

place on the subject of Calvinism. How those old disputants would have opened their eyes if they could have been present on this occasion, and listened to the friendly and brotherly talk on subjects which formed the battle ground of controversy between the churches for ages!

Rev. Dr. Cameron, General Superintendent of the Methodist Church, set the ball rolling by making a frank statement of the beliefs held by the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches. He thought that, upon examination, it might be found that there was not such wide divergence as is generally supposed. He believed strongly in the sovereignty of God, and he had reason to conclude that his Presbyterian brethren preached a full and free salvation to all men.

A prominent delegate declared that he did not see how it was possible to harmonize Calvinism and Arminianism. He thought that they were diametrically opposed to one another, and could not be made to coalesce.

Rev. Dr. Duval, of Knox Church, Winnipeg, replied to this, in what was conceded to be the most eloquent speech of the whole conference. He took the ground that no one could harmonize these doctrines, and it was not necessary to do so. After all they were but the theories of men, and we must go back to them to the teaching of God's Word itself. The Scripture certainly taught the sovereignty of God, and also the freedom of the human will. They are both in the Bible, and should both be preached, but there is no necessity for the theologians to make them agree.

UNITY IN FUNDAMENTALS.

As the conversation proceeded it became clear that there was a strong desire to seek points of agreement rather than of difference, and it was pointed out that on all the great fundamentals of the Christian faith there is unanimity at present. When the time comes to formulate a creed there will probably be a simple and brief statement of the truths which are essential, leaving room for liberty of opinion regarding the nonessentials.

The subject of Church polity was not discussed at any great length, but some time was given to the question of the itinerancy. In the Methodist Church pastors are appointed by a Stationing Committee from year to year, the limit of a pastorate being four years. In the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches, each congregation calls its own minister, who may remain for an indefinite period. It is not likely that these Churches will readily give up the system, to which they have become attached, but some prominent Presbyterians did not hesitate to express their approval of a modified form of itinerancy. If provision could be made by which the services of a minister might be retained in a church for a series of years, when it seemed desirable most of the objections to the itinerant system would disappear.

The discussion of this and other topics did much to clear the air of misconceptions, and helped to remove obstacles. The purpose evidently is to obtain a Church organization that will embody the best points in the three existing organizations, and, of course, it is recognized that there will have to be mutual concessions. When the three sections of the committee met separately, several ministers and laymen acknowledged that they were surprised that the difficulties were not more serious.

HURRY NOT ADVISABLE.

One leader of thought in the Presbyterian Church said that if all the people of the three Churches could have been present and

listened to the addresses and resolutions, there would be such a feeling in favor of organic union that it would be accomplished in the near future. Nothing was determined, however, in regard to the length of time that will likely be consumed in negotiations. It was generally felt that it would not be wise to rush things, but allow the fullest opportunity for gaining information, and discussing differences. Necessarily there must be a period of education in regard to the whole question, but within two or three years there ought to be some definite conclusion reached.

THE CLOSING SCENES.

The closing moments of the gathering were particularly impressive. Rev. Principal Shaw, of Montreal, stated that a similar movement for the unification of the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches in Australia had been inaugurated, and this would, no doubt, be watched with great interest on this side of the ocean, in view of what had just taken place in Toronto. Dr. Warden announced the hymn:

"O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come."

After this had been sung, Rev. Dr. Potts and Rev. Mr. Robertson engaged in prayer. Then the stirring, martial hymn, "Onward Christian Soldiers," was announced, and sung with great heartiness. There seemed to be special significance in the words:

"Like a mighty army, moves the Church of God;
Brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod;

We are not divided, all one body we,
One in hope and doctrine, one in charity."

Rev. Dr. Milligan, moderator of the Presbyterian Church, pronounced the benediction, and the delegates went east, west, north, and south, feeling that they had been privileged to participate in one of the greatest historic events that has occurred in this country.

Echoes From Ottawa Pulpits.

REV. DR. RAMSAY: The church needs the guidance of and support of her Lord's abiding presence. The problems of her work perplex her, but He will find their solution. The difficulties of her work make her faint, but He will renew her strength.

REV. DR. HERRIDGE: Christ knocks at three doors of the house of life, the door of feeling, the door of the intellect and the door of the will. It seems very easy to let Him in to the first two of these, but as for the third, there is the rut.

REV. J. W. H. MILNE: It is a disgrace to our Christianity that there are so many who think there is no use in trying to rescue the outcast and the criminal.

REV. R. EADIE: We are not our own but are bought with a price. We are either members of the King's Own, or we are not. We cannot serve two masters.

REV. J. H. TURNBULL:—There are some Christians in whom the word of God stagnates and evaporates in a useless fashion. Others there are through whom the great fresh stream of God's grace runs. They drink of the living water. They give as they get. They are blessed and made a blessing.

REV. W. A. MCILROY: A man's influence is always enhanced if he follows the bent of his own conscience in defiance of criticism. Duty is distinctly a personal affair; conscience must determine it. Now perjury is often counted a trivial offence among men. In these days we are growing

accustomed to it. But though often trivial in the sight of men, it is an atrocious crime in the sight of the infinitely true, pure and upright Jehovah.

December 31.

Translated from the French, by Rev. T. Fenwick, Woodbridge, Ont., for DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN.

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom; Ps. 90, 12.

This prayer is very suitable at the end of a year. It would not be a useless calculation to count the number of days which we have spent on the earth. These thousands of days lived are irremediably past. What have they left behind them? What has been their moral value for yourself and for others? Let us try to count our sins; we will not succeed, they make a formidable barrier. Let us try on the other hand to count God's blessings; their number stands infinitely beyond our transgression. "Where sin has abounded, grace has much more abounded." Let us try to turn ourselves to ward the future, to count the days which remain for us to live. Here, nothing is sure, not even to-morrow. Our plans for the future are at the mercy of an accident, or a disease. But even this uncertainty is a previous lesson. It would cast us into the arms of God. In Him we find pardon for the past, hope for the future, peace and joy for the present; in a word, this wise heart God gives to him who asks it. M. L.

The death of Principal Caven, of Knox College, Toronto, has awakened a good deal of sympathy among British Free churchmen. The organ of the English Free Church speaks this week of his "powerful, penetrating and continuous influence," and adds these words of discriminating comment:—"He represented the conservative side, though he was not stationary, and in the United Canadian Assembly he and the late Principal Grant were the most commanding figures. Principal Grant represented the newer thought, though with much caution. Pitted against each other as these two notable Scotchmen were, they maintained a cordial friendship, and it was pleasant to hear the way in which each spoke of the other. Dr. Caven was a man eminently adapted to his sphere. He was best loved where he was best understood. He was a born ecclesiastical leader of the nobler type."

The total attendance at the St. Louis fair, during the seven months it was open, was 18,500,000, and unlike previous expositions the receipts have more than equalled the expenses. "The financial result," says the New York Christian Intelligencer, "is a gratifying testimony to the wisdom of the Sunday closing feature of this exposition. The balance sheet is better than that of the Chicago Fair, open though that was for seven days in the week." It is not only right, but in the long run it pays in dollars and cents, for men and women to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

It is recorded with gratification by the British and Foreign Bible Society that a native trader from Timbuku visiting Bathurst took home a card with a text written in Arabic, and on returning to Bathurst the following year purchased an Arabic Bible. So great had been the interest excited among his fellow-countrymen by hearing the contents of the book that recently, on a third visit, he bought eighteen copies of the Arabic Bible.