguntur qui calamitatibus vexantur.*

(Matthaeo Polo, *Synopsis Criticorum Aliorumque Sacrae Scripturae Interpretum et Commentatorum*, [London: B. C. Wustius, 1694], 4:468.)

⁵⁸¹ A. Chalmers, *The Whole Works of the Right Rev. Edward Reynolds*, (London: B. Holdsworth, 1826), 2:456.

⁵⁸² *Annotations upon all the Books of the Old and New Testament*, vol. 2; on Matthew 20:22.

6) **Henry Melvill** (1798–1871; *Anglican*) ...[There is another] reason why our Lord's agony and passion may be characterized as a *baptism*. We have spoken to you of baptism as introductory to some alteration in state or condition. The word only applies to cases in which some change is presumed, as the result of immersion, to have taken place either literally or symbolically.⁵⁸³

7) **Albert Barnes** (1807–68; *American Presbyterian*): [paraphrasing *Matt. 20:22*] “Are you able to suffer with me—to endure the trials and pains which shall come upon you and me in endeavoring to build up my kingdom? Are you able to be plunged deep in afflictions, to have sorrows cover you like water, and to be sunk beneath calamities as floods, in the work of religion?” Afflictions are often expressed by being sunk in the floods, and plunged in the deep waters.⁵⁸⁴

8) **Moses Stuart**: ...As the more usual idea of *baptizō* is that of “overwhelming,” “immerging,” it was very natural to employ it in designating severe calamities and sufferings.⁵⁸⁵

9) **Heinrich Meyer**: The *cup* and *baptism* of Jesus represent martyrdom. In the case of the figure of baptism...the point of the similitude lies in the being *submerged*.⁵⁸⁶

10) **Richard France** (1938–2012; *Principal of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford University*): ...In the narrative context we must suppose that Jesus has coined a remarkable new metaphor, drawing on his disciples' familiarity with the dramatic physical act of John's baptism, but using it (somewhat along the lines of the secular usage...) to depict the suffering and death into which he was soon to be “plunged.”⁵⁸⁷

Dr. France's characterization of Jesus' use of the originally unique Christian noun *baptisma* to metaphorically describe especially intense suffering as a neologism is noteworthy. Yet as he also alluded to, similar connections do in fact occur in earlier Greek writings using the common verb *baptizō*.

Dr. James Moulton (1863–1917; English Methodist; Professor of Greek at the University of Manchester) noted one such example discovered among a large stash of Greek papyri that date from the 2nd century BC to the 4th century AD. While some of these writings contain fragments of biblical sayings or Hellenistic literature, most are nonliterary in nature, consisting rather business records and other transactions of a civic nature, or, as with this particular reference, personal letters.

Our earliest quotation [of *baptizō* in these manuscripts] is from P. Par 47.13 (c. B.C. 153). ...The translation of the letter, which is very illiterate, is by no means clear, but *baptizometha* must mean “flooded,” or overwhelmed with calamities.⁵⁸⁸ That the word was already in use in this metaphorical

⁵⁸³ *Christ's Baptism of Suffering*; Henry Melvill, *The Golden Lectures*, (London: James Paul, 1854), 687.

⁵⁸⁴ Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament, Explanatory & Practical*, (London: Blackie & Son, 1884), 1:209.

⁵⁸⁵ M. Stuart, *Is the Mode of Christian Baptism Prescribed in the New Testament?*, 73f.

⁵⁸⁶ H. Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Hand-book on the Gospels of Mark and Luke*, 135f.

German: *Die Praesentia πίνω und βαπτίζομαι vergegenwärtigen.—Kelch u. Taufe Jesu stellen das Martyrium dar. Bei dem Taufbilde aber...liegt das Tertium comparat. in dem Untergetauchtwerden;* (Heinrich Meyer, *Kritisch Exegetisches Handbuch über die Evangelien des Markus und Lukas*, 127.)

⁵⁸⁷ Richard Thomas France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 416f.

⁵⁸⁸ The mentioned text occurs in a personal letter written by a commoner named Apollonius to his brother:

“For thou liest, and the gods likewise, for they have cast us into a great morass wherein we may die, and if thou hast seen in a dream that we shall be saved from it, then we shall be plunged under.”

(G. Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 1:532.)

Greek: ὅτι ψεύδῃ πάντα καὶ οἱ παρὰ σέ θεοὶ ὁμοίως, ὅτι ἐν- βέβληκαν ὑμᾶς (= ἡμᾶς) εἰς ὕλην μεγάλην καὶ οὐ δύναμε- θα ἀποθανεῖν, κἂν ἴδῃς ὅτι μέλλομεν σωθῆναι τότε βαπτίζόμεθα (= βαπτίζομεθα). (Ibid.) ⇒

sense, even among uneducated people, strikingly illustrates our Lord’s speaking of His Passion as a “baptism” (Mark 10:38).⁵⁸⁹

A later employment of this theme in classical literature is seen in a novel by Heliodorus of Emesa (c.3rd century AD), where it actually occurs twice:

1) Cnemon, observing that he [a friend named Theagenes] was absorbed in grief [*pathei*—grief; suffering] and overwhelmed [*bebaptismenon (baptizō)*] by the calamity [*sumphora*—calamity; misfortune], feared he would harm himself, and so covertly removed his [Theagenes’] sword from its sheath.⁵⁹⁰

2) It is indeed fitting to weep, both now and later—but let us not be drowned along with him [*sumbaptizōmetha*] in his grief [*pathei*], and needlessly swept away by his tears as [*ōsper*] by a flood [*reumasi*—torrent; flood].⁵⁹¹

In expressing his grief and sense of loss upon having two friends killed in a devastating earthquake in Nicomedia (358 AD), the Greek rhetorician Libanius (c.314–394 AD) wrote:

3) I myself am one overwhelmed [*bebaptismenōn*] by that massive wave [*megalou kumatōs*] [of grief].⁵⁹²

Notably, some four centuries before Christ the Greek biographer Xenophon (c.430–354 BC) synonymously used the word *katadusin* (plunge; sink) in a comparable emotive context:

Ah, Cyrus, you are ever the same, gentle and compassionate to human weaknesses. But all the rest of the world has no pity on me; rather, they drown [or, *plunge*—*kataduous*] me in wretchedness [*achei*—distress].⁵⁹³

Despite Dale’s stoical disavowals, these examples, together with all of the previous cases, make plain that the *tertium comparationis* of *baptizō* in a metaphorical context is the general idea of being overwhelmed with, surrounded by, or plunged into a mass of water.

German: *Denn du lügst alles und die Götter bei dir gleichfalls, denn sie haben uns in einen großen Schlamm geworfen und worin wir sterben können, und wenn du (im Traume) gesehen hast, daß wer (daraus) gerettet werden solen, (gerade) dann werden wir untergetaucht.* (Ibid.)

⁵⁸⁹ James Hope Moulton, George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament: Illustrated from the Papyri and other Non-Literary Sources*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1949), 102.

⁵⁹⁰ *Aethiopica*, 2.3 [Story of Theagenes and Chariclea];

Greek: Ὁ δὲ Κνήμων ὅλον ὄντα πρὸς τὸ παθεῖ καταμαθὼν καὶ τῆ συμφορὰ βεβαπτισμενον, δεδιὼς τε μὴ τι κακὸν ἑαυτὸν ἐργάσῃται, τὸ ζῆφος ὑφαιρεῖ λάθρα;

(A. J. Lapaume, *Erotici Scriptores: Parthenius, Achilles, Tatius, Longus, Xenophon, Heliodorus...* [etc.], [Paris: Ambroise Firmin-Dido, 1856], 248.)

⁵⁹¹ *Aethiopica*, 4.20; (cf. W. Lamb, *Ethiopian Story*, 115.)

Greek. Μέν ἐξέσται νῦν τε καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα θρηνεῖν, ἡμεῖς δὲ μὴ συμβαπτίζόμεθα τῷ τούτου πάθει, μηδὲ λάθωμεν ὡσπερ ρεῦμασι τοῖς τούτου δάκρυσιν; (A. Lapaume, *Erotici Scriptores*, 296.)

⁵⁹² *Letters*, 25; Greek: Καὶ αὐτὸς εἶμι τῶν βεβαπτισμένων ὑπὸ τοῦ μεγάλου κύματος ἐκείνου. (Georgios Fatouros, Tilman Krischer, Dietmar Najock, *Concordantiae in Libanium: Epistolae*, [Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1987], 1:106.)

⁵⁹³ *Cyropaedia*, 6.1.37; Henry G. Dakyns, *The Education of Cyrus*, (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1914), 4:195.

Greek: ὦ Κῦρε, καὶ ταῦτα ὁμοίως εἶ ὡςπερ καὶ τᾶλλα, πρᾶς τε καὶ συγγνώμων τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀμαρτημάτων: ἐμὲ δ’ ἔφη, καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι ἄνθρωποι, καταδύουσι τὴν ἀχρῆ; (George M. Gorham, *The Cyropaedia of Xenophon*, [London: Whittaker & Co., 1856], 282.)

Chapter 11: “Christic” vs. Water Baptism

By all indication the determination that, in itself, *baptizō* “cannot express a definite act of any kind” was a significant factor in an equally unorthodox conclusion reached by Dale: unless the word *water* appears in direct conjunction with the terms *baptize/baptism*, or such a connection is undeniable by virtue of very specific and immediate contextual information, then water baptism cannot be in view. Here are some remarks by Dale advancing this proposition:

...Whenever a baptism is stated without any explanatory adjunct, there is no, of course, calling on *water* to fill the deficiency.⁵⁹⁴

...The idea that *baptizō* has any complimentary relation with water in the New Testament, or has any concern in the mode of using water in ritual baptism, is foundationless.⁵⁹⁵

The word *baptize* is not to be found in the New Testament in complementary relation to water.⁵⁹⁶

Accordingly, Dale asserted that whenever the term “baptism” occurs apart from “water,” then his chosen definition of something that is wholly subjected to a controlling influence—which in relation to Christianity he generally described as the baptism of the Holy Ghost, or being spiritually baptized into Christ—is the one and only sense in which it can be meant.⁵⁹⁷

As such, and in austere discord with the historical consensus of the universal Christian church, Dale insisted that the celebrated and oft acted upon words of the Great Commission—**“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing [baptizontes] them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...”** (Matthew 28:19⁵⁹⁸)—do not refer to the institution of water baptism in any way. Nor was this jarring assertion merely an aside. Rather, well over 100 pages of *Christic Baptism* are a concerted effort to defend and propagate that view.⁵⁹⁹ (I must also say that I have never seen any past or current proponents of Dale’s work even acknowledge this disturbing aspect of his teaching, much less actually deal with it.)

Much of Dale’s argumentation in this area was based on his perception of the parallel, although disputed reading⁶⁰⁰ of the Commission found in Mark’s Gospel:

*Mark 16:15, 16: And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized [baptistheis] will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”*⁶⁰¹

All, so far as I am aware, who interpret the language of the Evangelist [Mark] as indicating a ritual baptism, do so without having examined the question—“May not this be the *real* baptism by the Holy Spirit and not *ritual* baptism with water?” This vital issue has been assumed without investigation, and determined against the real baptism of the Scriptures, without a hearing. Such assumption is neither grounded in necessity, nor in the warrant of Scripture.

⁵⁹⁴ J. Dale, *Christic and Patristic Baptism*, 402.

⁵⁹⁵ J. Dale, *Christic and Patristic Baptism*, 466.

⁵⁹⁶ J. Dale, *Johannic Baptism*, 336.

⁵⁹⁷ Cf. *Christic and Patristic Baptism*, 100, 159–162, 241–242, 392–402.

⁵⁹⁸ Greek: *πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος.*

⁵⁹⁹ J. Dale, *Christic and Patristic Baptism*, 352–469.

⁶⁰⁰ Mark 16:9–20 is a variant manuscript reading that is nevertheless still included in most modern translations.

⁶⁰¹ Greek: *καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· πορευθέντες εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἅπαντα κηρύξατε τὸ εὐαγγέλιον πάσῃ τῇ κτίσει. ὁ πιστεύσας καὶ βαπτισθῆς σωθήσεται, ὁ δὲ ἀπιστήσας κατακριθήσεται.*

We reject ritual baptism from all direct connection with this passage, in general, because, the passage treats of salvation and its conditions (belief and baptism). All out of the Papal church admit, that ritual baptism has not the same breadth with belief as a condition of salvation, and are, therefore, compelled to introduce exceptions for which no provision is made in the terms of this passage.

We accept the real baptism by the Holy Spirit as the sole baptism directly contemplated by this passage, in general, because, it meets in the most absolute and unlimited manner as *a condition of salvation* the obvious requirement on the face of the passage, having the same breadth with belief, and universally present in every case of salvation.

...The [same] interpretation given to the Commission as recorded by Matthew is vindicated by the statements and allusions to the same as furnished by Mark, Luke [Luke 24:44–50; Acts 26:17, 18], John [John 3:5, 25], and Paul [1 Cor. 6:11; Eph. 5:26; Titus 3:5; Heb. 10:22]. These have already received consideration. In them all appears, in one form or another, the statement that *the remission of sins enters into that Commission* and through-the Lord Jesus Christ.

This remission of sins is stated, out of the Commission, as a *baptism* into repentance, into the remission of sins, into Christ, and into his death. Mark speaks of a baptism *which secures salvation*, and therefore is not ritual baptism but real baptism into Christ, effected, *as stated*, by believing. The real discipleship of Christ can only be effected by believing upon Christ, and the discipleship of Matthew is the same as the baptism into Christ of Mark.

And since a ritual baptism belonged to the real discipleship and real baptism into Christ, it cannot be, that a second ritual baptism belonged to that real baptism into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.⁶⁰²

For essentially the same reasons Dale also maintained two additional accounts of New Testament baptism that are narrated in terms exclusive of the word *water*, but which make reference to certain spiritual effects—namely, the baptism of the three thousand converts at Pentecost (Acts 2:37–41) and that of the apostle Paul (Acts 9:18, 22:16)—can again only refer to inner, spiritual baptism:⁶⁰³

This baptism is the same as that preached by John the Baptist, who makes “baptism into the remission of sins” the result of “repentance,” and therefore the work of the Holy Ghost. It is the same baptism as that preached by Peter, “Repent and be baptized into the remission of sins (believing) upon (*epi*) the name of Jesus Christ,” where repentance is presented as the means, and the Lord Jesus Christ declared to be the ground cause of the remission of sins.

The entire harmony of these statements with that of Ananias, “Baptize thyself and wash away thy sins calling on (*epi*) the name of the Lord,” is obvious. ...This passage says nothing of “figurative” washing away of sin by water. Such addition to Scripture radically changes its character. The removal of sin is real and by prayer.

...The interpretation is just as applied to baptism by the Holy Ghost and remission of sins through Christ; but when applied to ritual baptism it shows, that the wisest and the best are compelled to use language which proves that their feet “tread on slippery places.”⁶⁰⁴

In the end Dale would go so far as to categorically state:

There is no clear evidence of a physical *baptisma* [noun] being referred to at any time in the New Testament.⁶⁰⁵

⁶⁰² J. Dale, *Christic and Patristic Baptism*, 392f, 462f.

⁶⁰³ See also, *Christic and Patristic Baptism*, 98–112 (esp. p.100) and 130–162 (esp. p.162).

⁶⁰⁴ J. Dale, *Christic and Patristic Baptism*, 107ff.

⁶⁰⁵ J. Dale, *Johannic Baptism*, 142f.

In a lesser-known work of his Dale even more rigidly affirmed this stance:

Baptism (*baptisma*) denotes a result, an effect. ...The use of this word originates in the Scriptures. It is there used to express exclusively a spiritual result, effect, or condition. It never has water as its complement.⁶⁰⁶

Of course, according to this blanket assertion water baptism is also not in view in such New Testament passages as Matthew 3:7, Mark 11:30, Ephesians 4:5 and 1 Peter 3:21.

As a supposed confessional Presbyterian, it is rather remarkable that Dale either rejected or else never stopped to consider the long-established Reformed understanding of why Scripture often uses forceful and even efficacious language in connection with the sacraments, such as we find succinctly articulated in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*:

There is, in every sacrament, a spiritual relation, or sacramental union, between the sign and the thing signified; whence it comes to pass, that the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other. (WCF 27.2)⁶⁰⁷

The Heidelberg Catechism is quite forceful as to how this relationship pertains to baptism:⁶⁰⁸

Question 72. *Is then the external baptism with water the washing away of sin itself?*

Not at all: for the blood of Jesus Christ only, and the Holy Ghost cleanse us from all sin.

Question 73. *Why then does the Holy Ghost call baptism “the washing of regeneration,” [Titus 3:5] and “the washing away of sins” [Acts 22:16]?*

God speaks thus not without great cause, to-wit, not only thereby to teach us, that as the filth of the body is purged away by water, so our sins are removed by the blood and Spirit of Jesus Christ; but especially that by this divine pledge and sign he may assure us, that we are spiritually cleansed from our sins as really, as we are externally washed with water.⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰⁶ James W. Dale, *The Cup and the Cross*, (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1872), 5.

⁶⁰⁷ *Historic Creeds and Confessions* [electronic], (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

⁶⁰⁸ Historically, many Baptist stalwarts have recognized the same metonymic association—in this case understanding the subject (baptism) as often being expressed by adjuncts denoting that which it profoundly signifies: “Brethren, the baptism here meant [Mark 16:16—“**Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.**”] is a baptism connected with faith, and to this baptism I will admit there is very much ascribed in Scripture. Into that question I am not going; but I do find some very remarkable passages in which baptism is spoken of very strongly. I find this—‘**Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.**’ [Acts 22:16b**] I find as much as this elsewhere; I know that believer’s baptism itself does not wash away sin, yet it is so the outward sign and emblem of it to the believer, that the thing visible may be described as the thing signified.

“Just as our Saviour said—‘**This is my body,**’ when it was not his body, but bread; yet, inasmuch as it represented his body, it was fair and right according to the usage of language to say, ‘**Take, eat, this is my body.**’ [e.g. Matt. 26:26] And so, inasmuch as baptism to the believer representeth the washing of sin—it may be called the washing of sin—not that it is so, but that it is to saved souls the outward symbol and representation of what is done by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the man who believes in Christ.”

(Charles Spurgeon, “*Baptismal Regeneration*”; cited in, H. L. Wayland, *Charles H. Spurgeon: His Faith and Works*, [Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1892], 315.)

Greek: *ὁ πιστεύσας καὶ βαπτισθεὶς σωθήσεται, ὁ δὲ ἀπιστήσας κατακριθήσεται.

** ...ἀναστὰς βάπτισαι καὶ ἀπόλουσαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας σου ἐπικαλεσάμενος τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ.

⁶⁰⁹ *Historic Creeds and Confessions*, in loc. cit.

German: [Q72] *Ist denn das äußerliche Wasserbad das Abwaschen der Sünden selbst? Nein denn allein das Blut Jesu Christi und der Heilige Geist reinigen uns von allen Sünden.*

[Q73] *Warum nennt denn der Heilige Geist die Taufe das Bad der Wiedergeburt und das Abwaschen der Sünden? Gott redet so nicht ohne große Ursache: Nämlich, nicht nur, daß er uns damit lehren will, daß, gleich wie die ⇒*

In vigorously and, as I would submit, decisively refuting many of Dale's dubious claims in this consequential matter, the evangelical Lutheran theologian Dr. James Allen Brown (1821–82) wrote:

The first impression likely to be made on learning the conclusions thus reached [by Dale], is that it is a clear case of *reductio ad absurdum* [“reduction to the absurd”—i.e., an absurd conclusion necessarily resulting from a flawed premise]—that the author has condemned his own principles of interpretation, by showing their logical results. Doubtless some will be glad to avail themselves of this to break the force of his arguments on other points. It is only fair to say, that his general views of baptism would receive a stronger support by a different interpretation of these cases...

...First of all, it is admitted that the common, well nigh universal, view recognizes all these as cases of ritual baptism. ...We have great confidence in what may be called the “common sense” interpretation of the Bible, and are slow to believe that the great mass of Christians have been in error on this point for so many centuries.

...Ritual baptism was a well known and recognized religious ordinance at that time, and when the word is used without anything to suggest a different meaning, the natural impression is that of ritual baptism. It seems hardly necessary to offer any proof of the familiarity of this ordinance. It was practiced by John, submitted to by Christ Himself, and administered by the apostles before and after the death of their Master, as a means and a pledge of discipleship.

...The Eunuch at once said, as of a fully understood matter, “**See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?**” [Acts 8:36b⁶¹⁰] At Samaria, “**when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women.**” [Acts 8:12⁶¹¹] ...These and similar cases show how well it was understood at that time that ritual baptism was to be administered to all who desired to be disciples of Christ.

The language of the Commission is in perfect harmony with this idea. It is to make disciples of, or to disciple, *μαθητεύσατε* [*mathēteusate*], all nations, baptizing them, etc. It seems scarcely possible to receive any other impression from the words, than that they were to disciple the nations to Christ, and as a means were to baptize those who became disciples, and further to teach them to observe all things whatsoever commanded by Christ.

The relation of baptizing and teaching is suggestive of baptism being the initiatory step in the work of making disciples, or that the baptism was to be followed by instruction and obedience in the school of Christ. This, it also seems to us, is fatal to the interpretation of an exclusively higher and ultimate baptism, in which baptism with water, or as an external ordinance, is to have no part.

...When Peter said to the multitude, “**repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ,**”⁶¹² and when Ananias said to Paul, “**arise and be baptized**”,⁶¹³ we can hardly think of

Unsauberkeit des Leibes durch Wasser, so unsere Sünden durch Blut und Geist Christi hinweggenommen werden sondern vielmehr, daß er uns durch dieses göttliche Pfand und Wahrzeichen versichern will, daß wir so wahrhaftig von unseren Sünden geistlich gewaschen sind, wie wir leiblich mit dem Wasser gewaschen werden.

Latin: [Q72] *Estne ergo externus baptismus aque e ipsa peccatorum ablutio? Non est: Nam solus sanguis Jesu Christi purgat nos ab omni peccato.*

[Q73] *Cur ergo Spiritus Sanctus baptismum appellat lavacrum regenerationis, et ablutionem peccatorum? Deus non sine gravi causa sic loquitur; videlicet, non solum ut nos doceat, quemadmodum sordes corporis aqua purgantur; sic peccata nostra sanguine et Spiritu Christi expiari: verum multo magis, ut nobis hoc divino symbolo ac pignore certum faciat, nos non minus vere a peccatis nostris interna lotione abluui, quam externa et visibili aqua abluti sumus;* (The German Reformed Church in the United States of America, *The Heidelberg Catechism, in German, Latin and English*, [New York: Charles Scribner, 1863], 205.)

⁶¹⁰ Greek: Ἰδοὺ ὕδωρ· τί κωλύει με βαπτισθῆναι;

⁶¹¹ Greek: ὅτε δὲ ἐπίστευσαν τῷ Φιλίππῳ εὐαγγελιζομένῳ περὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ ὀνόματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἐβαπτίζοντο ἄνδρες τε καὶ γυναῖκες.

⁶¹² It would seem very odd and redundant for Peter to have said [meant]: “**Repent and be baptized** [with the Holy Spirit.]...**and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**” (Acts 2:38).

Greek: ...μετανοήσατε, καὶ βαπτισθήτω...καὶ λήμψεσθε τὴν δωρεὰν τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος.

a command that does not embrace the well-known baptism with water, or that this was not the very baptism enjoined as a condition and evidence of their discipleship.

It may help to confirm this to refer to the case of Peter at Ceasarea. Here there is no room for dispute or doubt, as distinct mention is made of the water, for baptism: “**Can any man forbid water,**” etc. [Acts 10:47a] The very form of expression in the original, “**Can anyone forbid the water,**” to *hydōr*,⁶¹⁴ indicates how distinctly it was understood that water baptism was to be administered in all such cases.

We believe that every reader of these accounts will naturally, if not necessarily, receive the impression of ritual baptism here, as in the cases where it is distinctly stated or so clearly implied as to place it beyond doubt.⁶¹⁵

In some respects, Dale’s position might seem posed as an attempt to resist the false teaching of baptismal regeneration. Yet, as Dr. Brown went on to point out, he unwittingly ended up creating an arrangement that is equally sacerdotal in substance:

No mere men could be commissioned to baptize with the higher and ultimate baptism exclusive of water, nor could the command be given to men by men to be thus baptized. Men are but the instruments employed by God and by which he is pleased to accomplish His work, and God never delegates to the instrument what belongs absolutely to Himself. He may commission men to preach repentance and remission of sins, but He commissions no man to do what He alone can do—forgive sins. So he may commission men to preach baptism and to administer the ordinance, but He does not commission men to bestow the higher and ultimate baptism into the triune God.

...We doubt if Rome has ever claimed more than is involved in this assumption by our modest Presbyterian brother. Of course he will disavow all idea of such an assumption, but we can not help thinking that his interpretation of the Great Commission, and that of the baptism of the three thousand and of Paul, must include thus much: When Christ said to the apostles, “**Go ye therefore and disciple all nations, baptizing them,**” etc., if He meant this highest baptism and this exclusively, then He commissioned men to administer and bestow it, and that just as actually and surely as He commissioned them to teach the observance of all things commanded by Him.

It is all plain enough if we understand it of submission to a divinely instituted ordinance, the condition and proof of their discipleship to Christ, but mysterious beyond comprehension, if it must be understood of something wholly divine, a baptism of the Holy Ghost.⁶¹⁶

Of course, if one maintains the Great Commission has no reference to water baptism, then it necessarily follows it cannot inform the church that the ordinance is to be administered using the verbal formulary “**in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**”—and indeed, Dale expressly and unflinchingly advanced this inter-dependent ideology:

We do, therefore, reject the hypothesis which makes the baptism of the Commission a ritual institution, as well as the further hypothesis that baptism into the Name of the Lord Jesus is the equivalent of baptism into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and deny, that the Lord Jesus Christ is adjoining the baptism of *his disciples* into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, had any idea of announcing a formula for a ritual ordinance.

...This denial is sustained:

⁶¹³ For Greek see note 608.

⁶¹⁴ Greek: *Μήτι τὸ ὕδωρ δύναται κολῦσαι τις*

⁶¹⁵ James Allen Brown, “*Dr. Dale’s Inquiry into the Usage of βαπτίζω*”; *The Quarterly Review of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, (Gettysburg: J. E. Wible, 1875), 5:343f.

⁶¹⁶ *Ibid*, 5:344f.

1. By the entire absence of all evidence in the Commission in connection with these words of a ritual injunction. *Baptizantes eis to onoma* ["baptizing into (or, in) the name"] is a complete phrase expressing a most positive sentiment in itself. Water (*hydatis*) cannot be introduced, elliptically, into it by any recognized law, because water nowhere appears in all Scripture with these very remarkable words. Again, these words cannot be converted into a ritual formula, because thereby the transcendent truth which they teach is destroyed. A rite is but a shadow. This baptism as it stands in the Commission is a reality. This reality is adequately secured by discipleship to Christ. Therefore, to convert it into a ritual shadow, is not only to give a stone instead of bread, but worse, it is to take away divine bread that has been given, and to replace it with a human stone.

2. By the absolute incredibility of the rejection by the Apostles of such a commanded formula, and the substitution of another.⁶¹⁷ What amount of evidence could give probability to such rejection it is hard to say; but this is certain, *there is not a particle of real evidence* for it.

3. By the essential difference of the two formulae as expressed in their terms.

4. *By the entire exclusion, hereby induced, of a CRUCIFIED Redeemer from the ritual entrance into that kingdom of which his CROSS is the door.*

5. By the want of significance in water ritually used in a baptism *into the TRINITY*, which, as such, *has no quality to remit sin*; while it is demanded in a ritual baptism into Christ, whose great characteristic is 'the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.'

6. *By the absolute necessity for that real baptism into Christ* (everywhere taught in Scripture and ritually exhibited by the Apostles) *in order to that* [sic] *baptism into the sovereign and holy THREE-ONE* taught in the Commission.⁶¹⁸

Dale did attempt to extricate himself from the practical and ecclesial dilemma this stance obviously creates, although advocates of the Regulative Principle of Worship⁶¹⁹ are sure to find his reasoning far from satisfactory:

This wonderful baptism into the Trinity (dependent upon the baptism into the incarnate, atoning, and mediating Son) has no direct or designed relation to a ritual baptism. It was, however, very soon after the times of the Apostles, connected with the administration of the Christian rite, and continued to be used in common with the formula into the name of the Lord Jesus, until the third century, after which there was an enactment against the use of the Apostolic formula, and a declaration that baptism so administered was invalid.

Such enactment, however, was in direct contradiction of the practice of the Apostles, and is rejected by both Luther and Calvin, who pronounce baptism into the Name of the Lord Jesus to be scriptural, while they observed, in their own practice, the formula which had been adopted by the church, and continued for many ages.

The two formulae have not equal fitness as applied to ritual baptism. The fitness of symbol water in a ritual baptism into the name of the Lord Jesus, is obvious. Its cleansing quality aptly expresses the cleansing power of the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus, into whose name the baptism ideally takes place. But what does the water represent in a baptism of *sinner*s into the name of the Trinity?

...Whether it is, or ever will be, the will of God that the Church should return to the use of the original formula, is more than I can say. My own feeling is, that until such will shall be clearly made known, it cannot be displeasing to the incarnate Redeemer, as the Second Person of the Trinity, that

⁶¹⁷ Here Dale was referring to the two nominal phrases associated with New Testament baptism; 1) "Father, Son and Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19) and 2) "[Lord] Jesus Christ" (e.g. Acts 2:38, 8:16, 10:48, 19:5).

⁶¹⁸ J. Dale, *Christic and Patristic Baptism*, 461f.

⁶¹⁹ This position was historically held by all early, and still by conservative Reformed and Presbyterian churches. It maintains that only such elements as are directly instituted by command, precept or appropriate example in the Bible, or are derived through carefully ascertained principles ("good and necessary consequences"), are permissible in matters of worship. This of course prominently includes the administration of the sacraments. (See, *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, 1.6, 10; 21.1.)

every disciple of his should be ritually baptized into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.⁶²⁰

Just as with the supposed intent of the Great Commission in general, Dale's take on this particular aspect of the subject not only put him at odds against all orthodox Christianity, but expressly with the doctrinal standards of his own church, as we again see plainly articulated in *The Westminster Confession of Faith*:

Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ. [Scripture-proof: Matthew 28:19]

...The outward element to be used in this sacrament is water, wherewith the party is to be baptized, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost... [Acts 8:36, 38, 10:47; Matthew 28:19]⁶²¹

Once again, *The Heidelberg Catechism* is most explicit respecting the source of this fundamental article of the Christian faith:

Question 71a: *Where has Christ promised us, that he will as certainly wash us by his blood and Spirit, as we are washed with the water of baptism?*

In the institution of baptism, which is thus expressed: **“Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”** [Matthew 28:19].⁶²²

On the other hand, it may be noted that various parties staunchly opposed to historical Reformed theology have conspicuously seized upon Dale's teachings as a means of denigrating the historical concord on this issue. Some even conversely appropriate it to help advance their own kindred claims that an inner working of the Spirit is all that is comprehended in most post-Ascension “baptisms,” including the arch-dispensationalist Lewis Sperry Chafer (1871–1952)⁶²³ and the outward-ordinance-denying Quakers⁶²⁴.

This hapless playing into the hands of those who have espoused serious theological error only further highlights how Dale's theory of *baptizō* and *baptism*, when applied consistently and taken to its logical conclusion, squarely winds up in the fallacy of “proving” too much.

⁶²⁰ J. Dale, *Christic and Patristic Baptism*, 458f.

⁶²¹ WCF 28.1, 2; *Historic Creeds and Confessions*, in loc. cit.

⁶²² *Historic Creeds and Confessions*, in loc. cit.

German: *Wo hat Christus verheißen, daß wir so gewiß mit seinem Blut und Geist wie mit dem Taufwasser gewaschen sind? Wer da glaubt und getauft wird, der wird selig werden; wer aber nicht glaubt, der wird verdammt werdeniese Verheißung wird auch wiederholt, wo die Schrift die Taufe das Bad der Wiedergeburt und das Abwaschen der Sünden nennt.*

Latin: *Ubi promisit Christus, se nos tam certo sanguine et Spiritu suo abluturum, quam aqua baptismi abluti sumus? In institutione baptismi, cujus haec sunt verba: Ite, et docete omnes gentes, baptizantes eos, in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sanctis. (The Heidelberg Catechism, in German, Latin and English, 204.)*

⁶²³ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1993), 5:138f.

⁶²⁴ E.g., Cyrus William Harvey [1843–1916]; *The Friend*, (Philadelphia: Wm. H. Pile's Sons, 1895), 68:393f.

A liberal Congregationalist minister, William B. Orvis (1850–90), sympathetic to the Quaker belief, also highlighted Dale's view—and the many indiscriminate ministerial endorsements of it—as direct supporting his strong anti-baptism stance. (See, *Ritualism Dethroned and the True Church Found*, [Philadelphia: Henry Longstreth, 1875], 103ff.)

Chapter 12 - Patristic Baptism

On the whole, *Patristic Baptism* does not objectively meet the criteria of being a systematic investigation into how the early church fathers used the verb *baptizō* or its Latin equivalents. Rather, it seems much more a determined although scattershot attempt by Dale to construe the sayings of these men as treating the concept of *baptism* and its associated terminology in the same way he did—the “condition” of being subjected to a controlling influence. In keeping with his standard *ipse dixit* methodology, Dale was keen to show that the early church did not view immersion as a particularly important or meaningful aspect of the rite—even though they may have typically practiced it.

The evidence now presented showing that the *Baptisma* of early Christian writers was not a physical water covering, but a spiritual condition of the soul, and sometimes applied to the condition of the water as impregnated with a power making it capable of effecting such *baptisma* of the soul, is conclusive against the [Baptist] theory.

...Friends of the theory seem to imagine that the admission, that the bodies of the baptized, when in health, were momentarily covered in water in ancient times, is a verdict in favor of the theory as affirming that such covering is Christian baptism, and that Patristic writers did so believe and therefore did so practice.

We wish therefore distinctly to say, that in adducing evidence to show, that “the Water and the Spirit” appear in Patristic baptism as recognized agencies and not as receiving elements, we have no purpose to deny or to question or to shadow this fact; but on the contrary to give it unhesitating acknowledgment. In doing so, however, we mean to enter a peremptory denial of the conclusion drawn from this fact, that this momentary covering in water was believed to be Christian baptism or any baptism whatever.

With this acknowledgment of a historical fact, we ask the acknowledgment, in turn, of another, just as patent, historical fact, namely: that those not in health were “almost daily” for more than a thousand years baptized *without any water covering*, by pouring and sprinkling. We do not, however, append to this fact the conclusion—“and these acts were Christian baptism, and were so believed to be, and therefore were practiced.” They believed no such thing. We believe no such thing. But they did believe, that baptizing water used by sprinkling or pouring did as absolutely and as literally effect the *Baptisma* of Christianity as was effected by the momentary covering of the body in water.

...It would be an inexcusable error to convert *baptō* second into *baptō* first, because the former dyed a fleece through the action of dipping. It is a like error which seeks to convert the Patristic *baptizō* into dip, because the baptizing water parts with its quality to an object dipped into it, the effect of which quality is declared to be a *baptisma*, and more especially when this water sprinkled or poured is declared to effect the same identical *baptisma*.⁶²⁵

First, no one denies that many of the early church fathers emphasized a perceived spiritual efficacy in water baptism, or that as a logical and even obligatory extension of this view there was widespread agreement that means other than immersion were to be circumstantially allowed—namely, 1) if accessing a sufficient amount of water was a physical impossibility, and 2) when baptizing especially feeble or bedridden candidates.⁶²⁶

Still, in an attempt to prove the linguistic claims made in his above statement, Dale touted a quotation from Augustine as unimpeachable proof that the early church fathers agreed dipping can neither be “baptizing” or “baptism”:

⁶²⁵ J. Dale, *Christic and Patristic Baptism*, 543ff.

⁶²⁶ This is explored in Appendix B, *The History of Non-Immersion in Christian Baptism*, beginning on page 148.

For because we say, “He [Christ] baptizes,” we do not say, “He holds and dips (*tingit*) the bodies of believers in water;” but he invisibly cleanses, and that the whole Church...⁶²⁷

...A more absolute discrimination between dipping and baptizing, and between a water covering the result of dipping, and baptism the result of baptizing, and the repudiation of the one as the other, could not be made than has here been made by Augustine.

...We affirm with Augustine that dipping is not baptizing either heathenly or Christianly, that a water covering for a moment or for eternity neither is nor has anything (*ex necessitate*) to do with Christian baptism, and that the Lord Jesus Christ, by the Holy Ghost, is the sole administrator of real Christian baptism, while men administer a symbol baptism in the use of water by sprinkling, or pouring, or dipping; for these modal uses of water, sprinkling and pouring, we have full scriptural warrant, while dipping has absolutely none, being purely a usage and doctrine of men.⁶²⁸

While in this instance Dale’s translation compares favorably with others,⁶²⁹ his seminal claim that it shows Augustine made an “absolute discrimination between dipping and baptizing” disregards a kindred but more explanatory statement from this Latin father (which Dale nowhere referenced). Thus, we have the inimitable benefit of letting Augustine interpret Augustine:

Jesus both baptized [*et baptizabat*], and did not baptize [*et non baptizabat*]. He baptized in that it was he that cleansed [*ipse mundabat*], and he did not baptize in that it was not he that dipped [*quia non ipse tingebat*]. The disciples performed the corporeal ministry, while he bestowed the divine power.⁶³⁰

This one simple, left-out passage patently discredits Dale’s interpretative judgment of patristic expression, and materially undermines his entire thesis on patristic baptism.

Accordingly, contra Dale’s sentiment, it does not follow that since the fathers frequently emphasized a perceived power in the waters of baptism, they were undecided or indifferent when it came to the proper, or at least the most desirable mode of administering it⁶³¹—or that these two

⁶²⁷ Augustine, *In Answer to the Letters of Petilian, the Donatist, Bishop of Circa*, 3.49;

Latin: *Quod enim dicimus, Ipse baptizat, non dicimus, Ipse tenet, et in aqua corpus credentium tingit: sed, Ipse invisibiliter mundat, et hoc universam prorsus Ecclesiam;* (PL 43:379)

⁶²⁸ J. Dale, *Christic and Patristic Baptism*, 563f;

⁶²⁹ Cf.: “For in that we say, ‘He Himself baptizes,’ we do not mean, ‘He Himself holds and dips in the water the bodies of the believers’; but He Himself invisibly cleanses, and that He does to the whole church without exception.”; (NPNF1, 4:621)

⁶³⁰ *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, 15.3 [on John 4:2];

Cf.: “Or are both true that Jesus did baptize, and yet not baptize? Yes; He baptized, in that it was He that cleansed: did not baptize, for that it was not He that dipped. The disciples afforded the ministry of the body: He afforded the aid of His Majesty.” (John Parker, *Homilies on the Gospel According to John, and his First Epistle, by St. Augustine*, [London: F. & J. Rivington, 1848], 1:231.)

Latin: *Iesus et baptizabat, et non baptizabat: baptizabat enim, quia ipse mundabat; non baptizabat quia non ipse tingebat. Praebebant discipuli ministerium corporis, praebebat ille adiutorium majestatis;* (PL 35:1511)

⁶³¹ The early church historian Socrates of Constantinople (c.388–c.440) gave evidence that immersion was sometimes insisted upon even in very difficult circumstances:

“When Atticus the bishop [of Constantinople; d.425] was informed of his [a physically disabled convert’s] wishes, he instructed him in the first principles of Christian truth, and having preached to him to hope in Christ, directed that he should be brought in his bed [*klinē*] to the font [*photisterion* – place of enlightenment]. The paralytic Jew receiving baptism [*baptisma*] with a sincere faith, as soon as he was taken out of [*analēptheis* – taken up from] the baptismal font [*kolumbēthras tou baptistēriou* – literally, “the pool of the baptistery”] found himself perfectly cured of his disease...” (*Ecclesiastical History*; 7.4; NPNF2 2:284.)

Greek: *...ἐπισκόπω Ἀττικῶ...Κατηγήσας οὖν αὐτόν, καί τήν εἰς Χριστόν ἐλπίδα εὐαγγελισάμενος, κομισθῆναι σὺν τῇ κλίνῃ κελεύσει ἐπὶ τὸ φωτιστήριον. Ὁ ὁὐ παραλυτικός Ἰουδαῖος εἰλικρινεῖ πίστει τὸ βάπτισμα δεξάμενος, ἀπὸ τῆς κολυμβήθρας τοῦ βαπτιστηρίου ἀναληφθεὶς, εὐθὺς ἀπήλλακτο τοῦ νοσήματος...* (PG 67:745)

concerns were isolated issues. To the contrary, the fact that they almost universally saw ordinary baptism as a physical rite of immersion that was instrumental or mediatorial in conveying spiritual benefits to its proper recipients is brought out in many writings. In addition to the preceding statement from Augustine, here are two more succinct examples of this mindset, the first from a Western church leader (Tertullian; c.155–222), and the second from an Eastern prelate (Gregory Nazianzen; 329–389):

[**Tertullian**] The act [*actus*] of baptism [*Baptism*] itself too is carnal, in that we are plunged in water [or, “immersed in water”—*in aqua mergimur*], but the effect spiritual, in that we are freed from sins.⁶³²

[**Gregory Nazianzen**] We call it [the sacrament of Baptism] the Gift, the Grace, Baptism, [etc.] ... “Baptism,” because sin is buried with it in the water.⁶³³

Dale made another bewildering assertion regarding the patristic “expression” of *baptism* and *baptizing*, citing a passage from a pseudo-Dionysius (c. 5th or 6th century AD) as proof:

“As the body is covered (*kalyptomenon*⁶³⁴) in the earth, the complete covering (*kalypsis*), by water, may naturally be received as a likeness (*eikona*) of death and burial. This symbol teaching (*sumbolikē didaskalia*) initiates the sacredly baptized [*baptizomenon*—(my insertion)] by the three coverings (*katadusesi*) in the water to the imitation of the divine death and three days’ and nights’ burial of Jesus the giver of life.”⁶³⁵

...There is no appearance of *baptisma* in those threefold coverings, it is *katadusis*. Now, bearing in mind that neither *kalyptō*, nor *kalypsis*, nor *katadusis*, ever expresses the Patristic *baptizō* or *baptisma*, what shall we say to the [Baptist] attempt to introduce a baptism under this CALYPSIS?⁶³⁶

Yet the Greek scholar Moses Stuart (Yale) decidedly came to the opposite conclusion:

I do not see how any doubt can well remain, that in Tertullian’s time the practice of the African church, to say the least, as to the mode of baptism, must have been that of trine immersion. Subsequent ages make the general practice of the church still plainer, if, indeed, this can be done.

The Greek words *kataduo* and *katadusis* were employed as expressive of *baptizing* and *baptism*, and these words mean “going down into the water,” or “immersing.”⁶³⁷

In more directly considering Dale’s claim, it is not entirely clear what he may have meant by “expresses”. If intended in the narrowest sense that patristic Greek writers never substituted *kalyptō*, *kalypsis* or *katadusis* in their direct citations of *baptizō* and *baptisma* as found in other writings, then he may perhaps be technically correct. Yet in philological terms such an absence is

⁶³² *On Baptism*, 7; Hennie Stander, Johannes P. Louw, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 64.

Latin: *Quomodo et ipsius Baptismi carnalis actus, quod in aqua mergimur, spiritalis effectus, quod delictis liberamur*; (PL 1:1207)

⁶³³ *Orations*, 40.4 [*On Holy Baptism*], (NPNF2, 7:360.)

Greek: *Δώρον καλοῦμεν, χάρισμα, βάπτισμα...βάπτισμα δέ, ὡς συνθαπτομένης, τῷ ὕδατι τῆς ἀμαρτίας*; (PG 36:361f.)

⁶³⁴ The word shown in the Greek source cited by Dale ([PG] “404”) is actually *aphanizomenon* (*ἀφανιζόμενον*), which has the kindred meaning of *disappearing*, *being hidden* or *made invisible* (see text in following note).

⁶³⁵ *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, 2.3.7 (Dale’s translation);

Greek: *ἐκ τῆς κατ’ ἀνθρώπον ἰδέας ἀφανιζόμενον οἰκείως ἢ δι’ ὕδατος ὀλική κάλυψις εἰς τὴν τοῦ θανάτου καὶ τοῦ τῆς ταφῆς ἀειδοῦς εἰκόνα παρείληπται, Τὸν οὖν ἱερώς βαπτιζόμενον ἢ συμβολικὴ διδασκαλία μυσταγωγεί τὰς ἐν τῷ ὕδατι τρισὶ καταδύσεις τὸν θεαρχικὸν τῆς τριημερονύκτου ταφῆς Ἰησοῦ τοῦ ζωοδότου μιμεῖσθαι θάνατον*; (PG 3:404)

⁶³⁶ J. Dale, *Christic and Patristic Baptism*, 567.

⁶³⁷ M. Stuart, *Is the Mode of Christian Baptism Prescribed in the New Testament?*, 142.

beside the point, knowing that patristic writers very frequently and synonymously described the means of obtaining, or the basic physical characteristics of a *baptizō* or *baptisma* with terms like *katadusis* (sinking) and its counterpart *anadusis* (rising). This is observable in the very quote given by Dale, with his own translation indicating that those who were *baptizō*-ed were indeed put into that condition “by” undergoing three *katadusesi*. There is also another instance of this convention from pseudo-Dionysius just one chapter earlier in the same work that Dale cited:

Then the priest immerses [*baptizei* (*baptizō*)] him three times [*tris*], invoking the threefold subsistence of the divine blessedness [i.e. naming the three persons of the Trinity] at the three [*tris*] plungings [*katadusesi*] and raisings [*anadusesi*] of the initiated.⁶³⁸

Here are three additional cases where patristic writers expressively intermixed terms like *katadusis* in describing both *baptisma* and *baptizō*,⁶³⁹ which Dale nowhere acknowledged:

[*Apostolic Constitutions* (c.375–380 AD); *a compilation of early Eastern church doctrine and practice; of Antiochan origin but uncertain authorship*] This baptism [*baptisma*], therefore, is given into the death of Jesus: the water is instead of the burial...the descent [*katadusis*] into the water the dying together with Christ; the ascent [*anadusis*] out of the water the rising again with Him.⁶⁴⁰

[**Basil**] Therefore has the Lord, the dispenser of life, established the rite of baptism [*baptismatos*], that it might afford a figure [*tupon*—image] of death and of life; the water fulfilling the figure of death, but the Spirit giving the pledge of life.

...In three immersions [*katadusesi*], therefore, and in the same number of invocations, the great mystery of baptism [*baptismatos*] is finished, so that both the figure [*typos*] of death is exhibited [*echeikonisthē*—to explain by an exact simile], and the souls of the baptized [*baptizomenoi*] are illuminated [*phōtisthōsin*] by the gift of the knowledge of God.⁶⁴¹

[**Severian** (d.420; *Bishop of Gabala, Syria*); Christ delivered to his disciples one baptism [*en baptismā*] in three immersions [*trisi katadusesi*] of the body, when he said to them, “Go, teach all nations, baptizing [*baptizontes*] them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”⁶⁴²

These are all clear examples of *katadusis* being used to express *baptizō*—or more precisely, being used as a vivid descriptor of what normally constituted a patristic *baptizō*. As such they demonstrate that in such usage *baptizō* was often employed in a manner that can only be

⁶³⁸ *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, 2.2.7;

Greek: τρίς μὲν αὐτόν ὁ ἱεράρχης βαπτίζει, ταῖς τρισὶ τοῦ τελουμένου καταδύσει καὶ ἀναδύσει τὴν τρισήντης θείας μακαριότητος ἐπιδοήσας Υπόστασιν; (PG 3:396)

⁶³⁹ See also texts for notes 36b, 66, 67, 73, 68, 73, 75, 76, 77, 80, 296, 299, 300, 326, and 546.

⁶⁴⁰ *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, 3.17; ANF 7:431;

Greek: Ἔστι τὸν τινὸν τὸ μὲν βάπτισμα εἰς τὸν θάνατον τοῦ Ἰησοῦ διδόμενον, τὸ δὲ ὕδωρ ἀντὶ ταφῆς...ἡ κατάδυσις, τὸ συναποθανεῖν, ἡ ἀνάδυσις, τὸ συναναστήναι; (PG 1:800)

⁶⁴¹ *On the Holy Spirit*, 15.35; (cited in, J. Chrystal, *A History of the Modes of Christian Baptism*, 71);

Greek: Τοῦτου κáριν ὁ τὴν ζωὴν ἡμῶν ὀκλονομῶν Κύριος τὴν τοῦ βαπτίσματος ἡμὲν ἔθετο διαθήκην, θανάτου τύπον καὶ ζωῆς περιέχουσαν. τὴν μὲν τοῦ θανάτου εἰκόνα τοῦ ὕδατος ἐκπληροῦντος, τὸν δὲ τῆς ζωῆς ἀρραδῶνα παρεχομένου τοῦ Πνεύματος. ...Ἐν τρισὶν οὖν καταδύσει, καὶ ἰσαριθμοῖς ταῖς ἐπικλήσεσι, τὸ μέγα μυστήριον τοῦ βαπτίσματος τελειοῦται, ἵνα καὶ ὁ τοῦ θανάτου τύπος ἐξεικονισθῆ. καὶ τὴ παραδόσει τῆς θεογονώσιας τὰς φυχὰς φωτισθῶσιν οἱ βαπτιζόμενοι; (PG 32:129f.)

⁶⁴² *Homily on Faith*, 7; (cited in, J. Chrystal, *A History of the Modes of Christian Baptism*, 77).

Greek: Ἐν τρισὶ καταδύσει τοῦ σώματος ἐν βάπτισμα τοῖς ἐαυτοῦ μαθηταῖς παρέδωκε, λέγων, Πορευθέντες μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος. (PG 60:769; placed among the spuria formerly attributed to Chrysostom.)

understood as directly expressing the physical act involved in baptism—and when taken in light of companion terminology like *anadusis*, being specifically expressive of the act of immersion. Confirming this is the certainty that no orthodox Christian would assert there are three individual rites of baptism, or three cleansings accomplished by it. Here is an especially notable case where even the noun *baptisma* was used in such a manner⁶⁴³ (which Dale, yet again, ignored):

[*Apostolic Canons* (c.4th century); *a particular sub-set of ordinances contained within the larger Apostolic Constitutions*]: If any bishop or presbyter does not perform the three immersions [*tria baptismata*] of the one admission [*muēseōs*—initiation; admission], but one immersion [*baptisma*], which is given into the death of Christ, let him be deprived [*kathaireisō*—overthrown; deposed];

For the Lord did not say, “Baptize [*baptisate* (*baptizō*)] into my death,” but, “Go ye and make disciples of all nations, baptizing [*baptizontes*] them into the name of the Father, *and* of the Son, *and* of the Holy Ghost.”

Do ye, therefore, O bishops baptize thrice [*autons*—“(do) the same”], into one Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost, according to the will of Christ, and our constitution by the Spirit.⁶⁴⁴

As the 12th century Byzantine chronicler John Zonaras noted in his commentary on the *Apostolic Canons*, the syntax of this article shows the noun *baptisma* was used to convey the physical act of immersion, while *muēseōs* was used for the overall rite of baptism.⁶⁴⁵

Here, by “three baptisms” [*tria baptismata*], the canon signifies three immersions [*treis kataduseis*] in one initiation, that is, in one baptism [*eni baptismati*]. So that at each immersion [*kataduseōn*] the baptizer [*baptizonta*] adds one name of the Holy Trinity.⁶⁴⁶

Turning to Latin terminology, as Stuart noted, the church father Tertullian—who was the earliest Christian writer to extensively treat the subject of baptism—is known for his frequent use of the verb *tingo* (and variants) in his descriptions of baptism. However, Dale insisted that Tertullian’s employment of this word was not to convey the idea or practice of dipping.

If Tertullian had believed that *tingo, to dip*, was the just representative of *baptizō* what was to hinder his uniform translation of the latter word by the former? But he does not do it. His constant use of *tingo* shows that in his mind it was related to the *dyeing* side of that word and not to the dipping.⁶⁴⁷

⁶⁴³ Also see text for note 279.

⁶⁴⁴ *Apostolic Canons*, 50, ANF 7:503;

Greek: *Εἰ τις ἐπίσκοπος ἢ πρεσβύτερος, μὴ τρία βαπτίσματα μιάς μνήσεως ἐπιτελέσῃ, ἀλλ’ ἐν βάπτισμα τό εἰς τόν θάνατον τοῦ κυρίου διδόμενον, καθαιρέισω.*

οὐ γάρ εἶπεν ὁ κύριος, Εἰς τόν θάνατόν μου βαπτίσατε, ἀλλά πορευθέντες μαθητεύσατε πάντα τά ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες, αὐτούς εἰς τό ὄνομα πατρὸς καί τοῦ υἱοῦ καί τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος;

(William Beveridge, *Synodikon sive Pandectae Canonum SS. Apostolorum et Conciliorum ab Ecclesia*, [London: William Wells & Robert Scott, 1672], 1:33.)

⁶⁴⁵ Another Byzantine canonist, Theodore Balsamon (d. c.1196), clearly agreed:

“This canon...decides that the sacrament (or mystery) of Holy Baptism ought to be administered by three immersions.” (*Commentary on the Apostolic Canons*, 50; J. Chrystal, *A History of the Modes of Baptism*, 90);

Greek: *ὁ κανὼν...διορίζεται γάρ διὰ τριῶν καταδύσεως τήν μύησιν ἐπιτελεῖσθαι τοῦ ἁγίου βαπτίσματος;* (W. Beveridge, *Synodikon sive Pandectae Canonum SS. Apostolorum*, 1:33)

⁶⁴⁶ *Commentary on the Apostolic Canons*, 50; (J. Chrystal, *A History of the Modes of Christian Baptism*, 90);

Greek: *Τρία βαπτίσματα ἐναῦθα τὰς τρεῖς καταδύσεις φησὶν ὁ κανὼν, ἐν μιά μύησει, ἤτοι ἐν ἐνὶ βαπτίσματι. Ὡστε τὸν βαπτίζοντα ἐκάστη τῶν καταδύσεων ἐν τῆς ἁγίας Τριάδος ἐπιλέγειν ὄνομα;*

(W. Beveridge, *Synodikon sive Pandectae Canonum SS. Apostolorum*, 1:33)

⁶⁴⁷ It is interesting to compare this assertion with the sentiment expressed in the texts for notes 102 [4a] and 103.

...There can be no doubt as to Tertullian's very frequent substitution of *tingo* for *baptizō*. And it should be held just as certain that this was not on the ground that *tingo*, *to dip* was the equivalent of this Greek word.⁶⁴⁸

Before addressing this claim respecting Tertullian, it is again informative to consider what various linguists have had to say regarding the ancient usage of *tingo* in our context.⁶⁴⁹

[**Gerhard Vossius** (1577–1649; *Dutch linguist and theologian*): Both *baptō* and *baptizō* are rendered by *mergo* or *mergito*, and this same meaning is usually transferred to *tingo*; *mergo* gives the proper meaning, which *tingo* also conveys by metalepsis.⁶⁵⁰ For the latter refers to the immersion of dyeing—as such is indeed done by immersion.⁶⁵¹

[**Hugo Grotius** (1583–1645; *Dutch jurist, philosopher and theologian*): It is not surprising to find the Latin Fathers using *tingere* for *baptizare*, as the Latin *tingendi* [a derivative of *tingo*] properly and generally signifies the same thing as *mersare* [a derivative of *mergo*].⁶⁵²

Similar to Vossius, the medieval German Catholic scholar Rabanus Maurus (c.780–856) identified *tingo* as being used in the context of baptism so as to convey both its means—which clearly implied in his statement as being the normal sense of the word—as well as its effect:

Baptismus is from the Greek *Baptisma*, which in Latin is translated *tinctio*. And it is called *tinctio* not only because man is immersed in water [*in aquam mergitur*], but because by the Spirit of Grace he is changed for the better, and is made into something far different than before.⁶⁵³

Alongside the general agreement that the patristic employment of *tingo* was used to convey, or at the very least incorporate the idea of dipping, there is direct and compelling evidence as to

⁶⁴⁸ J Dale, *Christic and Patristic Baptism*, 608f.

⁶⁴⁹ In terms of its classical usage, a comprehensive Latin-English dictionary states:

“*Tingo (tinguo)* 1) ...to wet, moisten, bathe with or in any liquid. ...2) to soak in color, to dye; ...*Tinctus, tinctas, tinctum, (tingo)* a dipping into (a dyeing by metalepsis)...” (W. Freund, E. A. Andrews, eds., *A Copious and Critical Latin-English Dictionary*, [New York: Harper & Brothers, 1851], 1545.)

Here is the entry for “dip” from a standard English-Latin dictionary:

“Dip, (verb) A. transitive; 1) *mergo*: to plunge... 2) *tingo* or *tinguo*: to wet by dipping... 3) *intingo* or *intinguo*: to dip anything in water...B. intransitive; to plunge oneself... 1) *mergor* or *mergo*...to sink. 2) *tinguor*... *tinctus*... *tingo*... *tingi*... *tingere*... to dip... [C.] Dip, (as a substitute for) immersion: express by *mergo, tingo*.”

(W. Smith, T. Hall, eds., *A Copious and Critical English-Latin Dictionary*, [New York: American Book Co., 1871], 210.)

⁶⁵⁰ *Metalepsis*, sometimes called *transumption*, refers to when words or expressions acquire a meaning by virtue of its association with something else, often on the basis of a related cause and effect.

⁶⁵¹ *Etymological Lexicon of Latin* (on *Baptismus*);

Latin: *Etsi autem βάπτω & βαπτίζω tum mergo, vel mergito, tum tingo transferri soleant; proprie tamen mergo notat, & μεταληπτικώς, tingo. Nam posterior est immersione tincture: quia haec immersione sit;*

(Gerardus J. Vossius, *Etymologicon Linguae Latinae*, [Amsterdam: Ludovicus & Daniel Elzevir, 1662], 62.)

⁶⁵² *Annotations on the New Testament* (on Matthew 3:6);

Latin: *Quod autem tingere pro baptizare usurpant Latini veteres mirum videri non debet, cum Latine tingendi vox et proprie et plerumque idem valeat quod mersare;*

(Hugonis Grotii, *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum*, [Groningen: W. Zuidema, 1826], 1:62.)

⁶⁵³ *De Catechismo et Sacramentis Divinis*, 4;

Latin: *Baptismus βάπτισμα Graece, Latine tinctio interpretatur: quae non tamen ob hoc quod homo in aquam mergitur tinctio dicitur, sed quia Spiritu gratiae ibi in melius immutatur, et longe aliud quam erat efficiatur;* (PL 112:1219)

Tertullian's own intentions when one considers his use of the same three-fold convention that many Greek fathers did with *baptizō*, as was earlier observed. Tertullian:

After His resurrection He [Christ] promises in a pledge to His disciples that He will send them the promise of His Father; and lastly, He commands them to baptize [*tinguerent*] into the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, not into a uni-personal God.

And indeed, it is not once only [*nec semel*], but three times [*sed ter*], that we are immersed [*tinguimur*] into the Three Persons, at each several mention of Their names.⁶⁵⁴

Again, we can be sure Tertullian was not saying there were three distinct rituals or three individual cleansings involved in the institution of Christian baptism. Rather, the physical actions of the rite are plainly in view. Another statement by Tertullian also shows that in the previous instance he used *tingo* in an identical sense as he did *mergitamur* (*mergo*):

When we are going to enter the water [*aquam adituri*], but a little before in the presence of the congregation and under the hand of the president, we solemnly profess that we disown the devil, and his pomp, and his angels. Hereupon we are thrice immersed [*ter mergitamur*], making a somewhat ampler pledge, than the Lord has appointed in the Gospel.⁶⁵⁵

Taken together these two statements likewise support the understanding that Tertullian believed immersion was the original mode of baptism—that is, Christ himself commanded his followers to *baptize/immerse* (*tinguerent*) new converts, while the church goes so far as to carry out that particular action in triplicate (*ter tinguimur/mergitamur*). Nor was Tertullian the only early Christian writer to use *tingo/tincti* in expressing Christ's command to baptize disciples. For example, here is a statement by the French priest and historian Gennadius of Massilia (d. c.496):

It is not to be believed that those are baptized [*baptizatos*] who have not been immersed [*tincti*] in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, according to the rule established by the Lord.⁶⁵⁶

Here is a similarly construed statement from Jerome (347–427 AD):

[*Speaking of the proper response to the Great Commission*] At first they teach all nations, then, when taught, they dip them in water [Latin: *intingunt aqua*]; for it cannot be that the body should receive the sacrament of baptism [*baptismi*], unless the soul shall have first received the truth of the faith.⁶⁵⁷

In this instance it is made explicit that *tingo/intingunt* is used in reference to a physical interaction with the element of water (*aqua*) rather than, simply, a supposed characteristic or

⁶⁵⁴ *Against Praxeas*, 26; ANF 3:623;

Latin: *Et post resurrectionem spondens missurum se discipulis promissionem Patris; et novissime mandans ut tingerent in Patrem et Filium et Spiritum Sanctum, non in unum. Nam nec semel, sed ter, ad singula nomina in personas singulas tinguimur*; (PL 2:190)

⁶⁵⁵ *De Corona*, or, *The Chaplet*, 3; Hennie Stander, J.P. Louw, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 64;

Latin: *Denique ut a baptisate ingrediar, aquam adituri ibidem, sed et aliquanto prius in ecclesia sub antitistitis manu, contestamur nos renuntiare diabolo et pompae et angelis eius. Dehinc ter mergitamur amplius aliquid respondentes quam dominus in euangelio determinavit*; (PL 2:79)

⁶⁵⁶ *De Ecclesiasticis Dogmatibus*, 52; J. Chrystal, *A History of the Modes of Christian Baptism*, 80f;

Latin: *Neque enim credendum est eos fuisse baptizatos, qui non in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti juxta regulam a Domino positam tincti sunt*; (PL 58:993)

⁶⁵⁷ *Annotations on the Gospel of Matthew* [28:19]; (J. Chrystal, *A History of the Modes of Baptism*, 73).

Latin: *Primum docent omnes gentes, deinde doctas intingunt aqua: Non enim potest fieri, ut corpus baptismi recipiat sacramentum, nisi ante anima fidei susceperit veritatem*; (PL 26:216)

condition of spiritual cleansing. In a didactic discourse on baptism an early bishop of Turin, named Maximus (d. c.415 AD), unmistakably employed *tingo* and *mersio* as synonyms (which writing, once again, Dale failed to discuss or even note):

Before we dipped [*tingeremus*] your whole body in the font, we asked you, “Do you believe in God the Omnipotent Father?” [etc.] ...After you affirmed that you believed, we immersed [*demersimus*] your body three times in the sacred font.

...They are rightly immersed [*mersi*] three times who receive baptism [*baptismum*] in the name of Jesus Christ, who rose the third day from the dead. For the three immersions [*demersio*] are the symbol of the burial of the Lord...⁶⁵⁸

A number of additional topics could certainly be addressed under the heading of patristic baptism. As Moses Stuart commented, “the passages which refer to immersion are so numerous in the fathers, that it would take a little volume merely to recite them.”⁶⁵⁹ ⁶⁶⁰ Yet the issues *Patristic Baptism* addresses that directly relate to the way *baptizō* and its equivalents were used and comprehended by patristic writers have been adequately covered. As stated at the beginning of this section, there is actually a relative paucity of this direct subject matter in Dale’s book, a point also duly noted the Baptist reviewer David Ford:

There is, we must say, something which looks almost like deception in Dr. Dale's incursion among the ‘fathers,’ and his report concerning their views of baptism. His ponderous treatises are entitled ‘*An Inquiry into the Usage of Baptizō*.’ Once ‘baptism’ was discussed under the two heads of ‘Mode’ and ‘Subjects.’ Our author gives but slight consideration to the ‘Subjects,’ and but little to its modal usage; nor does he inquire into its distinctive and proper usage as an act; but, instead of this, he devotes his treatises mainly to a consideration of the effects or benefits of baptism.

Indeed, he confounds, as we have seen, act and effect; and this confusion vitiates his whole ‘*Inquiry*’ in general, and his ‘*Patristic Baptism*’ in particular. Instead, therefore, of visiting the fathers to inquire into their views of the distinctively proper meaning and usage of *baptizō* in itself considered, his inquiry rather relates to the influence and the benefits, which, in their view, attended baptism.⁶⁶¹

The preceding examination shows how Dale’s selective consideration of patristic sources, often coupled with an arbitrary and dubious interpretation of them, renders it equally tenuous and problematic as that seen throughout other areas of his theory.

⁶⁵⁸ *De Baptismo*, 2;

Latin: *In hoc ergo fonte antequam vos toto corpore tingeremus, interrogavimus: Credis in Deum Patrem omnipotentem? ...Postquam vos credere promisistis, tertio corpora vestra in sacro fonte demersimus...Recte enim tertio mersi estis, qui accepistis baptismum in nomine Jesu Christi, qui tertia die resurrexit a mortuis. Ita enim tertio repetita demersio typum Dominicae, exprimit sepulturae...* (PL 57:775, 778)

⁶⁵⁹ M. Stuart, *Is the Mode of Christian Baptism Prescribed in the New Testament?*, 74.

⁶⁶⁰ On the other hand, a noted modern Presbyterian writer well-acquainted with Dale’s series concluded:

“Without argumentation, we simply state the baptismal mode described in the writings of the most ancient Early Patristic Fathers. All of them, without any exception, upheld first-century Christian baptism—*solely by sprinkling!* ...Only from about 350 A.D. onward, did the deformation of sprinkling as the Biblical *mode* of baptism increasingly take root.” (Francis Nigel Lee, *Sprinkling is Scriptural*; all emphases Lee’s.)

⁶⁶¹ D. Ford, *Studies on the Baptismal Question*, 92.

Summary and Conclusions

Dale began his first volume by laying down a number of presumptive⁶⁶² yet, as I have argued, disprovable theories about language. These two interrelated assertions were foundational:

- (1) No language would produce a derivative word that held the same meaning as its root. Since, as all agree, the root *baptō* means “to dip”, the later derivative *baptizō* cannot.
- (2) Transitive verbs can belong to one of two classes: that which directly expresses an action (e.g. *baptō*), and that which expresses a condition. However, no verb can belong to both classes. Hence, knowing the primary meaning of *baptō* (to dip), *baptizō* cannot inherently express a specific action, and it again follows that it cannot express the act of dipping.

After positing these highly restrictive rules, Dale attempted to sustain them by showing that the ancient usage of *baptō* and *baptizō* in Classic, Judaic, and Christian literature uniformly bore them out. However, Dale’s translation of many, if not the majority of the passages he so adduced was decidedly at odds with those normally ascribed by other scholars. Thus, it was only by his indefatigable subjection of so many primary sources into highly irregular and very strained interpretations that they could possibly be made out as supporting his position.

Moreover, the specific examples of *baptizō* that are scrutinized throughout this review include many which are seemingly among the clearest instances where *dipping* or *immersion* is the most natural and fluent meaning to ascribe—and as historically has almost always been the case. So if Dale could explain away even these examples (although others were ignored), then it is not really all that surprising or especially meaningful that he refused to admit such a definition when it came to any other occurrence of *baptizō*.

While some of the more technical aspects of his theory may be rather difficult to disseminate, at the end of his first book Dale helpfully gave a succinct statement of what his labors had ultimately led him to believe the term *baptize* means. (Notably, this also seems to be the single statement of Dale’s most frequently quoted by his admirers, both past and present.)

WHATEVER IS CAPABLE OF THOROUGHLY CHANGING THE CHARACTER, STATE, OR CONDITION OF ANY OBJECT, IS CAPABLE OF BAPTIZING THAT OBJECT; AND BY SUCH CHANGE OF CHARACTER, STATE, OR CONDITION, DOES, IN FACT, BAPTIZE IT.⁶⁶³

Hezekiah Harvey (Baptist), however, lodged this protest against such a nebulous definition:

It would allow me to say that when I burned a piece of paper, I “baptized” it.⁶⁶⁴

Dr. Hadley (Congregationalist; Professor of Geek at Yale) was equally incredulous at such an infinitely elastic meaning. He also exposed an ineptness in Dale’s definition by turning a major tenet back on itself:⁶⁶⁵

⁶⁶² It is noteworthy that in defending Dale’s theory, even the Presbyterian reviewer Willis Beecher plainly characterized rule #1 as a “presumption.” (See text for note 84.)

⁶⁶³ J. Dale, *Classic Baptism*, 354; emphasis Dale’s.

⁶⁶⁴ Cited in: Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Systematic Theology*, (Philadelphia: The Griffith & Rowland Press, 1909), 3:934.

⁶⁶⁵ Although in the quotation shown below Dale again used his preferred and more narrowly defined term *dip*, it makes obvious his opposition to the physical practice of those usually termed “immersionists”: ⇒

He [Dale] does not say that a surgeon who, by a successful amputation, saves a dying patient, *baptizes* that patient; or that a whetstone, when it changes a dull knife into a sharp one, *baptizes* the knife; or that the sun, when it dries up a stream in summer, *baptizes* the stream. But we are left to infer that he would regard these, and others like these, as natural and appropriate expressions.

The English word *immerse*, however, according to our author, has nearly the same primary meaning as the Greek *baptizō*; and it runs *pari passu* [literally—“with equal step,”—or, as more often put, “side by side”] through the same series of stages, “intusposition without influence,” “intusposition with influence,” “intusposition for influence,” until at length, dropping the idea of intusposition, it reaches the same general idea of “controlling influence.” As Mr. Dale says, “it expresses thorough influence of any kind” [e.g., *Classic Baptism*, 212].

Let the reader observe the words *of any kind*, and say whether we are not then authorized to affirm, that “Whatever is capable of thoroughly changing the character, state, or condition of any object, is capable of *immersing* that object; and by such change of character, state, or condition, does, in fact, *immerse* it.”⁶⁶⁶

Even those who may readily adopt Dale’s conclusion regarding *baptizō*’s strictly limited capabilities—yet somehow incredibly broad application—and thus highly recommend his work, seldom demonstrate the capability to really explain the highly eccentric schematic that produced it. Frankly, many do not appear to be all that familiar with his actual work. In the final analysis it seems accurate and fair to say that despite its oft dogmatic claims,⁶⁶⁷ triumphal presentation,⁶⁶⁸ and truly impressive size, many aspects of Dale’s series are both obstinate and problematic in proportional ways.

Beyond any dispute is the fact that in many important respects Dale’s conclusions were glaringly at odds with the findings of numerous philological investigations preceding his own. It is very difficult to suppose that every one of those efforts, some which were very extensive and conducted by highly respected and capable scholars, simply overlooked the elementary tenets of language and interpretation that Dale claimed to have finally recognized.

It also appears that the many glowing reviews *Classic Baptism* initially received essentially went to Dale’s head, so to speak, as he evidently assumed such positive comments would automatically extend to whatever future conclusions he may draw on the subject.⁶⁶⁹ Indeed, Dale

“Dipping the body into water is not, nor (by reason of a double impossibility found in the meaning of the word and in the divine requirement) can it be Christian Baptism. That Christian baptism is a water dipping is a novelty unheard of in the history of the church for fifteen hundred years. This idea is not merely an error as to the mode of using the water (which would, comparatively, be a trifle), but it is an error which sweeps away the substance of the baptism without leaving a vestige behind.” (*Christic Baptism*, 629; see also text for note 628.)

Dale also endorsed—and implored God’s blessing on—a work on baptism written by the Canadian Presbyterian minister William A. MacKay (or, McKay—1842–1905) entitled, *Immersion Proved to be Not a Scriptural Mode of Baptism, But a Romish Invention*, (1884 edition, [Toronto: C. B. Robinson], p.127).

⁶⁶⁶ J. Hadley, *The New Englander and Yale Review*, 26:755; emphases Hadley’s.

⁶⁶⁷ Even with Dale’s tendency to be very dogmatic about his theories, he was at times obliged to qualify them with some rather equivocal, and even contradictory “although”-s. Here are but two examples from the first part of *Classic Baptism*: 1) “The same word cannot express both act and condition, although act and condition may be inseparably united in one word.” (p.67); 2) “It [*baptizō*] is never used to express a momentary condition; although that condition may be, and in some very few cases is, of short duration.” (p.97.)

⁶⁶⁸ At the end of *Judaic Baptism* Dale made this brash pronouncement concerning his own work:

“With such evidence, deduced from language development, sustaining the previous conclusion of *Classic Baptism*...and with such varied, explicit, and authoritative evidence sustaining the present conclusion of *Judaic Baptism*...any attempt to overthrow these conclusions can have but little happier issue than an attempt to overturn this solid globe of ours, while no answer comes to the [Baptists’] despairing cry—*DOS MOI POU STO* [“give me someplace to stand!”].” (p.400.)

⁶⁶⁹ For example, see text for note 187.

went on to unflinchingly turn many aspects of conventional understanding in this oft studied area on its head.⁶⁷⁰ In his introduction to a recent reprint of Dale's third volume, Dr. Robert H. Countess (1937–2005; Presbyterian) quite candidly admitted as much:

Students must learn anew that Dale's results will fly in the face of dictionary [lexicon] entries, even that of the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* [Kittel].

...And students may learn the valuable lesson that dictionaries are guides, not dogmatic authorities. Usage is always the key to understanding a word.⁶⁷¹

Of course, these remarks very unreasonably insinuate that lexicons must somehow base their findings on something other than the common usage of the language and literature they pertain to.⁶⁷² But if this is in fact the case, then it would be very difficult to see how these references can have any real value or use whatsoever. Indeed, would not we be better off just altogether discarding them? Quite bemusingly, in his introduction to the new edition of *Classic Baptism*, under the heading *Reasons for Reprinting Dale's Work*, Countess made some rather contradictory assertions that are ultimately even more curious:

Dale argued that dictionaries show how words *are* used, not how they *should be* used. Lexicons are the descriptive results of lexicographical investigation and interpretation, not normative authorities for usage.

...Additionally, Dale distinguished between the intent of the author and the understanding of the audience. All of this has enormous import for understanding the meanings of *baptō* and *baptizō*.⁶⁷³

First, in all candor I must say I cannot find where Dale actually articulated these points with quite such specificity. But it seems fitting to still address some of the issues raised since Dale's work evidently left such an impression on one of his most avid promoters.

To begin with—if of course one presumes a writer has even the most basic ability to *communicate*—how is it ever gainful, or even legitimate scholarship to try and “distinguish between the intent of the author and the understanding of the audience”? Such an arbitrary approach is contrary to the foundational principle of relying to the fullest extent possible on *usus loquendi*, and a gaping invitation to instead engage in highly speculative eisegesis.

Further, is it not in fact the proper and rightful role of lexicons to show—as well as the primary concern of their readers to realize—how words are predominately used, or used in a particular context? Is this not the very essence of establishing a word's *usus loquendi*? If so, then how is it a rational complaint that lexicons “(only) show how words *are* used”?

No one would argue that lexicons furnish every possible meaning, in every possible context, for every word they treat. Rather, their main intent is to provide the native and/or normal—that is, the primary meaning of words, along with their most common secondary uses. Of course,

⁶⁷⁰ The fact that Dale was obliged to constantly employ such unconventional words as *intusposition* and *merse* in order to articulate his theory seems telling in this regard.

⁶⁷¹ James Dale, *Johannic Baptism...With a New Introduction by Robert H. Countess*, (Wauconda & Phillipsburg: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co., 1993), Intro., vi.

⁶⁷² It is useful to recognize that many Greek lexicons address word usage in specific categories, such as non-Christian classical (pagan) literature (e.g. Liddell & Scott), while others are bibliocentric and thus focus on the New Testament (e.g. Cremer, Kittel, Thayer, Strong, Vine). Still others are patricentric, analyzing word usage among the early church fathers (e.g. Suicer). Some overlap in this respect, like BDAG, which examines both New Testament and patristic writings. Notably, however, as was shown in sections 2 and 10 of this survey, the broad consensus is that there is a general continuity in *baptizō*'s basic meaning throughout all of these genres.

⁶⁷³ James Dale, *Classic Baptism...With a New Introduction by Robert H. Countess*, Intro., 4.

according to the rules of grammatico-historical interpretation, normal word usage is where all proper exegesis must begin. Only if and when a given context clearly forbids a word's primary meaning should a secondary or, even more rarely, an unusual definition be assigned.⁶⁷⁴

Finally, if not from information gathered by “lexicographical investigations,” then what other source or discipline will supposedly better serve the purposes in question? Are we to simply jettison the imposing historical concord on this issue and instead embrace the views of a highly strident controversialist—even while they admittedly “fly in the face” of the scholarship of so many credentialed linguists and time-proven exegetes? Is Dale really to be accounted an authority unto himself, and his peculiarities taken as the means by which the historical consensus of Greek academia in this thoroughly gone-over tract of philology must be overturned?⁶⁷⁵

It is also significant that despite Dale's open appeal for revisions to be made in accordance with his alleged discoveries,⁶⁷⁶ no Greek lexicon produced after his series was released has expressed agreement with his anomalous conclusion that the verb (!) *baptizō* never conveys a specific *action*, but always and instead a *condition*.⁶⁷⁷ Rather, allowing for any nuanced distinctions that might validly be made between *dipping* and *immersing*, all such references uniformly agree that *baptizō* inherently can, and in fact normally does denote these definitive actions—indeed, that such is the word's native, and residually its primary meaning.

I would then suggest that such an enduring consensus cannot be minimized, let alone simply set aside. Nor, upon a straightforward and natural reading of the relevant primary source materials does the conventional understanding appear to in any way be misinformed or unduly biased. Hence, as I have been arguing, according to the fundamentals of grammatico-historical interpretation, neither can it be thought improbable.

Most reviewers of Dale's series, whether non-immersionists or otherwise, have been generous in their acclaim of Dale's accomplishment in terms of the obvious effort and dedication that went into producing it. Still, and in line with many immersionist reviewers, the Scottish theologian Marcus Dods (1832–1909; Presbyterian) wrote:

That the normal mode [of “New Testament baptism”] was by immersion of the whole body may be inferred from the meaning of *baptizō*, which is the intensive or frequentative form of *baptō*, “I dip,” and denotes to immerse or submerge. (Many examples are given in Stephanus [Henri Stephens *Lexicon Graeco-Latinum*] and especially in *Classic Baptism...* by James W. Dale...). The point is that “dip” or “immerse” is the primary, “wash” the secondary meaning of *baptō* and *baptizō*.⁶⁷⁸

While these comments indicate a high regard for Dale's work as a useful collection of *baptizō*'s ancient usage, they also show Dods clearly differed as to its conclusions.

I think some remarks by Hezekiah Harvey (Baptist) aptly summarize some of the main concerns that have been considered in this review, as well as some additional issues that seem appropriate to weigh when evaluating Dale's overall theory:

⁶⁷⁴ See note 175, and Hadley's remarks in text for note 176.

⁶⁷⁵ In another recent book on baptism, a Presbyterian author effectively answers these questions in the affirmative: “For centuries the church has been held captive to the definition of baptism as a dipping and later as an immersion. ...So many lexicons and dictionaries offer these terms of action as its definition. For our study, however, we will forgo all these scholarly lexicons and Bible dictionaries. Instead, we will make a brief argument as to its *true usage* by the Classical Greek, Judaic and Christian Patristic writers [viz. Dale's series].”

(Mark A. Kramer, *A Stir in the Waters*, [Longwood: Xulon Press, 2011], 211; emphasis Kramer's.)

⁶⁷⁶ Cf., *Classic*, 51, 75, 350ff; *Johannic*, 66, et al.

⁶⁷⁷ See especially Dale's definitions in the texts for notes 11, 12, 13 and 104.

⁶⁷⁸ *A Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, James Hastings, ed., [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906], 1:169.

The Greek churches, which extend over Greece, Russia, Egypt, Abyssinia [Ethiopia], Arabia, Palestine, and the whole of western Asia, and in some of which the Greek language is, and ever has been vernacular, have always practiced immersion, and insisted on this as the true import of the word. ...All church historians unite in affirming immersion as the theory and practice of the Greek churches. ...Unless it be supposed the Greek Churches have through all the ages mistaken the meaning of their own language, the inference from their uniform doctrine and practice would seem irresistible.

...Among the reformers, Luther and Calvin, with all scholars of that age, unitedly affirmed, in emphatic language, that immersion was the original form of the ordinance; as, indeed, do all Continental scholars of the present age [19th century].

...If, moreover, we examine the results of Christian scholarship, as they appear in the highest authorities in Greek lexicography and New Testament exegesis, we find the decision of Greek scholars nearly unanimous for immersion, as the proper [i.e., primary] meaning of *baptizō*, and the original form of the ordinance.

...The late Prof. Moses Stuart, of Andover, in his work on Baptism and its Subjects, affirms that “all lexicographers and critics of any note are agreed that *baptizō* means to *dip*, *plunge*, or *immerse*, in any liquid.” ...Liddell and Scott, the acknowledged lexical authority in classic Greek, define *baptizō*, “to put in, or under, water”; and they explain its figurative uses, such as, *to soak*, *to drown*, *to sink*, as derived from this. The most eminent scholars of the recent period, as Fritsche, Lange, and Meyer, in Germany, and Conybeare and Howson, Alford, Lightfoot, Ellicott, and Plumtre, of the Anglican Church, are in full accord with these latest utterances in New Testament lexicography.⁶⁷⁹

...Now, against this consensus...which itself creates a strong presumption of truth, Dr. Dale distinctly opposes himself; and in defiance of the collective learning, and intellect, and spiritual intuitions of the Christian ages, he boldly affirms that their united convictions were false.

Surely the author might well need four ponderous *octavos* to sustain a position so forlorn and hazardous; and, considering the odds against which he has been compelled to contend, it can not be deemed strange that even these, notwithstanding the amazing courage and industry they display, have failed to accomplish a work so Herculean and hopeless.⁶⁸⁰

In any case, the continuing claim that Dale’s work has never been successfully (credibly) challenged is simply not true. Rather, an imposing company of both non-immersionist and immersionist scholars have objectively exposed some substantial shortcomings and, arguably, fatal defects in Dale’s reasoning and scholarship. While some will likely not see these refutations as sufficient to disprove or discredit Dale’s conclusions, at a bare minimum it must certainly be admitted that a good number of scholars well-schooled in Greek and of high reputation have.

With regard to the way many non-immersionists continue to promote Dale’s series without any stated reservations,⁶⁸¹ I would respectfully submit for consideration some remarks by George Campbell (Presbyterian), which in principle seem to have a measure of applicability here:

I have heard a disputant of this stamp [i.e. one who exhibits either “blind zeal” or “a total want of candor”] in defiance of etymology and use, maintain that the word rendered in the New Testament

⁶⁷⁹ This list of names also calls attention to the fact that the whole of European scholarship—regardless of religious affiliation or academic discipline—essentially ignored Dale’s theory. As such the embracement of his ideas has for the most part been a North American and, it must be said, sectarian phenomenon. (An obscure American enthusiast, Thomas Jenkins, did translate and publish *Classic Baptism in Welch* [*Bedyddio: Ymchwiliad I Feddwl Y Gair Baptizo*, (Utica: T. J. Griffiths, 1877)]).

⁶⁸⁰ Hezekiah Harvey, “Dale’s Theory of Baptism”; Baumes, J. R. ed. *The Baptist Quarterly Review*, (Cincinnati: J. R. Baumes, 1879), 1:160f.

⁶⁸¹ For example, in his compendium of Dale’s work Ralph Bass writes: “These [Dale’s] books are without equal in the history of the study of baptism. ...Having completed this [Bass’s] study, the reader is encouraged to consider purchasing the original five books, now published in four volumes, and experience the joy of the fullness of his contribution.” (*Baptizō*, 5f.)

baptize [*baptizō*], means more properly “to sprinkle” than “to plunge,”⁶⁸² and, in defiance of all antiquity, that the former method was the earliest, and, for many centuries, the most general practice in baptizing.

One who argues in this manner never fails, with persons of knowledge, to betray the cause he would defend; and though with respect to the vulgar [uneducated], bold assertions generally succeed as well as arguments, sometimes better, yet a candid mind will disdain to take the help of a falsehood, even in support of the truth.⁶⁸³

Writing several years before his death—and having witnessed the many heated polemical debates and works created by both non-immersionists and immersionists throughout his lifetime, including Dale’s—Philip Schaff similarly concluded:

The Protestant Baptists can appeal to the usual meaning of the Greek word and the testimony of antiquity for immersion. ...The baptism of Christ in the Jordan and the illustrations of baptism used in the New Testament (Rom. 6:3, 4; Col. 2:12; 1 Cor. 10:2; 1 Pet. 3:21) are all in favor of immersion rather than of sprinkling, as is freely admitted by the best exegetes, Catholic and Protestant, English and German.

Nothing can be gained by unnatural exegesis. The persistency and aggressiveness of the Baptists have driven Paedobaptists to the opposite extreme.⁶⁸⁴

Personally, I find it difficult to argue with Schaff’s assessment, especially considering the tumultuous time in which he was writing. Yet regardless if some extremist positions have or may be taken by various immersionists (e.g., *baptizō* always conveys mode *and absolutely nothing but mode*), this is not justification for their opponents to deal with the linguistic and historical evidence in an even more radical though opposite-leaning manner the verb (*baptizō* always conveys condition *and indicates absolutely nothing with respect to action*).

Finally, even the relatively modest sampling of quotations cited in this review (as compared to what might have been shown) betrays another fallacy Dale continuously engaged in, which might be likened to an attitude C. S. Lewis called “chronological snobbery”. That is, Dale exhibited an almost total disregard for, or at best an unconscious disconnect from the fact that the vast majority of pre-19th century Christians, including those of the Reformed and other Protestant churches, interpreted the biblical and historical data relative to the apostolic mode of baptism in essentially the same way immersionists do. By this I specifically mean:

- 1) They agreed that the native and normal usage of the Greek word *baptizō* is to express the actions of *dipping* or *immersing*, and that most, and perhaps all of the New Testament’s literal usage of this verb follows classical Greek literature in denoting or at least incorporating that physical characteristic.
- 2) They agreed that *baptizō*’s figurative usage in the New Testament is only cogent when a connection to the literal act of plunging or the condition of being covered is appreciated.

⁶⁸² Just to be clear, Campbell, who died in 1796, is obviously not referring specifically to Dale. Nor did Dale posit this particular lexical error (see for example, *Classic Baptism*, 20; *Johannic Baptism*, 403). However, I would suggest that a conclusion as novel as to say the verb *baptizō* “never denotes any definite act” is in fact equally in defiance of etymology and common usage.

I must also question the propriety of directing people, at least without ample warning, to a series that so adamantly claims that the Great Commission has nothing to say or do respecting the ordinance of water baptism.

⁶⁸³ George Campbell, *Lectures on Pulpit Eloquence*, (London: John Bumpus, 1824), 304f.

⁶⁸⁴ P. Schaff, *The Oldest Church Manual called ‘The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles’*, 55f.

3) They agreed that the spiritual symbolism expressly attached to Christian water baptism in the New Testament prominently includes or, according to many, even centers on the concept of the believer's vicarious inclusion in Christ's death, burial and resurrection (sometimes integrated into the term "regeneration"), and that this spiritual truth is vividly and intuitively portrayed by a brief immersion into, and emergence out of water.

4) They agreed that a natural, straightforward reading of the New Testament's accounts describing both John's and subsequent Christian water baptism amply indicates that the apostolic church normatively and intentionally practiced full bodily immersion (with some divines perceiving possible exceptions to this rule).

5) Secondly, they agreed that until the 13th century, or so, and for all the same reasons as stated above, the great majority of Christians continued to practice baptism by immersion whenever possible.

To denigrate these viewpoints, then, is to in effect say that most Christians prior to the 19th century—again, including almost all of the Protestant reformers—simply misunderstood the basic meaning of key scriptural passages on this matter. This, despite the fact that many obviously considered the issue at some length and came to substantially the same conclusions. Yet even if this were the case, the many criticisms of how immersionists have historically understood these texts—which as we have seen exemplified in Dale's writings can sometimes reach the level of ridicule, or even outright disdain—are unavoidably if perhaps unwittingly made to apply to all of these men as well. Simply put, one cannot credibly apply such criticisms to only some while selectively exempting others who substantially agreed on the same points in question.

Of course, and of great significance, despite their acknowledgments regarding the normative mode of apostolic baptism, most of these capable and godly men clearly disagreed with modern immersionists by concluding that the use of immersion is not something necessary, important or (in some cases) desirable to maintain. I believe these noticeably divergent standpoints then evoke what is surely the most important question underlying our entire review: How should the biblical and historical evidence concerning the apostolic mode of baptism be applied to the practice of the present-day church? And that, dear reader, is a whole other discussion.⁶⁸⁵

⁶⁸⁵ See, however, discussion on pages 70–74.