

one" has become tens of thousands, moulding the thought, the institutions, the destiny of nations.

This essential unity of the Presbyterian world has given rise to the proposal of a General Council in which representatives of all our churches could meet. Dr. McCosh, now President of Princeton College, works out the idea as follows:

It is reckoned that if you sum up the Presbyterian churches throughout the world they embrace 20,000 congregations, and a population of 34,000,000. If you add the Lutherans, who in many parts of Germany are one with the Reformed, and who are, in all respects, nearer Presbyterianism than they are either to Episcopacy or Independency, we have a population of 55,000,000 out of 107,000,000 of Protestants of the world. What a power every one will say for good if only these Churches can be made to combine in their action. Looking to this immense community three grand ends are to be aimed at. The first is to separate the Evangelical Churches from that rationalism which is so marrying the usefulness of Protestantism all over the Continent of Europe. The second is to deliver them, if not from State connection, at least from State control, which has ever been protecting rationalism with its coldness and its deadening influence. A third and a grand effort must be made. We must unite the scattered energies of these 34,000,000 for the overthrow of the powers of darkness, and for the spread of the Gospel throughout the world. Let us pray for this end, and at the same time labor for it.

It has long been a favourite idea of mine that the Presbyterian Churches might be brought together at a Pan-Presbyterian Council, at which all of them might be represented. Let it be understood that I do not propose breaking up the separate churches of British and Continental Europe or of this country. I would no more think of this than I would of separating the States of our Union. Some grand principles might be agreed to; let them be few and simple. Of course there must be a doctrinal basis; but this should not consist in a new creed or confession. Let each church retain its standards, and be admitted into the union only on condition that these embrace the cardinal truths of salvation. There must also be certain principles of church order presupposed, such as the parity of ministers and government by representative councils in which ministers and elders have a joint place. But the mode of carrying out these princi-

ples must be left to each organization—in this way securing that we have in the church, as in all the works of God, unity with variety. The Grand Council should have authority to see that these fundamental principles of doctrine and of government are carried out in each of the churches, and might cut off those that de liberately departed from them in act or in profession. But beyond this it need have no other disciplinary power. Without interfering at all with the free action of the churches, it might distribute judiciously the evangelistic work in the great field, which is the world, allocating a sphere to each, discouraging the plantation of two churches where one might serve, and the establishment of two missions at one place, while hundreds of other places have none. In this way the resources of the Church would be kept from being wasted, while her energies would be concentrated on great enterprises. When circumstances require it the whole strength of the Church might be directed to the establishment of truth and the suppression of error and prevalent forms of vice. More important than all, from this heart of the Church might proceed an impulse reaching to the utmost extremities and carrying life to every member.

The same grand idea has been ably enunciated by several writers and speakers within the past few years. It is a thought that is sure to germinate and grow strong and in the fulness of time to be acted out in real life. Dr. McCosh confesses that his Scottish partialities lead him to look upon Edinburgh, the city of Knox and Chalmers, as the most appropriate place for the first meeting of the great General Assembly of Presbyterianism. But there are obstacles in the unfortunate state of feeling now existing among the Scottish denominations. It is possible, however, that this melancholy asperity among Scottish Christians will be a thing of the past before the idea of a Grand Central Council is otherwise ripe for realization. Every passing year will witness the removal of obstacles physical and ecclesiastical. At the present hour every colony of Great Britain, except New Zealand and South and West Africa, is united to the parent country by electric telegraph. In a year or two the whole family of colonies will be brought within the electric circle. Communication and travel become cheaper,