

cry earnestly to God to pour out His Spirit upon His people, to revive His work in the earth, to have mercy upon His weary and distracted flock, to give in larger measure the spiritual discernment by which we shall know "the deep things of God." Should this prayer be answered, we shall have the needed guidance in all theological study and investigation, and it will be answered should the faithful in many lands unite in truly presenting it. So long as our thoughts are fixed on man, on human talent and genius, on great scholarships, or improved methods of investigation, we forget the real source of wisdom and power; and fail to honour Him without whose aid we can achieve nothing in the kingdom of God.

The Holy Spirit can so illuminate our understanding that difficulties which now distract and embarrass shall do so no more; they shall be finally solved, or, perhaps, the truth and glory of the Gospel shall so shine forth that these difficulties shall almost vanish from our field of vision. Just as the individual sinner, profoundly conscious of ignorance, cries to God for light, so should we unite, beseeching the God of truth to guide and direct the thought which is so largely occupied with religious questions. Thus will theological study become abundantly fruitful, and will minister to spiritual life and the highest welfare of the body of Christ. A firmer faith and a clearer knowledge and a more joyful activity will appear everywhere.

Let no one dream that the better estate which we long for must be due to "the laws of moral and intellectual evolution," and that the issue cannot be hastened. What these laws are we little know, but we do know that the Divine Spirit has immediate access to all hearts and minds, and can teach us wherever teaching is required. Having no confidence in man's wisdom let us look only to God, and cry unto Him as the children of Israel cried unto the Lord when the Red Sea was before them and Pharaoh's host behind. Let us "cease from man whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted for?"

Thus, trusting in God and honouring the Spirit, whose perpetual leadership the Saviour has promised, we may dismiss alarm respecting the future. It is indeed sad to see that in many places where an evangelical, living Protestantism once had possession we have little more than the cold negations of rationalism, and that in countries where a believing theology has greater recognition, biblical and doctrinal questions and questions of comparative religion are sometimes handled as no one who has been "taught by Him" should ever handle them. Our ingratitude to God for His great goodness to Protestant Christendom, and our inactivity in sending the Gospel to the nations, may indeed procure chastisement for us, may bring an obscuration of that light which we have so inadequately valued, but should there come such obscuration, thank God it will only be temporary, for, according to His gracious promise, all ends of the earth shall see His salvation, and Christ shall reign over the whole world. The Spirit, poured out at Pentecost as an earnest, will be communicated in still larger measure, the Church will be revived and extended, faith will take the place of faint-hearted unbelief, our theology in all its departments will be purified and strengthened, we shall cease to hear of conflict between the Bible and science, and believers of every name drawing nearer, as round a common centre, to Him who is the life and the light, the unity of the true Church of God will be more perfectly manifested than ever before. All this will come through trust in God and increasing prayer for the Spirit's teaching. The Lord will fulfil His promise—"He shall guide you into all the truth."

The Council having been constituted with prayer by Professor Blaikie, D.D., LL.D., the roll was called, and routine business disposed of. The venerable Professor of New College, Edinburgh, delivered the opening address, in which he said that it was a pleasant thing to meet in the Dominion of Canada, where the branches of Presbyterianism now constituted a happy, united Church. It was pleasant to meet in the progressive city of Toronto, which was a Presbyterian centre, and its name would henceforth be associated in the history of the Alliance with that of other cities where it had met, as Edinburgh, Philadelphia, Belfast and London. He referred in fitting and feeling terms to the prominent members of the Alliance removed by death since the last meeting of the Council. He happily characterized the life and work of such men, Dr. Eugene Bersier and Edmond de Presensé, of Paris; Alexander Gavazzi, of Rome; Dr. Donald Fraser and Professor Elmslie, London; Dr. Whigham, Ireland; Dr. Alexander N. Somerville, Glasgow; Dr. John Cairns, Edinburgh. On the American side they had lost Dr. Ransom Welch, of Auburn; Dr. J. W. N. Taylor, New York; Dr. E. D. Junkin, of the Southern Church; Dr. Howard Crosby and Dr. Van Dyke, New York; Dr. Hugh Hannah, Belfast; Dr. Bomberger, Pennsylvania; Dr. George, St. Louis; Dr. Breed, Philadelphia, and Dr. Nish, Australia. He paid a fine tribute to the services so efficiently rendered by the Secretary, Dr. Mathews, in promoting the objects of the Alliance. He referred to the fact that the Alliance had been followed by the Ecumenical Council of the Methodists at Washington in 1890, and the following year by the Congregational International Council in London. He concluded with an eloquent expression of his confidence that the Alliance would see grander results from its efforts in the future.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22.

The Council has spent no time unnecessarily before settling down to the steady work before its members. To-day the meetings were unusually interesting. At the morning session Dr. J. Munro Gibson, of London, presided. After the opening devotional exercises, in which Rev. Dr. Wardrop, of Guelph, and Rev. Dr. John Hall, of New York, took part, the business of the Council was taken up. Dr. Roberts, American Secretary of the Alliance, and Dr. Waters, recording secretary of the Western

Section of the executive commission, were appointed Clerks of the Council for the present. The jubilee of Rev. Dr. Blaikie's ministry, which fell on this very day, the 22nd September, was marked by the Council proffering to him the honorary secretaryship of the Alliance, and by the appointment of Rev. Dr. Mathews and Rev. Dr. J. Marshall Laing to attend his jubilee to be held at Edinburgh. Dr. Blaikie made a suitable acknowledgment.

Dr. Mathews, General Secretary of the Alliance, in presenting the report on Statistics, said that several thoughts pressed themselves strongly on his heart. They were meeting to-day, he said, under circumstances which gave a peculiar character to the gathering. They were representing a Church whose members were scattered all over the world and were everywhere helping the kingdom of Christ. It was a Church that had a historic reputation for desiring a cultured ministry. The point which impressed itself principally on his mind was that they represented a multitude of humanity which they could not estimate, though they could mention it in figures. They represented the most impressive idea of unity with which the world had yet been favoured. Their meeting was one more far-reaching in its influence than any of the historic councils which stand as landmarks in the history of the Christian Church. More so than the council at Nice, at Dort or at Westminster. They represented a hundred times as great a community as any of these. They stood with 20,000,000 of men at their backs, and the words they uttered should be such as would touch that vast portion of the race. The words they would say would go winged to the very ends of the earth, and would be borne far beyond the sea. There was a peculiar solemnity in the thought. They had not come together at the edict of any sovereign. They had no legislative authority, but they had a power behind them in the influence they wielded. They had come together as a collection of committees. There were present with them men who could clear up dark questions of theology, there were some who would light up social questions with the lamp of their knowledge, and there were some from the mission fields who would kindle in the breasts of their hearers the flame of zeal which burned in their own breasts in the work of their Master. These things were enough to make him feel that the meeting was one of the most impressive that the Protestant Church had yet witnessed.

In touching on the statistical report Dr. Mathews said that the returns this year were not so complete as he could wish. He referred to the difficulty there was in collecting the returns, as the Alliance had no power to enforce the sending of them upon the various ministers and Synods. There was, he said, an increase in the membership of the Church to the extent of 250,000, and there was also a substantial increase in the Sabbath school membership. Dr. Mathews then made some remarks touching the Reform Churches of the continent. This, he said, was comparatively a new subject for enquiry, and he had gained much interest in its study. This subject brought him back to a consideration of the Presbyterian system of government itself. It was a system, he said, which educated men in highest forms of social as well as Church government. Its capacities had been by no means exhausted. It had been referred to by some as effete, as of the sixteenth century, but it showed an adaptability at all times to every increase of enlightenment. Its capacity, as he had said, was by no means exhausted. It was a system which conducted to individual activity. It found work for men of every age and class to do, and, as it was, if followed up, they would find their people kept more closely together.

The report opens with a grateful acknowledgment of Divine guidance, and referred to the absence of friction among the allied Churches, and the many occasions upon which the constituent parts of the Alliance had been able to aid and encourage each other in difficulties. The more notable events in the history of the Alliance during the past four years are referred to, among others the ecclesiastical union of the Christian Reformed Church in Holland, and the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands, the increased friendly relations between the two Churches in the United States, and the union of the Church in Brazil, and also in Japan. In the inner life of the Church the report notes increased and sustained spiritual vitality in every department. The statistical tables appended to the report show the following figures by Churches, as made up from the last available returns:—

Territorial Divisions.	Pastoral Charges.	Ministers.	Communicants.	Sabb'th S'l Attend'ce.
European continent...	5,289	5,602	752,901	353,676
United Kingdom...	5,149	4,642	1,430,152	995,754
Asia...	260	102	16,954	5,115
Africa...	174	174	105,752	18,600
North America...	11,921	12,782	1,708,543	1,556,985
South America...	52	37	3,425	5,210
West Indies...	39	41	10,869	5,210
Australia...	423	455	39,590	55,685
New Zealand...	194	166	19,149	29,770
Melanesia...
Grand totals...	23,487	23,951	4,092,965	3,020,765

Rev. Dr. Chambers, of New York, brought in a resolution, which read: "Resolved, That it be referred to the Business Committee to consider the propriety of constituting a third Section of the Executive Commission, to be called the Southern Section, and to consist of the members from Australia and the South Pacific." The motion was carried. Rev. James Kerr, D.D., of Glasgow, gave notice of the following resolution: "This Council declares its admiration of the recent action of the United States Congress in deciding in favour of the shutting of the gates of the Columbian Exposition on the Lord's Day, expresses the hope that there shall be no reversal of this action, and, as an Association holding the consensus of the Reformed Churches, specially rejoices in this decision as it illustrates the great Scriptural doctrine of the binding obligation of the Sabbath on all peoples and prepares the way for other public action and reforms which would recognize the supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ over the nations and promote the civil and religious prosperity of all communities."

Professor Lindsay, Glasgow, read a very able and thoughtful paper on "The Protestant Reformation; its spiritual character and its fruits in the individual life." After describing the various aspects of the Reformation, the movement itself, he said, was a revival of religion, one of the many fulfillments of the promise of the outpouring of the spirit of God upon His waiting Church. What gave it its wonderful influence over the lives of men and women was the overmastering desire shown in it to get nearer to God. Following this the speaker gave brief sketches of Luther, Zwingli and Calvin in their relation to the Reformation. On Calvin he dwelt at some considerable length and quoted the summing up of his character by Ernest Renan, "lacking that deep, sympathetic ardour which was one of the secrets of Luther's success, Calvin succeeded in an age and in a country which called for a reaction towards Christianity simply because he was the most Christian man of his generation." The Reformation, the speaker continued, did not bring to light many truths which were absolutely unknown in the mediæval Church. The spiritual life of the mediæval Christian was fed on the same divine thoughts which are the basis of the Reformation theology. When the mediæval Christian went down on his knees in prayer, stood to sing his Redeemer's praises, spoke as a dying man to dying men, the words and thoughts that came were what Zwingli and Luther and Calvin wrote in Reformation creeds and expounded in volumes of Reformation theology. The Reformation was such a spiritual movement and produced such spiritual results that the level of its ordinary theological thinking and teaching reached a height only attained in the highest words of devotion in the mediæval Church. The Reformation revival, the speaker said, came in answer to earnest, constrained prayer. In the Rhine land, in Wurtemberg, in the Black Forest, in the north belt of Switzerland, were the real reformers before the Reformation, men and women who met for quiet worship and who formally united in prayer for Pentecostal blessing. They were called in the times immediately before the Reformation the Old Evangelicals. Their immediate descendants were the despised and slandered Anabaptists. They pleaded for a Free Church in a free State, and repudiated both State support and State control; and above all they insisted that the realm of conscience was inviolable and that no man should suffer civil pain; or penalties for his beliefs. So they were not included outwardly in the Reformed Churches which sprang out of the very revival they had prayed for so earnestly and so long. "But," the speaker concluded, "we have only to look around and mark how our Baptist brethren, their lineal descendants, have spread and prospered to see how God has blessed these Old Evangelicals, to whose prayers He sent abundant blessing when He gave His Church the Pentecost of the Reformation."

Remarks on the paper were made by Dr. Talbot Chambers, Dr. Apple and Dr. John Hall.

Rev. Professor H. Bavinck, D.D., of Kampen, Holland, in the afternoon read the first paper, taking as his subject the influence of the Protestant Reformation on the moral and religious condition of communities and nations. The paper was listened to with much attention and interest. He bespoke forbearance since it was his first attempt at addressing an audience in English. It may be remarked that his mastery of the Anglo-Saxon speech is very striking. He said the influence of the Lutheran Reformation came behind the Calvinistic in its influence on the nations. The German Reformation, though at first just as radical as the Swiss, was early dulled into conservatism. Luther, frightened by the radicalism of the Anabaptists, restricted the working of the reform principle to the realms of religious life, and left everything else much as it was. The Lutheran was, therefore, only a reformation of the religion. Luther makes the worldly free from the ecclesiastical, but he allows it to stand side by side with the spiritual, as if the external were an indifferent matter, and incapable of general and moral renewal. In a direct way, therefore, the influence of the Lutheran Reformation was only appreciable in religious life and in pure doctrine. The religio-ethical influence of the Reformation was most powerfully and purely observable among the Calvinistic nations. The Swiss Reformation was radical and total. In principle it went deeper down, and therefore its practical compass was greater. Calvinism had no peace before it had found the eternal in and behind the temporal. Calvinism was the only consistent theological view of the world and of humanity. In Calvin's system all depended not on any creature, but only on God Almighty. The sovereignty of God stood foremost. This was the starting point and the ruling idea. It was true that Calvinism by its strict preaching of God's justice awakened a deep feeling of guilt and unworthiness in man, and that it prostrated him deeply in the dust before God's sovereignty and majesty; but equally true was it that afterwards it elevated him to a singular height of blessedness, and that it caused him to rest in the free, eternal and unchangeable good pleasure of the Father. This system was certainly not adapted to the making of a soft and dear people, and it was averse to all sickly sentimentality. But it created men of marble, with characters of steel, with a will of iron, with an insuperable power, with an extraordinary energy.

The second paper of the afternoon session, and third of the series on the Reformation, was presented by Rev. Professor M. Leitch, D.D., of Belfast, upon the influence of the Reformation upon the intellectual state and progress of the communities and nations. He opened by a reference to the gross darkness and ignorance of the peoples, gradually brought about by the machinations of the Papacy, which existed immediately before the birth of the Reformation. He then dwelt upon the awakening of science, art, commercial enterprise, as shown by the advent of the printing press, the circumnavigation of the globe, the discovery of America by Columbus, and many other historical events. In the midst of this great era of progress,

since named the renaissance, the birth of the Reformation occurred, and the glorious advance has gone on ever since in every country which has accepted the principles of that Reformation. It had been said that the Reformation grew out of the revival of learning, but this was only true in the same sense that it is true that the cultivation of the ground produces the crop. The crop would only grow from the proper seed, and so the Reformation grew from the Word of God, and not from the revival of learning. In support of the position that the subsequent progress of the peoples ran parallel to the onward march of Reformation principles, the speaker drew a comparison between Italy, Spain and Ireland on the one hand and Germany, England and Scotland on the other. He showed how before the Reformation Italy was the most enlightened and highly civilized nation in Europe, but since she refused to accept the revival she has steadily gone back. So with Spain, both before and since. By contrast, Dr. Leitch noted how the intellectual progress of England and Germany had steadily gone forward since the date of their embracing Protestantism. Comparing Ireland and Scotland, peopled by the same Celtic race, the same remarkable contrast was shown. By statistics taken from the latest returns, the paper showed the tremendous difference in the educational condition of the countries under consideration from eighty-two per cent. of illiterates in Spain and Portugal to about two per cent. in Germany. While not definitely claiming that all this difference was due to the Reformation, the speaker desired his auditors to draw their own conclusions from these most significant figures and facts. The presumption of a connection, however, he deduced from the facts that the very essence of Protestantism as distinguished from Roman Catholicism is that the individual comes into personal communion with God; Protestantism gives the Bible to the people in their own tongue, and encourages them to read and understand it; and Protestantism secures liberty of thought. All these make progress and enlightenment, and must therefore ever lead toward the intellectual and material advancement of a people, as well as their spiritual improvement.

Professor Henry M. Baird, D.D., LL.D., of the University of New York, in his paper on the influence of the Protestant Reformation on political and civil institutions, said that two forces of modern civilization had wrought energetically in the sixteenth century, which, though occasionally mistaken for each other, were really distinct in character and in ultimate effects. Both the Reformation and the renaissance contained a protest against the past, but the former dealt primarily with moral and religious truth, the latter with literature and art, poetry and oratory, with painting and sculpture. Both movements were in their way admirable, but it was the Reformation which created the men of strong moral fibre, who had made the Europe and America of to-day. The renaissance inculcated no lesson of self-denial, and boasted no moral heroes. We stood in admiration before the scholarly erudition of an Erasmus; we are entranced by the genius of a Raphael; but none of these were enthroned in the first place in our affections and reverence. The renaissance offered no picture the counterpart of the appearance of Luther at the Diet of Worms, pronounced by Carlyle "the greatest moment in the modern history of man." In reference to the Reformation, it was pre-eminently true that the idea of the universal priesthood of man had worked untold blessings in political institutions. There was little of that which distinguished our modern civilization with its constantly-increasing liberty and its forms of government which was not due, directly or indirectly, to the teachings of the reformers. The Reformation had deserved well of the world in the domain of political institutions by rendering for ever unobtainable the papal dream of a universal theocracy. There was, previous to that event, scarcely a country of Christendom whose national dignity had not been assailed, infringed, trampled under foot by the Papacy. The mediæval claim of the Roman pontiffs became an absurd fancy the moment it was denounced by Luther and Melancthon, by Faile and Calvin. Both Lutheran and Calvinistic nations had constantly denied the assumption of superiority by the papacy. In this regard the Reformation had greatly benefited the nations wherein its adherents had been in the minority. The Protestant Reformation, too, had thwarted every attempt at establishing a world monarchy under a secular prince. It had fostered a true national consciousness. In Protestantism, the ancient notion that man exists for the benefit of the community or ruler, was supplanted by the apprehension that Governments were for the advantage of the individual. That which essentially distinguished Calvinism was its spirit of nationality, in that it developed the individuality of peoples. Among all classes of the population there was fostered something of the "civis Romanus sum." Of necessity, therefore, Protestantism threw itself in the way of ambitious schemes of universal monarchy. The Protestant Reformation, too, had lent a powerful aid to the cause of personal liberty, civil and religious, to the recognition of the rights of man; and this, despite the errors of Luther and Melancthon on the one hand and of Calvin and Faile and Beza on the other. The speaker contended that the Governments of States that became Protestant had been, and were, for the most part, stable and free from intestine commotions, while those which rejected Protestantism were not so. In illustration of this statement he contrasted Great Britain and the United States with the Spanish republics of South America.

Papers were discussed by Drs. Kerr, Glasgow; Rentoul, Australia, and Rev. William Park, Belfast.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23.

Principal Hutton of the United Presbyterian Theological College, Edinburgh, presided at the morning session of the Council on Friday. A vote of thanks was unanimously tendered Dr. Caven for his able and appropriate sermon on the opening day.