

had nothing to lose, but everything to gain, by the sober exercise of a reverent progressive critical spirit. Workers in this field must hold themselves free to receive light from all quarters; and philosophy rightly studied should teach them to be not only aggressive but also calm, judicious, and thoroughly inductive in their search for truth. But the great dominating philosophical speculations now daily woven into popular literature and science were directly antagonistic to the central truths of theology. This was the case with various forms of materialism. Its universal negation of spirit struck at the being of God and all dependent doctrines. Its attempt to reduce man's constitution to one factor, to make him all body and no soul, a cunningly constructed machine set in motion and directed by physical force, left no room for either freedom or moral responsibility. He was in the iron grasp of a relentless necessity deprived of free agency and incapable of virtue or vice, as these were described in Scripture. All this rested upon pure assumption, for materialists had not given evidence of that which they confidently postulated. They asserted without proof that all mental, moral, and spiritual phenomena were accounted for by the investigations of physicists, while the truth was that physicists, by every method of analysis known to them, had failed to discover the source of a single thought, volition, hope, joy, sorrow, or act of conscience. When they had done their utmost the whole mass of spiritual phenomena was still unaccounted for, untouched. The hypothesis of evolution had of late penetrated all departments of thought. It was used to explain the origin and growth of all things. One thing was common to all processes of evolution, namely, the unlimited time required to bring about results. The genesis of the world dated away back in the past eternity they know not how far. Regardless of what God said as to man having been created in His own image we were asked to believe in an imperceptibly gradual evolution, an unspeakably slow ascent from primordial germs through countless millions of ages, and through as many brute ancestors of various orders. Religious life in like manner rose from the lowest fetishism, and diversified itself into all the forms of the prehistoric past. Christianity was nothing more than an eclectic belief, evolved out of all the corrupt cults that preceded it. This might please Pagans, Buddhists, and admirers of the parliament of religions, but it was in flagrant contradiction of Scripture and history. (Applause.) Whatever truth and beauty great specialists might profess to see in this hypothesis, it was obvious that as it influenced current theology and the belief of the masses, it discredited a supernatural revelation, rendered void faith in the miraculous appearance of the Son of God among men, and consequently in all the distinctive doctrines of the Gospel. In like manner a critical examination of Pantheism, and of many other current philosophies and speculations would reveal both their weakness and antagonism to Biblical theology. It was still true, after the lapse of ages, that the world by wisdom knew not God. Hence the folly—one was constrained to say the wicked folly—of preaching philosophy to perishing men, instead of the simple Gospel, which was the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

SABBATH SCHOOLS.

Rev. Dr. Cochrane, in presenting the report on Sabbath schools, on behalf of the Western Section said that Sabbath schools in the nineteenth century did not need any defence whatever. Even infidels and sceptics sent their children to them, and he was glad to say that the attendance was increasing every year. Sabbath schools were really a part of the Church, and the elder or minister who took no interest in them was not only doing an injury to his own soul, but was crippling the work of Christ. In Great Britain there were to-day 71,550 teachers, 837,000 scholars; on the European Continent, 83,000 teachers and 374,000 scholars; in Asia and Africa, 2,258 teachers and 28,750 scholars, in Australia and New Zealand, 9,350 teachers and 110,500 scholars; total, 116,000 teachers and 1,851,000 scholars. In the United States there were 162,500 teachers and 1,811,000 scholars; and in Canada, 18,000 teachers and 162,000 scholars. The total for the Western Section was 297,000 teachers and 3,085,463 scholars. In an age when secular education almost seemed forced upon certain Churches in order to meet the demands of Romanism and ritualism, it was necessary that the youth of the land should be grounded in the great doctrines of their faith. They from Canada breathed more freely now because that morning news had been flashed across the Atlantic that in Quebec, where there were ten Catholics for every Protestant, the people had said that they would rather trust the State in the hands of the Protestants than to the bishops of Rome. Quebec had struck the blow which he hoped would reach the Vatican that day. He hoped the Pope would understand what it meant, and also that Westminster would understand it.

WORK ON THE CONTINENT.

In connection with a paper on work on the European continent, Rev. Principal MacVicar expressed satisfaction that the Council had at length come to practical work, and emphasized the suggestion made as to the planting of English churches on the continent. It had fallen to his lot to be in contact with similar work for more than twenty-eight years. In the college over which he presided they had a professor whose whole time was given to the training of French and English speaking missionaries. In the province of Quebec they had ninety points at which they had planted missionaries who spoke both French and English, and who labored successfully in enlightening the million and a quarter of French Roman Catholics who inhabited the province. The growth of a liberal evangelical spirit was greatly promoted by the labors of these missionaries, and there was this advantage in the plan suggested—namely, that the Romish population felt that they had the sympathy of the great Protestant Churches of the Dominion. He could conceive of nothing that would be more effective in bringing their work practically to bear on the continent of Europe than the suggestion of Pastor Dardier, and he hoped one or other of the committees would take the matter into consideration, and submit to this or next meeting of Council something that might be acted upon.

HOME MISSIONS.

Rev. Dr. Cochrane presented the following valuable statistics and suggestions: Home Mission work in Great Britain, he said, was in many respects essentially different from what it was—and must be for years to come—on the American Continent. Here we had a compact and homogenous people; there they had a heterogeneous mass of people gathered from all parts of the globe. In Great Britain our efforts were confined to cities, towns, and villages within easy reach; while on the American continent they had to deal with vast districts over prairies and Rockies. Here we required a few thousand pounds; but there, if the work was to be done at all, it demanded millions of dollars. The adherents of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches in the world numbered about 30,000,300. Of these there were 2,000,000 communicants in the United States, and 200,000 in Canada. In connection with these Churches there were over 80 Presbyterian Universities or Colleges and 21 theological seminaries and some 7500 missionaries engaged in Home Mission work, and supplying nearly 8000 stations every Lord's Day, with an expenditure last year of \$2,000,000. The field of Home Missions in the United States covered its entire territory of 3,630,000 square miles, that of Canada nearly the same—3,470,257 square miles. As to population, the United States had now 70,000,000, and Canada 5,000,000, with territory unoccupied capable of providing homes and farms for 300,000,000 more. Home Mission work in American towns and cities was very much what it was in the Old World. There was the same widespread indifference to religion, as indicated by the fact that some 32,000,000 in the United States never entered a place of worship, and their children never received Biblical instruction. More and more it seemed as if the working classes were getting out of sympathy with the Church. Sixty-five out of every hundred young men were Christless. Then there was immorality of all shades and colors, drunkenness, Sabbath-breaking, gambling, fraud, violence, defiance of the law, and traps and temptations for the young in the more public as well as less frequented streets, and unblushing infidelity that laughed to scorn the sacredness of the marriage tie. But it was still worse in the newer and more sparsely settled portions of the west and north-west, where certain forms of evil assumed a fiendishness and ferocity unknown in the great centres of commerce. No subject could come before the Alliance more practical in its bearings than home evangelization on the American Continent, not only upon the masses—not only as regarded the future of their common Presbyterianism—but because of the mighty influence that such a great missionary church must have upon the American Continent viewed simply as a Christian nation. With them in the United States and Canada the Protestant Churches had no State connection—could not have—and, he might say, would not have if they could; and yet from purer motives and a higher standpoint than party politics they could exercise a mighty influence upon Cabinet and Parliament and Senate. For this there was no Church better fitted than the Churches represented at the Council of the United States and Canada. Standing as they did between a powerful hierarchy of Rome, that would intimidate the State and use it as her slave to obey her mandaments, and those on the other hand who would eliminate from the State everything that was Christian and introduce the reign of anarchy and infidelity, she occupied an exceptionally commanding position. On the American Continent, where there were such a vast multitude of creeds and "isms," there was need for a Church that held by the old creed and Confession of Faith.