

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger. The Politics of the Future.

A thorough acquaintance with history is deemed essential to the statesman. From the past he draws wisdom that shall guide him in the future. In fact the statesman who had neglected the study of history would be justly esteemed an empiric, unworthy of public confidence, or to be entrusted with the guidance of state affairs. But the most intimate acquaintance with the past furnishes no ability to pierce the future. The profoundest politician would readily confess that he could not with any confidence rely upon the most careful diplomacy, but that "There is a destiny that shapes our ends, rough, hew them as we will."

Are we, then, left without reliable guidance as to the political developments of the future, or to be guided only by the aphorism, "History repeats itself"? Must the nations and their rulers grope on, or rush on, into the dark beyond, their best wisdom a lantern which illumines only the present and the past? Can it be possible that the Divine mind which has ordered nature so perfectly, so harmoniously, that in the beginning laid foundations and ordained causes which should result unerringly in perfection of superstructure and in eternal harmony, should have failed to have ordered historical events as harmoniously and in view of a grand finale? Does not the Bible claim to be just the guide that statesmen need, even in the most strictly diplomatic sense, for the solution of the political problems that engage their wisdom and ingenuity, only to baffle? To all who will hear comes the answer, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos. iii. 7). "We have also a more sure prophecy whereunto ye do well that ye take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place." It is, alas, too true that a large majority of professing Christians refuse to accept the prophetic portions of Holy Scripture as being a history of the future, and contend that prophecies are to be understood *spiritually*, or to be spiritualized. Let me ask these brethren, Have not all fulfilled prophecies been literally fulfilled? Are not the prophecies couched in language as plain, as precise, as literal, as any that could be used to describe like events subsequent to their transaction? Is it not *safer* to understand the Lord to mean just what he says when he speaks by the mouth of his servants the prophets? Refusing thus to understand and believe, is there not danger of being found at last in the dark places of ignorance which alienate from the life of God? Those who refuse to believe the prophecies will surely be without excuse should the future prove to them their error. Regarding the prophetic portions of the Bible as a history, as a light illuminating the otherwise dark future, how intensely interesting does the study of them become. Divinely inspired artists are the prophets who paint in glowing colors, pictures that the eye of faith loves to dwell upon, illustrating the glory of the Lord and of His millennial kingdom, the triumphs of his people, and the overthrow of his enemies. Standing where in vision the prophets stood we could perceive the harmony of events which from any other or nearer standpoint seem all confusion and discord. We would perceive that every move made upon the political chess-board was directed by a Divine hand, and in view of the ultimate *check-mate* indicated by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthian church in these words, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power," for Christ must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet, that GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL."

The course of grand historical events, the succession of empires which lead up to the kingdom and reign of Christ as indicated by the inspired interpretation of visions that appeared to Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar. We assuredly live in the era typified by the feet and toes of the image that Nebuchadnezzar saw in vision, and the days of which the God of Heaven should set up a kingdom, which should not, like the great empires

preceeding it, be destroyed, but should break in pieces and consume all other kingdoms and fill the whole earth.

It is not the purpose of the present article to enlarge upon this last and greatest of Empires further than to point out that it will be an Israelitish kingdom and that the immediate territory or seat of the kingdom will be that portion of Asia, the bounds and description of which are given in Ezekiel xlvii. 13-20. A partial restoration of Israel to the promised land is predicted as occurring prior to the assumption of regal authority on the throne of David by Him whose right it is. During this interval the great wealth of the Israelites excites the cupidity of Gog, who appears to be identical with the "King of the North," concerning whom Daniel prophesies, and who comes with a vast and motley host covering like a cloud the mountains of Israel to take a spoil and to take a prey (Ezek. 38). Jerusalem is taken, its houses are rifled, and half the city are led away captive, at this crisis Israel's deliverer descends upon the Mount of Olives, from whence he ascended and destroys the hosts of the invader with pestilence and great hail stones, fire, and brimstone (Zech. xii: Ezek. xxxviii). Then is the kingdom established. In that day happy shall the people be whose rulers are guided by statesmen who are enlightened by the politics of the future by the light of prophecy. When "the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us." The wise will "kiss the Son lest he be angry and they perish from the way."

Here, I think, lies the solution of the Eastern question. The Czar with whom Gog may be easily identified, will assuredly be dominant and triumphant for a time notwithstanding all efforts to maintain the balance of power, but he will meet the fate of all who lift the hand against Israel.

May Britain be blessed with those who bless Israel. E. A. C.

For the Christian Messenger. "Baptism in a Nutshell."

Such is the title of a small pamphlet of sixteen pages, which, since the ordination of Rev. T. Trotter at Shelburne, has been widely circulated in that town, by some person or persons, with the intention it is supposed, of setting the good people right on the subject of baptism, on which it appears to have been thought by the said person or persons, they had been set wrong on the occasion of the ordination of the said Rev. T. Trotter.

The author of the pamphlet is Rev. Charles Taylor, M. D., D. D., of the Kentucky Annual Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church South, and edited by Rev. Thomas O. Summers, D. D. The pamphlet is in its twenty-fourth thousand, which is very gratifying, as such publications cannot but be helpful to the cause of truth if they are carefully read, and we sincerely hope every one who gets a copy of this rare production will read it with great care. With your permission, Mr. Editor, I will pass the principal points under review. The subject is treated under twelve heads.

1. BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The first statement under this head is, "Baptism as a Christian ordinance is the application of water to the person." Here at the outset the author begs the whole question, and arouses one's suspicion at once. If lexicons and encyclopedias: if the word baptize as used by Greek writers: if the testimony of the whole Greek church: if the testimony of a host of scholars and commentators among Pedobaptists: if the plain teaching of the New Testament, and the Old as well, have any weight, then baptism is the application of the person to the water, and not of water to the person; that is to say immersion, and not pouring or sprinkling.

The author seems to ground his argument on the words of John the Baptist, "I indeed baptize you with water . . . He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." He fails to see that the word 'with' is used to distinguish water baptism from that of the Spirit, and fire. A child might see (unless he shut his eyes) that John means to say, "Water is the means with which

I baptize you, but he will baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." By which may be understood that, as when a person or thing is immersed in water, or other liquid, they are entirely under the influence of it, so when Christ baptized with the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, the baptized were entirely under the influence of the Holy Ghost.

Our author further remarks, "How were they baptized with fire?" On the day of Pentecost "there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." Here the learned Doctor makes two mistakes, First, that John addressed the disciples when he said, "He shall baptize you with fire," whereas it was to the multitudes who came to him in the wilderness; the disciples had not yet been called. The second mistake is (I hope not made on purpose, and for a purpose) that the disciples were baptized with fire. This, as I have shewn, was spoken to the multitude, among whom were Pharisees and Sadducees, and doubtless many who would reject Christ, and the baptism with fire referred to the punishment of the wicked at the last day, as shewn in the very next verse (Matt. iii. 12). "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into his garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Besides, it was not fire that sat upon the disciples, but "cloven tongues like unto fire." The likeness of a thing and the thing itself are very different matters. From these false premises the author proceeds to argue that baptism must be by pouring, because the disciples were baptized with the Holy Ghost, as he supposes, in the form of tongues of fire, whereas they were not baptized with fire at all, nor was it anywhere said they should be. The Rev. Dr. proceeds: "The Spirit came upon—was poured out—was shed forth—fell upon." It also positively determined that the way in which they were baptized with the Holy Ghost, was the way in which John baptized with water; consequently, he must have poured it on them." There is some close and cogent reasoning for you reader! It is our learned author, however, who has 'positively determined' it, and not the author of the words he so sadly misconstrues.

But taking for granted that the baptism of the Spirit and that of John were identical as to mode, then John's baptism was by immersion, for we find that the sound from heaven like a mighty rushing wind "filled all the house where they were sitting," they were consequently surrounded by it, enveloped in it, or, to quote Archbishop Tillotson, "they who sat in the house were immersed in the Holy Ghost, as those who are buried in the water, which is the proper notion of baptism."

2. JOHN BAPTIZING IN JORDAN.

Under this head the very learned Dr. says, "John baptized in Jordan. He also baptized in Bethabara beyond Jordan—was Bethabara a river? Thus we see that the little Greek word translated 'in' often means 'at,' 'by,' 'near,' 'with,' &c." Not so often, Doctor, as you would wish to make out; for out of 2,720 times where it occurs in the New Testament, it is translated 'in' in 2,500 cases. In 20 other places 'in' would be better than what is there, and in about 40 places it means 'with.' It was that which gave the puzzled Dutchman such joy, that it often meant at, by, or near to. As it happens, however, the word means 'in' in the case before us, for it was as impossible for John to baptize at, by, or near Jordan (unless there was enough water for immersion at, by, or near the Jordan) as for Mr. Taylor to eat his dinner by putting his food at, by, or near his mouth. Our author says further, "Jesus went up into a mountain." Did he go under the ground on the mountain? Deep reasoning, deep reasoning! Possibly when a boy, Dr. Taylor climbed into trees sometimes, did he get into the tree as grub-worms do? Sometimes, perhaps, he goes into his garden, or field, does he burrow as moles do? If the Dr. still practices in medicine, it is to be hoped he exercises greater care in preparing phisic for his patients than he does in preparing arguments for Infant's Sprinkling for his reader, or they are devoutly to be pitied. M. D.'s are generally very careful in whatever they do, but then there

are exceptions to every rule. And it is pretty nearly time that gentlemen who figure so largely with high-sounding titles, had finished with this worse than child's play about in, into, at, by, near, and so on. It is true the Greek word 'en' has a variety of meanings, but it is by no means difficult to find its meaning in any case by simply observing the context, and using about half a grain of common sense, and no coloured specs.

3. THE QUANTITY OF WATER NECESSARY.

The Dr. says, "We read in Mark vii. 4, 'The washing of cups, and brazen vessels, and tables.' The word washing is in the original 'baptisms,' and the word 'tables' is 'beds,' or 'couches.' Ask any Greek scholar could they have immersed beds, or tables?"

Reader, mark the analytical skill of our Doctor of Medicine and Divinity. He says the word 'tables' in the original means beds or couches, and then deals with the word as if it meant tables and not beds or couches. From his question, he appears to think that the beds must have been such as are in use now, some fifty or sixty pounds weight, and the tables something like our modern dining or extension tables; whereas the man that was healed (Matt. ix. 6, 7) found no difficulty in taking up his bed and going home with it. Such beds, a D. D. ought to know were often nothing more than a mere mat or pallet, or skin, which could be rolled up and carried under the arm. The poorer classes often used skins.

As regards the 'tables,' those of ancient times were for the most part a circular skin, or piece of leather spread upon the floor. Another form of table being a sort of stool placed in the centre of this leather table, to hold the principal dish or dishes. And suppose the beds and tables were such as are used now-a-day, we do not see any serious difficulty in immersing even them, if necessary.

Mr. T. admits the 'washing,' or 'baptism' of cups, and pots and brazen vessels, but not of tables, although Mark includes tables. Mark says that the "washing of cups," &c., were among things they had "received to hold"; in the original 'baptisms of cups,' &c. In Leviticus xi. 32 we find that such things were baptized, "And upon whatsoever any of them when they are dead, (see verses 29, 30) doth fall, it shall be unclean; whether it be any vessel of wood, or raiment, or skin, or sack, whatsoever vessel it be, wherein any work is done, it must be put into water, &c."

On John baptizing in Enon, (John iii. 23) Dr. T. remarks that he must have chosen a place where there was much water, so that the people might have enough for drinking, cooking, and for their animals, just as a place where there is much water is always selected for a camp-meeting as it is needed for all those purposes." Good for you, Doctor; and will you tell us next from what book you learnt this, and do tell us a little more about it. It would be interesting to know, for instance, what food they took with them, and what cooking utensils, and what the animals were that they took to water,—whether horses, camels, mules or donkeys, or all four. And how is it that you, dear Doctor, happen to know better than John why John the Baptist chose a place where there was much water?

If Mr. Taylor should ever publish an illustrated edition of this illustrious pamphlet, it is to be hoped he will give full-page illustrations of the two scenes; first, the people on the way to Enon, giving due prominence to kettles, pans, &c., and entitled, "Going to Camp-meeting at Enon," and next, the people at Enon, some gathering sticks, others lighting fires, others cooking, and others watering the various animals, and call this "Camp-meeting at Enon."

And if Rev. C. Taylor, M. D., D. D., should ever bring out a new version of the New Testament, he will have an opportunity of correcting John iii. 23, and make it read thus: "John was baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, because the people would need water for drinking, cooking, and for their animals."

4. BAPTISM OF THE EUNUCH.

Dr. Taylor says concerning this, that "Geographers and travellers tell us that from Jerusalem to Gaza there are no streams deep enough to immerse in." Well, supposing that to be the case, it does not prove there were none eighteen hundred years ago. At a place called

Catherine's River, Queens Co., N. S., less than fifty years ago there was water enough for vessels to go in from the sea, when the writer was there last summer (1876) he could not see enough to float even a "Nutshell," the whole being filled with sand; may not a similar fate have befallen the "certain water" by sand from the desert? for such was that part of the country. Any way, there was enough to baptize the eunuch in, or Luke would not have said Philip baptized him, notwithstanding all the efforts of titled brethren to dry it up, yet leaving just sufficient for sprinkling.

The Dr. next tries to shew that they only went to the water and came up from it. But "a wayfaring man . . . need not err" as to the meaning of the rightly translated words, "went down into," and "came up out of."

He says further, "The baptism was probably by sprinkling" ("probably" is a word of incalculable value to our Pedobaptist friends) "for only a few verses before the passage the eunuch was at that moment reading in Isaiah, he had doubtless (another valuable word) just read (Chap. lii. 15) "And he shall sprinkle many nations."

Now, just listen, Doctor Taylor;—If the eunuch had read the verse just quoted, he read either the Hebrew, or the Septuagint Scripture. If the former, he read a word which means "to exult, leap for joy," viz. 'yarah' from the verb 'nazah'; and, if the latter, he read *thaumastai*, which is a good translation of *nazah* and means almost the same thing. George F. Noyes, Professor of Hebrew in Harvard University translates it, "So shall many nations exult on account of him." Our learned author then asks, "Was not this prophecy fulfilled on the day of Pentecost?" Our answer is 'No, as to the sprinkling; and Yes as to the rejoicing.' Reading Isaiah lii. 15, "So shall many nations rejoice on account of him," in the light of the day of Pentecost (Acts ii., particularly vs. 5, 33, 41-47) it will be seen that it was thus and then fulfilled.

5. BAPTISM ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

Dr. Taylor raises two objections against immersion, i. e., baptism, of the three thousand. The first is "Want of time." He says, "This was at the rate of about five in every minute, even if they stopped preaching altogether, and did nothing but baptize from that time (9 a. m.) till sunset." Let us see; five a minute is three hundred an hour; three hundred multiplied by twelve is three thousand six hundred; so that the Dr.'s arithmetic is as faulty as his reasoning, and his 'sunset' would take place at ten minutes to ten in the morning! Is that the hour the sun sets in Kentucky, Doctor T.? You must think your readers have enormous throats. But now we will look fairly at the matter. Suppose only the twelve apostles baptized, then three thousand would be two hundred and fifty each, and say each baptism took half a minute, then the whole could be baptized in two hours and five minutes; and if the seventy were there too, then the three thousand could be baptized in less than twenty minutes. If half a minute seem too short, perhaps the reader will look at the clock or watch for that time, and then judge.

The second objection is "Want of water." The Rev. Dr. says, "Would the enraged people and authorities of Jerusalem, who had just crucified Jesus have permitted such a use of their pools and cisterns to accommodate his hated followers?" Had the Dr. read the 47th verse he would not have wasted that much ink, for there it says, "having favour with all the people." Besides this, they had free access to the temple (Acts ii. 46). "Continuing daily with one accord in the temple," where were ten lavers holding about 350 gallons each; and within a mile of the temple were six public fountains, or pools, to which the people had free access. Dr. Robinson in his "Researches in Palestine" says that Jerusalem was well supplied with water, to say nothing of numerous pools elsewhere. He mentions two reservoirs, one 300 feet long and 250 wide; another 600 feet long by 250 wide. The pools of Hezekiah and Bethesda which were within the walls, were 240 feet by 144, and 360 by 130 respectively. Besides these he names several other fountains. So we see the Dr. has made the water scarce for his own convenience.

(To be Continued.)