

There ought to be no serious objection among Bible students to the elimination from the creed of a doctrine in which God is represented as having foreordained a certain number of His children to salvation and another number—the largest—to eternal damnation. The doctrine is not only irreconcilable with our conceptions of infinite mercy and justice, but it seems also to be a direct contradiction of the fact that man is a responsible agent, accountable for his deeds, whether good or evil.

The idea of predestination was woven into the system of dogmatic theology, not by any of the authors of the Bible, but by Augustine. And when it is known that this eminent church father, as Neander states, often read the scriptures more to discover something to corroborate his own views than to find the truth, it may well be suspected that the objectionable doctrine has its deepest roots in the Platonian philosophy of which Augustine was a diligent student, rather than in the soil of true Christianity.

The doctrine of election as found in the scriptures is widely different from the Augustinian-Calvinistic conception. It exhibits the independence of our Creator and represents Him as pursuing His own plans and purposes in promoting the good of all His children, without interfering with their freedom of action. It declares the source of salvation to be, in the first instance, the mercy of God. It accounts for the rejection of the Gospel by nations without excusing this rejection. And it gives a reason for the prediction of the final success of the Kingdom of Christ, notwithstanding all hostility.

Limited to these features the doctrine of predestination is scriptural, but when it is applied to individuals, making them all but irresponsible machines in the hands of an engineer, it is false in theory and disastrous in its effects. It can, therefore be only gratifying to believers in the "word of God" to learn that an influential religious body has the courage to take steps towards the correction of the error.

But another question naturally arises. If one doctrine can be rejected because it offends the sentiment of individuals, why cannot every other doctrine be rejected for the same reason? Some might feel that the doctrine of the divinity of Christ is, as Dr. Brandes calls it, an absurdity. Others might think, with Dr. Waldenstrom, that the doctrine of substitution is a "juridical difficulty." It seems that the Presbyterians, by the step they now have taken, bind themselves to eliminate

one doctrine after another from their creed, should the sentiment against it grow strong enough to demand consideration.

Here is a dilemma, indeed. The followers of the Westminster Confession have for years and years declared to the world that this creed was founded on the word of God, in their opinion the only revelations ever to be had, the only source of absolute religious truth, perfect and infallible. But now they are forced, either to cling to their creed and suffer their church to be broken up into factions, or else to change that creed, that embodiment of the infallible word of God. If they choose this latter alternative, as they in all probability will, what confidence can be placed in the rest of the creed? Is it not all liable to a very reasonable suspicion?

The whole situation illustrates the necessity of the continued revelations of that Spirit whose special function among men is to guide them to all truth. Man-made doctrines, however carefully expressed, or a whole system of doctrines, however well formed, will sooner or later prove their insufficiency and bring fatal confusion. Divinely revealed truths are eternal and unchangeable. These alone can stand the test of ages and bring about harmony and happiness to mankind.

STATE SOCIALISM.

THERE is on this continent one city at least that is determined to make an experiment in State socialism. It is the city of Toronto in Canada. For many years that burgh has had trouble with its street car corporations. Between strikers and political jobbers the streets were almost perpetually in a ferment. The service given by the car companies was always unsatisfactory. Therefore the municipality decided on purchasing the entire plant, and will in future operate the lines directly under the management of officials appointed by the city. The Toronto enterprise will be watched with interest.

The danger to be apprehended in introducing schemes of this kind into American cities is the fact that they may be made to subserve the interests of a party. If such a city as Chicago owned and operated her vast system of street cars, what tumult and disorder would take place at every election!

Even now the police and fire departments there are made party affairs. The new mayor who was elected, last April, suspended 200 policemen in on batch a few days ago. He appointed a new chief of police, and new heads for

all departments of the city government. Suppose he controlled the street car system also, what a field he would have for political heelers! And now that cable and electric cars are largely in use in all big cities, requiring a certain amount of skill to manipulate them, the changing of experienced hands at every election would be productive of immense injury to the public.

TAXPAYERS. CONSIDER!

THE opinion of the City Attorney in reference to the bonding power of the city, reported to the City Council on Tuesday, May 26, opens a serious question for the consideration of the taxpayers. He holds that the limit of four per cent. of the value of taxable property which, under the law of Congress, restrains municipal corporations in contracting debts, does not include the bonding power of city school districts. That while the boundaries of the school district of this city correspond with those of the municipal corporation, the organizations are separate and distinct and their bonding powers are separate and independent.

This position may be legally correct, though many lawyers take an opposite view of the matter. But it raises the question whether, in view of the extended borrowing powers it concedes to the City Council, and the disposition of that body to exercise them to the fullest extent, it will be wise for the taxpayers of this school district to shoulder the extra burden of bonds to the amount of \$600,000 for school purposes.

We do not wish to raise any impediment in the way of the School Board to raise the funds necessary for essential improvements. We only draw attention to the effects of the view of the case taken by the city attorney, so that citizens may understand the situation and the prospects.

The city bonds now issued amount to \$800,000 and bonds for \$200,000 more are placed on the market, making the bonded indebtedness of the city a million dollars, which with other liabilities will run up the total present city debt to not less than \$1,200,000. Add the \$600,000 which the School Board ask the taxpayers to assume, and we have the sum of \$1,800,000, the full amount to which the city can go in the line of debt. But if this debt of \$600,000 is to be contracted outside of that limit, then the city may issue bonds to the extent of \$600,000 more, making the total indebtedness no less than \$2,400,000.

Considering the propositions for paving and for the public building, it