

A THEOLOGICAL DISCUSSION.

THE following, copied from the Program for a debate arranged between the Editor of this Journal and a prominent Methodist minister of Allegheny City, will be self-explanatory: –

HISTORY OF THE PROPOSITION.

On March 10, 1903, Rev. E. L. Eaton, D.D., pastor North Avenue M.E. Church, addressed a letter to Pastor C. T. Russell, of the Arch Street (Bible House) Chapel, in which he said:

"Believing that nothing helps so much to get at the exact truth of a fact or doctrine as a full and free discussion of it; and that any legitimate thing that will attract the attention and arouse the interest of those who are indifferent to Scriptural truth is commendable; I have thought that a public debate of some of those questions about which you and I differ, and which we both believe to be vital to the Christian system, would be of immense interest to the public, and perhaps of great spiritual profit to those who heard, provided that the discussions be carried on – as I feel sure they would be – in a Christian spirit and with moral and spiritual earnestness. Therefore I have decided to call your attention to the matter, and to inquire whether you would be willing to engage with me in a joint discussion, at some suitable time and place in this city.

"The questions which I have in mind, but which I have not exactly formulated, are concerning the following:

"1 – The Second Coming of Christ.

"2 – The Millennium.

"3 – Post-Mortem Probation.

"4 – State of the Dead Between Death and the Resurrection.

- "5 – Eternal States of the Saved and the Lost.
- "6 – The Doctrine of Salvation."

The Christian, brotherly spirit of the communication was responded to in like manner by Pastor Russell on March 12 in a letter as follows:

"I assure you that your courteous expressions and Christian sentiments are fully reciprocated by me. I agree with you that such a public discussion as you suggest – of our divergent views on the teachings of the Bible – ought to be profitable, stimulating to Bible study on our part as well as on the part of all Bible students hereabouts. I therefore accept your proposition, and join you in mutual assurances that the 'Golden Rule' shall be observed, which will insure Christian courtesy of the very highest standard."...

Other engagements and appointments hindered an early consummation of arrangements, but on June 27 the gentlemen concerned appended their signatures to a joint letter embodying the general conditions which should regulate the discussion, viz.: that in debate the first speaker should have fifty minutes, the second speaker fifty minutes; and that each should have ten minutes for reply; that the meetings should be absolutely free to the public, and should be held in Carnegie Hall, Allegheny, on October 18,20,22,27,29, and November 1.

PROPOSITIONS.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON, OCTOBER 18, THREE O'CLOCK.

Proposition 1. – The Scriptures clearly teach that divine grace and power, full and free, have been constantly exercised toward mankind since the fall, to the intent that all, if they would, might be saved. Hence there will be no probation after death, nor need of any. Dr. Eaton will affirm. Pastor Russell will deny.

TUESDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 20, EIGHT O'CLOCK.

Proposition 2. – The Scriptures clearly teach that the souls of the dead are unconscious while their bodies are in the grave. Pastor Russell will affirm. Dr. Eaton will deny.

THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 22, EIGHT O'CLOCK.

Proposition 3. – The Scriptures clearly teach that all of the saved will become spirit beings, and after the General Judgment will enter heaven. Dr. Eaton will affirm. Pastor Russell will deny.

TUESDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 27, EIGHT O'CLOCK.

Proposition 4. – The Scriptures clearly teach that only the "saints" of this Gospel age will share in the "First Resurrection;" but that vast multitudes will be saved in and by the subsequent resurrection. Pastor Russell will affirm. Dr. Eaton will deny.

THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 29, EIGHT O'CLOCK.

Proposition 5. – The Scriptures clearly teach that the second coming of Christ will precede the Millennium; and that the object of both – the second coming and the Millennium – is the blessing of all the families of the earth. Pastor Russell will affirm. Dr. Eaton will deny.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON, NOVEMBER 1, THREE O'CLOCK.

Proposition 6. – The Scriptures clearly teach that the divine penalty for sin – actual transgressions of God's holy law – eventually to be inflicted upon the incorrigible, will consist of inconceivably great sufferings, eternal in duration. Dr. Eaton will affirm. Pastor Russell will deny.

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We bespeak the prayers of the dear friends of the Truth, that in connection with this opportunity for presenting the Scripture teaching concerning the wonderful plan of God we may have wisdom from above; and that the name and character of the Lord may be glorified. [R3258 : page 392]

HOW TO SECURE REPORTS OF THE DEBATES.

Anticipating your interest in the proposed discussions, we have negotiated with the leading Pittsburgh daily, *The Gazette*, to publish reports of each session in their issues of the following days.

Our arrangement follows: –

Eight copies of each issue containing the debate reports (with one copy each of the intermediate issues, as required by law to secure cheap postage) to one address, postpaid for 55 cents; or the same, with one year's subscription to ZION'S WATCH TOWER, for \$1.50. All remittances should be sent direct to the WATCH TOWER office.

Believing that many of the friends will consider these six reports desirable for circulating amongst their friends and neighbors we have felt no hesitation about guaranteeing *The Gazette* 1250 subscriptions. **Order at once**, as, otherwise, the number printed may not be sufficient to fill all orders.

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