

The Difficulties of Arminianism.

Not unfrequently, when a person tries to escape from one difficulty, he only finds himself caught in the thicket of another, it may be a greater. This is the experience of those who exchange Calvinism for Arminianism. That there are difficulties in Calvinism, yes, great ones—I hear speak of that found in the Confession of Faith, not of that found, for example, in "Holy Willie's Prayer," every intelligent and honest Calvinist will most readily admit. But there are also difficulties, yea, much greater ones to be found in Arminianism. We shall see this as we go on.

Dorchester Street Methodist Church, Montreal, held its anniversary services on Sabbath, September 24. The Rev. D. Winter, of the West End Church, took the evening service. He preached from II Thessal. ii, 13: "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation; through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." In the course of his sermon, as reported in the Montreal Witness of the day following, the preacher said: "God has chosen you; but this was limited in its extent, for God's choice depended on one's choice of God. As soon as a man was willing, God began to work in him his salvation." Judging from the statements of different Arminian writers which I have seen, I believe that Mr. Winter is not misrepresented in the foregoing quotation. I shall now say a few words in review of his language. Had I sufficient space at my disposal, I would say a great deal.

According to Mr. Winter in regeneration, man takes the first step—not God. Man chooses God, then, because he has done so, God chooses him; God chooses no one who does not first choose Him. But the preacher's text seems to be altogether out of harmony with that doctrine. There it is said: "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, etc." The expression "from the beginning," means "from all eternity." Of course, man was not then in being. God, therefore, first chose man. How could man, when he was not in being, choose Him? The same applies to the kindred passage in Ephesians, i, 4: "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world,"—that is, from all eternity—"that we should be holy," etc. Arminians try to surmount this difficulty by saying: "God, from all eternity foresaw who in time, would choose Him. These, and only these, He chose. His doing so was the reward of their first choosing Him."

McCheyne says:

"Chosen not for good in me,"

Mr. Winter, in effect, says;

"Chosen for good seen in me."

According to the latter, the Lord sent Paul to open the eyes of those who had already opened them, and to turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, those who had already turned. He opened the heart of Lydia, because she had opened it. Mr. Winter says that "as soon as a man is willing, God begins to work in him his salvation." God waits for men to take the first step. But this willingness is the beginning of man's salvation. How is the wondrous change brought about? All men, by nature, have no love to God. How is it, if the change depends wholly on man, that many never have this willingness? How can we harmonize with Mr. Winter's doctrine, the language of Paul to the Philippians: "God worketh in you both to will and to do?"

There is a hymn which says:
"O Lord do Thou the sinner turn!
Now rouse him from his senseless state!"

According to Mr. Winter, it is out of place to pray God to change the sinner's heart. Such prayer should be addressed to the sin-

ner. God can justly say to the suppliant whose language I have just quoted: "It is not my place to change the sinner's heart. Till he change it, I am utterly powerless. But as soon as he does so, then I can work in him his salvation, and will, that very moment, begin my work."

For the reason already stated I must stop here.

Woodbridge, Ont.

T. FENWICK.

Bruce Presbyterian Meeting of W. F. M. S.

The twelfth annual meeting of this society was held in Knox church, Paisley, on the 28th ult., Mrs. Johnston, the president, occupying the chair, and associated with her on the platform were Mrs. Robertson, of Walkerton, and Miss Smith, of Tara, vice-presidents and Mrs. Ferguson, of Chesley, Sec.

After devotional exercises the minutes of last meeting were read and adopted. The reports of the auxiliaries and Mission Bands were then read by their respective secretaries.

Mrs. Colborne, of Paisley, in an address of much power and beauty, welcomed the society; Miss Hamilton, of Tara, gracefully responded. The president's address followed. She said a spirit of thankfulness should prevail among us, that we are permitted to be present—for the privileges we enjoy and the progress we have made when we look back to other meetings. Christ said I must work. The work must be done and none but He could do it. Let us work and pray as those who are bound to win. This work reminds us of a vast machinery hall, all the machinery there, but silent and still. Touch the button and start it all. The one impelling motive "the love of Christ" has brought us together and should be the motive power of all our work.

The reports of the secretary treasurer, secretary of supplies and literary secretary were read and indicated substantial advances in the various departments of the work. The membership and attendance has increased. Regular meetings have been held which have been interesting and profitable. Thank offering meetings have been very generally held. Contributions amount to \$580, showing a slight increase over last year. The bale of clothing sent to the North-West Indians was valued at \$364. The dedicatory prayer was offered by Mrs. Matheson, of Armow.

The officers for the coming year were elected as follows:—President, Mrs. Robertson, Walkerton; 1st Vice-President, Mrs. Johnston, Paisley; 2nd Vice-President, Miss Smith, Tara; Secretary, Mrs. Ferguson, Chesley; Treasurer, Miss Miller, Paisley; Secretary of Supplies, Mrs. Galbraith, Paisley; Literary Secretary, Mrs. Marr, Walkerton.

Mrs. Conning, of Walkerton, read an excellent paper on "Medical Missions." A duet by Mrs. and Miss Bain, "Keep me safe within the fold," was sweetly sung, followed by a paper on the "Missionary Obligations of the Church" by Mrs. Ferguson, Chesley.

During the meeting Mrs. Cameron, Port Elgin, Mrs. Fitzpatrick, Underwood, Miss Smith, Tara, and Mrs. Robertson, Walkerton, led in devotional exercises. Hearty votes of thanks were tendered to the managers of the church to the Paisley ladies for their hospitality and to all who had taken part in the meeting.

The afternoon meeting was closed by prayer led by Mrs. McKinnon of Port Elgin. The delegates and members of Bruce Presbytery who had held their regular meeting the same day were invited to take tea in the basement of the church.

At 8 o'clock the church was well filled. Rev. Mr. Johnston, the pastor, occupied the chair and presided. The proceedings were interspersed with excellent music from the choir and a quartette by four gentlemen, "Let a little sunshine in," was well received. Rev. Mr. Wilkie, returned missionary from Indore, India, gave an interesting address, and Rev. Dr. Campbell spoke in the interests of the Century Fund.

The next meeting will be held in Tara on the 27th September, 1900.

Opening of Montreal College.

The thirty-second session of the College was formally opened on Thursday eve of last week in the David Morrice Hall. The occasion was more than usually interesting by reason of the presence of the Rev. Principal Salmond, D.D., of the Free Church of Scotland, Aberdeen, Scotland, who delivered the opening lecture. The subject was, "Christian Ministry and its Supreme Idea."

The Rev. Principal MacVicar, D.D., L.D., presided, and on the platform were Rev. Drs. R. Campbell, John Campbell, Cairat, Armstrong, of Ottawa; and the Messrs. C. B. Ross, of Lachine; W. Shearer, of Sherbrooke; J. R. McLeod, of Three Rivers; A. J. Mowatt, John McLeod, of Vanke Hill; N. H. McLeod, of Ottawa, and J. Morin. The Rev. Dr. A. B. Mackay, the Rev. Messrs. Winfield, Reid, and Keracher, occupied seats in the audience.

The Rev. J. MacLeod, of Vankleek, opened the meeting by reading Psalm 134 and after devotional exercise the chair delivered a brief address. He said that present was the thirty-second session, the attendance of students promised to be large and satisfactory. Speaking of the progress of the Presbyterian Church in Canada he said that since the union in 1875 the number of ministers had increased from 64 to 1,488, or 130 per cent; the membership had increased from 88,228 to 212,926; or 140 per cent and finances from \$952,672 to \$2,511,175, or 160 per cent. The attendance at Sabbath School had only increased from 97,204 to 160,150, or 64 per cent. That seemed to show they were weak in looking after the youth.

The Rev. Principal Salmond's address was interesting and inspiring. He urged members of the Christian ministry to regard that in a world where there were a great many good and happy things for men to God had given them the very best and holiest, and made them preachers of his truth. The vocation of the Christian ministry was not without its own peculiar anxieties and worries, and if faithfully discharged it would tax their utmost energies and make heavy demands upon their consistency and patience. But in all that made exertion itself in strength and gladness, in all brightened a career with the serene life of happiness, in all that was capable of making life with a deep joyfulness, there was no calling to match it for a moment. It was all important that a worthy conception of what the Christian ministry was should be entertained by the theological student. A peculiar grandeur belonged to it in its subject-matter, its results and its history. It was divine ordinance, and as such it demanded more of a personal inclination. It demanded what our forefathers had been accustomed to term a "call." There might have been wide differences of opinion as to the particular mode in which this call comes, and though it might be true the mistake was not infrequently been made of defining too precisely or too mystically, it was not put that there is a call to the Christian ministry.

The function of preaching deserved most sedulous attention and required for exercise the most patient preparation. What a power it had been in the history of human progress! It had had its times of power and its times of declension; but wherever preaching function of the ministry had been to the front, the life of the nations and churches had been free, fruitful and progressive. It was the preacher's primary duty to be a student of the word, to learn to interpret it faithfully, to understand its unity, and its variety. It was his secondary duty to be a theologian, to master that which the Bible offered, to make himself acquainted with the great systems in which these truths had been expressed by the master minds of Christ's church.

The benediction was pronounced by Rev. Dr. Robert Campbell.