

every diversity prescribed in the law. It is therefore improper to commit its meaning to immersion, or sprinkling, or both; for more than both it clearly comprehends. To ascertain its special meaning in a given case, the only way is to observe the direction of the law in that case. In the case of baptism by fire it is equivalent to immersion, in the case of baptism by blood to sprinkling, &c.

1 Cor. xv. 29: "What shall they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?" Commentators have been greatly puzzled about the meaning of this text, by referring it to christian baptism; to which it does not apply; but when referred to the baptism recorded in Num. xix., its meaning is plain and suited exactly to the apostle's argument. That baptism expresses, more emphatically than any other, a hope of the resurrection, being administered in the very face of death; and death in some shape, being the sole occasion of its administration, it is with peculiar propriety called "baptism for the dead."

1 Cor. x. 2: "Our fathers were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." Paul had infallible knowledge of the fact that the Israelites were baptized in passing the Red Sea, otherwise he would not have asserted it. This baptism was extraordinary and most magnificent, administered by the hand of Jehovah to about three millions of souls, men, women and children, at once. It was administered during a thunderstorm, by means of a shower of rain, alluded to by Moses (Exod. xiv. 24) and declared plainly by Asaph (Psalm lxxvii). It was a complete and a beautiful sprinkling! An immersion it could not be, where the ground was dry under their feet and the water a wall on their right hand and on their left (Exod. xiv. 29). The Israelites were no more immersed than any company travelling between two walls and a cloud over their head. In their deliverance from Egypt, Israel enjoyed a real though obscure dispensation of the gospel, hence their dedication to Moses under God in this ordinance was of the same nature with evangelical baptism.

To these four passages from the epistles of Paul I will add four more from the Evangelists. They teach us that the Pharisees found fault with Christ for neglecting baptisms which had been in common use among the Jews.—These baptisms were not only those which Moses appointed by God's command, but those also which were appointed by the elders and handed down by tradition. The latter were pretended improvements of the former, and were probably observed with more attention and punctuality. The law of Moses said (Lev. xv. 11) that a man should baptize himself by rinsing his hands in water, when he was touched by a man having an issue; but the elders said that he must so baptize himself before he eat, whether he was so touched or not. Mark vii. 4 says, "When they come from the market, except they wash (Gr. baptize), they eat not;" and he affirms (verse 3) "that except they wash"—that is, baptize their hands off—(margin with the fist)—"they eat not." Hence the Pharisee, in Luke xi. 38, " marvelled that Christ had not first washed (Greek, was not baptized) before dinner."

The law of Moses required that such vessels as cups and pots should be baptized by immersion, when an unclean, dead animal fell on them, and by sprinkling when a person died in the house wherein they were, and that such things as tables or beds should be baptized by rinsing in water when they were defiled (Lev. xv. 12). When therefore he says (verse 4) "many other things there be which they have received to hold, as the washing (Greek, baptism) of cups and pots, brazen vessels and tables," or beds, he seems to refer to baptisms somehow aside from the direction of the law; and in verse