

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

CONCERNING BAPTISM.—X.

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From the Christian Standard.

MR. EDITOR,—In the "Standard" of April 8th you again return to what you are pleased to call "McKay's definition of baptism." You give several detached quotations from Dr. Dale, leaving the impression upon the minds of your readers that Dale teaches that the primary meaning of *baptizo* is very much, if not precisely, what immersionists maintain. I trust you did not intend to misrepresent the views of this good man and great scholar; but that you have done so very thoroughly any of your readers can see by referring to "Christic Baptism," p. 22, where Dr. Dale says: "If anything out of mathematics was ever proved, it has been proved that this word (*baptizo*) does not mean to dip; that it never did, that it never can so mean, without there be first an utter metamorphosis as to its essential character." I wonder what the good doctor would have said had he been told that within a year of his death his words would be quoted by an immersionist writer as favouring the theory which he so completely exploded. For immersionists to seek comfort from Dale is to attempt extracting sunbeams out of cucumbers. Dr. Dale did a great work—a work that will be an enduring monument to his profound scholarship, his patient research, and his wonderful power of analysis—but the result of his labours was, that he was convinced, as by a demonstration in Euclid, that *baptizo* "never did and never can mean to dip;" and his whole work is to the dipping theory what a charge of dynamite is to a crow's nest. If the editor will dip into Dale once more he will find on the page above quoted that Dale's "intusposition" was never "*momentarily*," but always "*without any limitation*" as to time. He will also find Dale denying that there is "a particle of evidence" for baptizing people "into water." The expression baptize into water (*eis hudor*) never occurs in the Word of God. Yet if *baptizo* means "to dip" and *eis* means "into," this is just the expression that we might always expect to find.

I am very anxious that the readers of the "Standard" should clearly comprehend the very peculiar method of reasoning by which the editor seeks to combat what he is pleased to term my definition of baptism. I will therefore here give in full the words in my book which constitute the text to the greater part of his review. They can be found on page 23: "They (Presbyterians) believe that it (*baptizo*) always expresses a condition or result irrespective of the mode or act by which it is brought about; and that in the Scriptures it denotes a thorough change of spiritual condition effected by the Holy Ghost applying the 'blood of sprinkling' to the soul. And this spiritual baptism of the soul is made manifest or signified by an external rite in which pure water is sprinkled or poured upon the person."

I can scarcely hope that all the readers of the "Standard" will agree with me in the above statement, but notwithstanding this, I venture to say that few, if any, of them will require to read it, as the editor says, "at least ten times before he understands it." Strange that, although the editor finds the above sentence so utterly incomprehensible, he nevertheless devotes so very much of his precious time and attention to it. He "cannot understand" it, and yet, week after week for months, he can write columns of reviews of it! How easily he can write about that which he does not understand—yea—and enlighten his readers about it!

The candid reader, whatever his own views may be, will find no difficulty in understanding that in the above quotation I teach what I believe to be the truth of God's Word, viz., that in the real baptism, such as is spoken of in 1 Cor. x. 13 "by one Spirit as we all baptized into one body"—the soul is changed as to its state and condition from condemnation to justification, from a lost to a saved state, and the external rite of water baptism "makes manifest" or signifies this change of the soul effected by the Spirit. I believe there are two things in baptism (a) a real, thorough change in the soul, (b) an external sign of that change. This external sign is called water baptism, the sign receiving the name from the thing signified.

Now, how does the editor attempt to disprove this? The reader will mark it well. As I showed in my last communication, the editor takes what I say of the baptism of the soul effected by the Holy Ghost and applies it to the mere external sign, or water baptism; and thus, by an easy *reductio ad absurdum*, he comes to a conclusion perfectly satisfactory to himself. What I state to be true of the substance he, very conclusively, shows is not true of the shadow, and therefore he concludes that it is not true at all! If I were to affirm that man is responsible, the editor would exclaim, "Man's shadow is not responsible, and therefore 'Mr. McKay's statement is a monstrous absurdity.'" What profound reasoning this would be! And yet this is precisely the reasoning in the "Standard" of March 25th and several other issues. I affirm that the Spirit of God baptizes the soul (1 Cor. xii. 14) by thoroughly changing its spiritual condition. The editor cries out: "Is Mr. McKay a water regenerationist? Does he believe that in this baptism (Acts x. 47), which was undoubtedly water baptism, there was a thorough change of spiritual condition?" etc. Again you say: "Paul thanked God that he had baptized none of the Corinthians but Crispus, Galus and the household of Stephanus (1 Cor. i. 14-16). That is, he thanked God that he had not brought any but these into a thorough change of spiritual condition." And so, because water cannot do what I affirm the Spirit of God does, the editor of the "Standard" shouts: "Mr. McKay's definition is a monstrous absurdity." I leave the reader to characterize the conduct of the man who could so misapply the language of an opponent. The cause cannot be of God that demands such downright dishonesty on the part of its advocates.

But the editor will say, It is the meaning of the word baptize we are seeking, and as baptism is in or with water, does it not follow that the changed condition expressed in *baptizo* is effected by the water?

I will try and make the answer so plain that even the editor can understand it without reading it "ten times." Take the ordinance of circumcision. The true, real circumcision, Paul tells us, was of the heart (Rom. ii. 28, 29), and was a changed condition or state effected in the soul by the Spirit of God—"made without hands" (Col. ii. 11), while that internal changed state of the soul was made manifest or signified by the cutting off a small piece of flesh. The external rite is called in Rom. iv. 11 the sign (symbol) of circumcision, not circumcision itself, for Paul says in the same epistle (ii. 28, 29) "neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh . . . Circumcision is that of the heart." There was then a real circumcision which was of the heart (Deut. x. 16, and xxx. 6; Jer. iv. 4; Rom. ii. 28, 29; Phil. iiii. 3; Col. ii. 11); and there was an external rite, also called circumcision, but which was only a "sign" of the internal change of heart (Rom. iv. 11, etc.). And all that the "Standard" has said about my sentence on page 23 may, with equal fitness, be applied to what the apostle says about circumcision. The editor may find scores of places in the Bible where the words "circumcise" and "circumcision" denote the external rite; and demand of the apostle how he can harmonize his statement that circumcision is "of the heart," and "not outward in the flesh" with the fact that in Gen. xxi. 4, we read that "Abraham circumcised his son Isaac, being eight days old." Did Abraham change the heart of his infant son? If not, then we must understand that the sign or symbol of circumcision is very often spoken of when the word circumcision is used. So we say that the real baptism is internal and "by one Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 13) thoroughly changing the state of the soul, while that real, internal baptism is to be symbolized by the sprinkling of pure water.

[To be continued, if the Lord will.]

PRESBYTERIANISM IN PONTIAC.

Pontiac is the great timber field which stretches away along the north side of the Upper Ottawa. But how different now! The days when the famous Indian chief of that name trod its slumbering forests! Pontiac county has at present many well-tilled fields and pleasant villages, and the forests have retired so far from us that many in our midst have never seen a mighty outspread army of these giant pines, whose united voice, when battling with the tempest, is only equalled in majesty by the roar of the ocean, or the crash of the thunder. Here, as elsewhere, Presbyterianism has had its struggles and its triumphs. The

only self-supporting congregation in our body, in the county, is that of Bristol, which last year gave also to the various schemes of the Church about \$300. Here the name of David Wardrop, at present of Teeswater, Ont., is fragrant, because of his excellent work during a period of years. The present pastor is M. H. Scott, the son of one of the elders of Dr. Baile's congregation, Eramosa. The Bristol church is about forty-five miles above the city of Ottawa, not far from the bank of the Ottawa River. On all that stretch of forty-five miles no Presbyterian missionary was ever sent, except to the village of Aylmer, some nine miles on this side of Ottawa city. Yet the country is fertile, well settled, and that mostly with our people. Notice, that in almost the same distance as that between the cities of Guelph and Toronto, only one small congregation of Presbyterians. During this summer a missionary, Mr. J. C. Campbell, was sent into this region, under the care of Mr. Scott, of Bristol. He found some forty-five families still faithful to us and anxious for our services, and the mission was eminently successful. Following the course of the river westward, we reach the Litchfield congregation, with four stations, the farthest of which, Bryson, is about twenty-two miles from Bristol church. On the beginning of our work, Litchfield and Bristol formed one church, in the days of Mr. Melville. Litchfield is not yet self-supporting, but is fast coming up to that point, under the able pastorate of Jas. Robertson, who has laboured in the field for more than four years. It is expected that this year their contributions to schemes will equal the amount received from the Mission Fund. Still following the river, we reach Fort Coulonge, about seventeen miles beyond Bryson, noted as the pleasant residence of the Bryson families, amongst which are Senator Bryson, Hon. John Bryson, and the family of the late Hon. Thomas Bryson. Here our Jos. Gaudier has laboured with zeal and success for a number of years, and virtually has the field to himself. He has in all four stations, and besides this, labours in the timber shanties for a portion of the winter. This field is self supporting, except for the work done for and money received from the Lumberman's Mission. Those who know this whole field would like to see Mr. Gaudier relieved of his work in the shanties, as he has enough to do without it. Lastly, is our mission in the townships of Thorne and Leslie, some thirty miles north of Bristol. This field was occupied by the French Evangelization Society, which, assisted by the Home Mission, have worked the field for the last three years. Our French student, Mr. Duclos, has been in great favour, not only with his own countrymen, but also with our English-speaking people. There is at present a church in course of erection. This field is not very hopeful, from the fact that so much of the land is rugged and unfit for cultivation. Besides, these townships seem destined to fall into the hands of the Germans, of whom there are now about one hundred families. The writer has visited this field on two occasions, once when the roads were at their very worst. He has travelled the Gatineau roads and some of the worst roads in the Eastern Townships, but if you want to pass through all the terrors that one reads about in books of travels, you can experience them by visiting the Mission in Leslie in the spring of the year. After coming down the last mountain, and finding that our buggy was only broken in two places, we breathed a long breath, thanked God, and started southward; and we will not try the experiment again until the work of Christ demands it.

M. H. S.

CHURCH PROGRESS IN THE NORTH-WEST.

MR. EDITOR,—The last two months have been critical ones in the western part of our Presbytery, in consequence of the continuous church openings. Brandon led off, Rapid City followed, then Neepawa, and Minnedosa opens between Christmas and New Year.

The church at Rapid City is a neat frame one, 35 x 30, with vestry 14 x 12, stone foundation throughout, lathed, plastered, and nicely painted inside, and seated with chairs. The whole cost is about \$3,000, \$1,000 of which has been paid already, the remainder to be paid in two years. The weather was at its best on the day of the opening, and so were the Rev. Messrs. Robertson and Bell, who carried the hearts and understandings of their hearers with them, not by strange devices, but by simple, earnest presentation of the good old story. The usual soiree followed on Tuesday evening, and the sum total of Sabbath collections and proceeds of soiree amounted to \$290. Not