

THE Presbyterian Quarterly.

NO. 46.—OCTOBER, 1898.

I. INSPIRATION.

A few years before his death, Theodore D. Woolsey, President of Yale University, was asked by a leading Quarterly to write an article for its pages on Inspiration. He declined to do so, on the ground that the time had not yet arrived for such a thing to be successfully done. President Woolsey died in 1889, and during these intervening years perhaps no biblical subject has had fuller discussion. Yet inspiration is still regarded by most biblical students as a *question*; notwithstanding this, inspiration is generally regarded as also a *fact*.

“The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”¹ To every believer in the truthfulness of the Bible, these words of the apostle reveal the fact of inspiration, declare that the Scriptures are, in some sense, the product of a divine influence brought to bear upon human writers. The process by which the Scriptures were formed has been long and gradual. “At sundry times and in divers manners”² has God spoken to us in times past. The Koran was given all at once. Full-grown it sprang from the shield of Mahomet, a prophet who not only had no forerunner, but who, as the professed bearer of divine revelation, had no successor. The Bible, however, has come to us through many prophets, each

¹2 Pet. 1:21.

²Heb. 1:1, 2.

VANCE'S PREDESTINATION.

PREDESTINATION. A Sermon. *By Rev. James I. Vance, D. D.* Pp. 32. Paper. 5 cents. Richmond, Va.: Presbyterian Committee of Publication.

This sermon, by the popular pastor of the First Church, Nashville, Tenn., has been issued with the imprimatur of the Presbyterian Committee of Publication. There is some difficulty in determining why the author felt himself called to preach, much less to publish, the sermon. No thorough Calvinist can possibly accept it as a statement of his creed, nor will the Arminian hardly be willing to do so, coming from the source it does. The only ones who can derive any benefit from it, will be that class who believe in anything that is called Predestination. They do not understand the doctrine, do not profess to understand it, do not propose to try to understand it, but they believe it, and they mean to keep on believing it. This class will probably profess themselves very much edified by reading this sermon. We commend it most heartily to them, and to them alone.

All hope of clearness is destroyed by the fact, that there is no definition of predestination given, while the word is frequently used in different senses. In one place it evidently covers *all of the decrees* of God :

“God has a will, a plan, a purpose about the world. He has always had as much. When he started out to make a world, there was a definite plan in the mind of the Creator. Nothing was left to chance or fate ; everything was a matter of prearrangement.”

In another place it appears to mean simply *election*. Speaking of the condition which predestination meets, the author says :

“The condition is the human race, dead in trespasses and in sins. God’s will infringes upon a soul spiritually dead, lost. It will not help the present discussion to inquire into the cause of this, &c.”

In another place it clearly means a *plan* of redemption. “What is the goal of Predestination?” The answer is : A kingdom, the restoration of the fallen, all of the steps of grace ; the gospel call, justification, adoption, and sanctification. From this statement it might be supposed that Predestination had been treated logically, 1st, as to its general meaning ; 2d, specifically, as equivalent to election ; and 3d, as embracing the application of redemption. Such, however, is not the case. The whole structure of the sermon makes this an impossibility. Predestination with our author simply means predestination. The loose way in which the whole subject is handled is best illustrated by his position that all Churches hold to this doctrine.

“Predestination is likewise in the creeds of all Christian Churches. It is there either explicitly or implied, either by direct statement or by necessary inference. There is no exception. . . . Other Churches state the doctrine more mildly. They endeavor to mellow it, limit its sweep, reduce it to the measurements of human thought, but they must recognize its presence. The difference between the denominations with regard to predestination is not that one Church accepts it and another denies it. The difference is in the place assigned to the doctrine.”

The objections that are dealt with under the terms “caricature and apol-

ogy" are of the kind that hardly need refutation or even comment, while the real difficulties with which the doctrine is beset, and upon which the body of the Church needs light, are left untouched. Was it just to appoint one man as the legal representative of a numerous constituency, without their consent ; and then, upon his sinning, to impute the guilt of his sin to each one of them, without their having any opportunity to repudiate his conduct ? Was it wise or good in God to do this, when he foreknew that the representative appointed by himself would certainly sin ? Was it merciful in God only to elect some of our fallen race to eternal life, and to provide an atonement for them alone, when that same atonement is sufficient for all ? Such are some of the difficulties, that if answered well, would have been of service to the Church.

The *ground* of Predestination is made to be the *love* of God.

"God's decrees are not the manifestation primarily of power, wisdom, expediency, or foreknowledge, *but of eternal and unchangeable love.* . . . Perhaps the strongest, clearest statement of Predestination is that contained in the latter part of the eighth chapter of Romans, beginning with, 'Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called.' Lying side by side with this, in the same part of the same chapter, is the Bible's strongest, sublimest statement of divine, inseparable love : 'I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, &c.' "

If it were meant that God was good in all of his decrees, or that love was the motive that led to the election of some men, and angels to eternal life, there would be none to object. But this is not what is meant. If we have rightly fathomed the purpose of the author, this sermon was prepared for the purpose of showing that Predestination in all of its manifestations, springs from *love*. His text is, "The will of the Lord be done," and the Lord's will is the expression of his love. Justice nowhere appears, all reference to it is studiously avoided. It is love, love, love, nothing but love ; no justice, no righteousness, no holiness, except as they emanate from love. Was it love that decreed the permission of the first sin ? Was it love that decreed the eternal punishment of the wicked ? Was it love that destroyed the beloved city, and scattered the chosen people ? Does love say, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay ?" The answer to such questions is amazing. It is in substance, God could not help man's sinning without making him an automaton. When he had sinned God provided a plan of escape for him. This plan is offered for his acceptance or rejection. The human will is clothed with ability to choose or not choose this plan. If any are lost, therefore, it is because God is not able to prevent it. Here are some of his statements :

"Individuals may reject God's plan, but they can not thwart his purposes." "The objection looses its last vestige of plausibility when we confront the gospel call, which clothes the human will with ability to accept, if it chooses to do so, the gracious provisions of the gospel and enter into life." "God's glory is his goodness, his grace ; and if he can be glorified by the redemption of one soul, much more by all."

But what of Predestination ! Could Bishop A., or Presiding Elder B., or Circuit Rider C. possibly ask for any thing more ? Calvinism has been betrayed and wounded, in the house of its friends.

From the positions taken in this sermon universal restoration follows as a logical consequence. The author says :

"God's decrees are not the manifestation primarily of power, wisdom, expediency, or foreknowledge, *but of eternal and unchangeable love.*" "Remember this, that God's decrees are God's love in thought and action." "But God is a Father, his people are his children, and worship is adoration of God's goodness and love."

This quotation relates not to a class, but to all of God's creatures.

"God is not glorified by the damnation of his creatures. 'It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.' (Mt. 18:14.) Besides, if God can be glorified by the salvation of a part, why not by the salvation of all? How comes it that God's glory is so easily satisfied? God's glory is his goodness, his grace; and if he can be glorified by the redemption of one soul, much more by all."

"Predestination has for its goal the restoration of the fallen and the outcast. This is precisely the lesson taught in the the famous passage in Jeremiah about the clay and the potter. (Jer. 18, 2-6.) The meaning has often been horribly distorted from its plain and evident intention. It has been made to teach that God fashions some lives for an everlasting heaven, and others for an endless hell; and he does this because we are the clay and he is our potter. Nothing could be further from the meaning of Jeremiah. The potter finds the clay 'marred,' useless, but instead of casting it away, he touches it with the alchemy of his art, fashions it with the skill of his genius, until under his deft care the 'marred' clay becomes a vessel shaped for use and invested with beauty. So God, the divine potter, deals with human clay. He finds us 'marred,' sinful, but instead of casting us away, he touches us with the alchemy of his holy love and fashions us with the skill of his grace, until under his patient, considerate care, the 'marred' clay once more becomes a vessel mete for the Master's use, and invested with imperishable beauty and worth."

"God has a will, a plan, a purpose about the world. He has always had as much." "God's plan will certainly be carried out sooner or later. Time is no factor with God, because he is without beginning or end; 'a thousand years in his sight are but as yesterday when it is past and as a watch in the night.' Delays are not defeats with God." "From first to last it is every where and always a predestination to *privileges*. The decrees do not impoverish but enrich, do not damn but save."

It appears from these quotations taken from different parts of the sermon that all decrees spring from love, that they are all fulfilled by love, that they look to the salvation of the lost, that they never damn but always save, that God cannot be glorified by the damnation of any, but is by the salvation of all, that time is no object with him, and that his will and purpose must surely be accomplished. If this is not universal restoration, what is it? If any doubt remains as to what is here implied, the interpretation which is given of Jer. 18, 2-6, would remove it. The author does not venture on interpretation of Scripture very much, except as a sort of illustration, but here he deals formally with the passage. The meaning which he gives it is, that *all* of the marred clay is to be made into vessels of beauty. As this clay is made to represent us in our sinful estate, the fashioning of it into vessels of imperishable beauty means that no one of us shall be cast away. We cannot forbear the regret that Paul could not have seen this interpretation before he committed himself to that horrible position, that out of the marred clay,

the potter, in his justice and wisdom, might make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor. Such is the bright hope set before our race,—the Universalist that could desire more would certainly be hard to please.

We pass over a number of other serious errors in this sermon without comment. It has throughout the unpleasant odor of "New Theology," and the nauseous taste of "Advanced Thought." It is all so bad, that the only proper disposition to make of it would be to recommit the whole case, with instructions to review and correct.

G. A. BLACKBURN.

Columbia, S. C.

WEST'S DANIEL'S GREAT PROPHECY.

DANIEL'S GREAT PROPHECY ; THE EASTERN QUESTION ; THE KINGDOM.

By Rev. Nathaniel West, D. D. Large 12mo. Pp. 306. New York :
The Hope of Israel Movement.

This is no ordinary book : in massive strength and comprehensive exegesis of Scripture it is equal to the learned work of Dr. Pusey on Daniel, or the profound treatise of Prof. Auberlen on Daniel and the Revelation.

Dr. West is no ordinary man : his bold thinking ; his love of truth for its own sake ; his extensive and accurate scholarship ; his abounding labor by pen and tongue in behalf of the integrity of the Scriptures, place him in the foremost rank of the great Biblical students and scholars of the century.

In reviewing this book, the best service I can render the readers of THE QUARTERLY will be to let Dr. West state his views in his own words.

Nothing could be finer than his *Description of Daniel* :

"A young man eighteen years of age, a captive at the Court of Babylon, and hostage for the good behavior of the vassal king of Judah ; a youth of royal blood and a holy celibate for the kingdom's sake. Before he reached his majority he reproduced and interpreted the monarch's dream, and because of his piety, learning, genius, and fear of God, grew to become the prime-minister and master of the magi in the realms of Babylon and Persia. By the banks of the Euphrates, Ulai and Tigris he talked with angels and received visions from God. A hundred years he lived contemporary with the kings of Assyria, Babylon, Media, Persia, Greece and Rome, and the last four kings of Judah. He personally knew Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Joshua the High Priest and Zerubbabel, Prince of the House of David. In Babylon and Shushan he met the royal magnates of the heathen world. He was contemporary with the Greek sages, Anaximander, Xenophanes, Parmenides, and Pythagoras. He studied 'Moses and the prophets,' and like Joseph and Moses could decipher Egyptian obelisks and read Assyrian and Babylonian texts with greater ease than can any of our modern archæologists. He loved Jerusalem, the temple of the Holy Land. The woes of his nation touched his heart, and the desolation of Zion melted his eyes to tears. Although by his own influence the edict of Cyrus was procured for the release of the captives, yet as an exile he chose to remain at the Court of Babylon in order the more to promote their interests. He pursued his mission, trusting in a faithful God. In his person, he was fair of countenance, well favored, the admiration of Ashpenaz, Melzar and Arioch, the object of their tender regard. In his demeanor, he was courteous, dignified, deferential, reverent and respectful. In his character, abstemious, serious, devout, courageous, unblemished in his private life, and incorruptible in public office, a pattern of righteousness, holiness, wisdom, prayer and faith—full of the fear of God—a favorite with all. In