

Pastor and People.

THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION.

THREE VIEWS.

I.—SOCINIANISM.

Socinus does not quite presume
To hold there's no election,
But solemnly asserts there's room
At least for its correction :—

That God, although He can create,
Has only His suspicions
Regarding man's remote estate,
And chooses "on conditions,"

wit : when after we are born
We turn and trust in Jesus,
Till then unable to discern,
'Mong His elect He sees us.

Socinus, blasphemous and blind,
Perfection would diminish,
As if the Everlasting Mind
Its work could fail to finish.

II.—ARMINIANISM.

Arminius does not quite deny
The choice applies to persons.
The following is not far from nigh
The path of his assertions. —

When God Almighty chose a man
In Christ before creation,
He fixed the choice where He could scan
A Christian conversation.

In other language, God foresaw
My faith and my repentance,
And linking these with love and law,
Pronounced and sealed my sentence.

Arminius probably forgot
That faith itself proceedeth
From Him who doth in love allot
To man what'er he needeth.

III.—CALVINISM.

But how does Calvin, Augustine,
St. Paul himself, behold it,
In that blest Book in which are seen
Jehovah's plans unfolded ?

They find the origin or spring
Of God's sublime salvation,
In the election by the King
And author of creation,

Of a "peculiar people" born
Of him who fell in Eden,
Belov'd before the Eternal morn
With life or law was laden ;

Elected for Himself, because
Of His own sovereign pleasure,
And not because of aught that was
Or is, in man to treasure ;

Nor do we die of dread or dole,
Although with Calvin driven :
See how the Calvinistic soul
Exalts and praises Heaven :—

O gracious, free and Sovereign Lord !
Eternal thanks I'll render,
For all the wonders of Thy word,
For all Thy love so tender,

Restowed on rebels, in a realm
By Satan seared and blighted—
A ship where sin is at the helm,
And with its work delighted.

Lord, who am I, and what are mine,
That I should be elected
Through endless bliss with Christ to shine,
While others are rejected ?

Rejected, not because their guilt
The fount of grace had frozen.
But simply for the reasons built
Upon the words NOT CHOSEN.

I cannot see or understand
What's hid behind God's curtain ;
But I can grasp my Saviour's hand,
And make my safety certain.

Oh ! why should mists and mysteries
The minds of men appal so ?
If Christ is mine, I hold the keys
Of my election also.

WILLIAM MURRAY.

Athol Bank, Hamilton, March, 1890

LENDING A HELPING HAND.

BY REV. J. A. R. DICKSON, B.D.

There are times when everybody needs help. But there is no time when they need help more than when they are seeking salvation, and struggling with the entanglements of evil habits, or the influence of wicked companions, or the hindrances put in the way by doubt or unbelief or hardness of heart. Anything that keeps them from coming to decision, and accepting Jesus as their Saviour and their Lord, is a loud cry to every intelligent Christian to lend a helping hand. Those who are halting, or who are hindered in resolving to be the Lord's, need the stimulus of a kind word, or a clear direction or a sweet assurance. They need to be cheered on,—encouraged—to cast themselves upon the mercy of God through faith in Jesus Christ. They hang back in a state of uncertainty and doubt and fear, it may be, their timidity or terror

coming clearly to the front. They long to be free, they are anxious to stand before God justified and accepted, but they meet obstructions in the way. Here is the province of the wise man's actions. "He that winneth souls is wise." This wisdom must embrace the exercises of love, sympathy, patience, knowledge, righteousness and truth. There must be no deceitful dealing with the soul, no mere salving of the sore, no allowance given to false hopes, no permission granted to anything that will not stand the scrutiny of God's eye. There must be honest and faithful dealing. The object is not to please or flatter the individual, but rather to save his soul from death. The handling, therefore, may be gentle, but must be firm, profoundly serious and intensely earnest. That is necessary to escape the "woe" pronounced on those who call darkness light and light darkness. To give help that will be of value, there must be discrimination. Every one is not held in the same chain. What will help one will not help another. A good word for one may be a bad word for another, just because it has no bearing on the case. It gives no light, it ministers no easement, it removes no obstruction. Hence there is required a knowledge of the hindrance, whatever it may be, ere anything can be offered by way of relief. Some people have only one prescription for all soul troubles just as they have only one for all bodily diseases. I have heard those who listened to Dr. James Morison when he set out to preach the Gospel, say, that it consisted of only Believe ! Believe ! Believe ! "And this was to them itself a great puzzle. They said, Believe what ? Believe whom ? Believe how ? But of all this he said nothing. Some may say, "Surely Dr. Morison would not be so foolish and unphilosophical as only to say, "Believe ! Believe ! Believe !" with out adding all the rest. Very likely not. But whatever he did say it must have been altogether out of proportion to his insistence on "Believe !" for this was the prevailing impression made on the minds of the hearers. "Believe" does not meet every case. If that were so it would stand as the only direction to sinful and sin-bound men who are held fast in the cords of their iniquities. Great men are not always wise. They are not able to rise above their conditions, always, and this must be borne in mind, that at certain times there are strong tides of individual truths sweeping over churches and communities. One-sided gospels are preached. Bits of the truth are unduly magnified as though they singly were the whole truth. They have their mission doubtless, but a fuller conception of the truth would do wider and grander service, and build up sturdier men. Just think of such a man as Dr. Lyman Beecher saying of his evangelistic work, in which he was exceedingly successful, "I took great pains to see that they were converted in Dr. Hopkins' way." Every one who has read Mrs. Beecher Stowe's "Minister's Wooing" will remember what "Dr. Hopkins' way" was. It was a willingness to be damned for the glory of God. A loving submission instantly rendered. Its demand was Submit ! Submit ! Submit ! That was all. Now compare that with our Lord's treatment of men, and how imperfectly that represents it. Dr. Beecher gives us a sample : "One young lady was in distress. 'O what shall I do ? What shall I do ?' she exclaimed. At once her eyes blazed up with joy : 'O bless God that I was born a sinner !' I asked her afterward what she meant by that. 'Why, if I hadn't been born a sinner Christ wouldn't have died for me.' 'Is it the glory of God in that that pleases you ?' 'Yes.' " Then Dr. Beecher adds : "That was the good new school doctrine. I was active then on those points. I took great pains to see that they were converted in Dr. Hopkins' way." Results as well as the great mental and moral conditions of the people at that time may have justified this course, but we must keep clearly in mind that Christ's way is broader, and, to our thinking, simpler, and more perfect in its embrace upon the soul. He had one word for Nicodemus (John iii.), another for the apostles (Matt. iv.), another for the woman of Samaria (John iv.), another for the rich young ruler (Matt. xix.), another when he entered on his work (Matt. iv.), and so on through a long list. He sees the different conditions of the heart, and He applies His remedy to suit the different manifestations of the disease. The disease is one—sin—but its outworking is dependent upon the character. Hence the urgent necessity there is to find out the state of the soul, ere any word is spoken by way of either counsel or comfort. Do not work in the dark. Do not move on with your eyes blinded. Get into the light on the case with which you deal, and you will speed better, and more satisfactorily, than in any other way.

Mr. D. L. Moody, one of the wisest and most successful of preachers in our day, tells his story illustrative of this point : "I met a man who expressed doubts as to his being much of a sinner." "Well," says I, "let's find out if you have sinned. Do you swear ?" "Well, as a general rule, I only swear when I get mad." "Yes, yes, but what doth the Lord say about not holding a man guiltless that swears ? Believe me He will hold you responsible for that ; bear that in mind ; you must be able to hold your temper, but, if not, beware to take the name of God in vain. Are you not, now, a sinner ?" And the man was convinced.

Dr. Andrew Bonar informs us that Murray McCheyne used to speak very plainly in dealing with souls. One came to him who assented to his statements of the Gospel, and yet refused to be comforted, always looking upon coming to Christ as something in addition to really believing the record God has given of His Son. He took John iii. 16, 17, "For God so loved the world," etc. The woman said "God did not care for her." Upon this he at once convicted her of making

God a liar ; and as she went away in deep distress, his prayer was, "Lord, give her light."

Skill in discovering the state of the heart, and in applying to it what God says, is of prime moment in Christian work. Duncan Matheson was an excellent spiritual physician. He could diagnose a case and also prescribe for it while many would be wondering how they should begin.

A young man of talent, now a devoted follower of Jesus Christ, found himself at the close of a meeting in deep distress. "Downcast and sad," he says, "I was stealing away from Mr. Matheson, whom I did not wish to meet. Wonderful love of Jesus ! who marks our wayward steps, and still in tenderness and love calls after us, 'Come unto Me.' I was unexpectedly confronted by Mr. Matheson, who introduced me to a minister. Hesitatingly I began, in answer to kind enquiries, to state my case, when Mr. Matheson, laying his hand on my shoulder, said, 'O I know what is wrong wi' James. I know what James is wanting. It was a' settled eighteen hundred years ago ; but James is not satisfied with that ; he would like something more. Isn't that it, now ? But that's enough, man. Let that suffice for you.'" In this way he held up the finished work, and relief followed.

Oh how grateful are poor, troubled souls for the kindly assistance of a helping hand at this juncture. What are required of us to be useful here ?

1. An intimate knowledge of the devices of the devil, who would keep men away from Jesus by his lies, magnifying their sin into a barrier, or minimizing it into a reason for unconcern, or distorting the idea of God so that He is forbidding. We should learn how he acts on the heart to keep the man from Christ.

2. A thorough acquaintance with the word of God which is the seed of God, and the sword of God, and the lamp of God. By that conviction of sin is wrought, by that relief is found—through that the power of God flows into the salvation of the soul.

3. Prayer for the Holy Spirit as a guide to the right word ; as a giver of the tender sympathetic feeling ; as the applier of the truth to the conscience and heart and life. Nothing can be done without the Holy Spirit. Furnished in this way, and faithful in doing honestly the duty of each day the helper will soon rejoice in great and glorious success.

THE TRUE MEASURE.

For some time the age of ministers, as related to service, has been under discussion. Attempt has been made to fix the "dead line." Some have gone so far as to maintain that the minister's best days are gone when he has reached the age of fifty. Spectacles and gray hairs have been the leading factors in the problem. It has been too generally overlooked that age should not be measured by years. Some men are younger at sixty than others at thirty. Some men are older at forty than others at eighty. It is largely a matter of constitution, association, disposition and manner of life. All his students knew that the late Alexander Donaldson was as vivacious, cheerful and youthful as any of "his boys." This he himself attributed chiefly to his daily contact with the young, in his work as a teacher.

There are other men who are decidedly old at the age of thirty. They are dull in thought and stupid in expression. They are slow in movement, both in body and mind. Natural temperament and an environment of their own selection conduced to this condition. These are many men of whose age, in years, we never think. In many departments of life they are doing the world's best work. The most prominent and useful men of the day are over seventy years of age. They are in the ministry, the editorial chair, the law, medicine, the service of the State, in various callings. Two of the greatest statesmen of Europe, of this or any other age, are Gladstone and Bismarck, octogenarians.

Not in exceptional cases, but uniformly ; not only in the law and medicine, but also in the pulpit, should ability, experience, education and wisdom be the qualifications for service. Of course age of itself should be no commendation any more than mere youth ; but other things being equal, it should have the pre-eminence.

In the case of the ministry it is sometime said "old men are not in sympathy with the young." But it is a thoughtless utterance. Young men, because they are young, may make more show, and by nature and manner create the impression that the young alone are in sympathy with the young. But close observation will demonstrate the fact that the aged have the deeper love, the real sympathy, the kindest feeling for the young in all their interests. They were young themselves ; they are mostly parents, they know the perils of the young by experience and observation ; many of them have been bereaved of children, and on many accounts it stands to reason that they are best qualified to deal honestly and faithfully with the young. The question should not be with regard to any man, "How old is he ?" but what is his spiritual, mental and physical strength ; what his experience and education ; what his qualifications for the service required ?—*Presbyterian Banner*.

THE University of St. Andrew's is to open professorial classes for the education of women in a summer session during the present year, provided a sufficient number of students respond to the invitation issued. The lectures will be on subjects now taught in the university, and of the same character as those given during the winter months to the matriculated male students. They will also qualify for the L.L.A. diploma of the university.