

of opinion as to the Bible when there were no more new truths to be derived from it, or new questions raised concerning it; when its interpretation was perfected, and research regarding it completed. That would not be, he believed, before the day of doom. Certainly it would not be in their day. Never was Biblical research more actively pushed forward in all directions than at present; never, therefore, were the Churches more bound, while conscientiously guarding old and assured truths, to beware of dogmatism as to new views, or of unnecessarily trammelling advancing research. The free action of spiritual life in the form of investigation and criticism, when displayed in fields hitherto little trodden, and on questions hitherto little studied, might apparently produce, or really produce, for the time, only contradictory and destructive theories. Yet, in God's good time it would assuredly bring about unity and peace, and minister to faith and virtue, as it had done in fields already traversed, and in regard to questions not settled. Christian unity also tended to uniformity of worship; but it did not follow that the one was at all dependent on the other, because in his opinion there was not one divinely given form of worship for all men in all circumstances. The same had to be said about oneness of ecclesiastical government or polity, and in this connection he indicated the opinion that unions of Churches must be grown into, and not striven for, and that a Universal Church was as grandiose and diseased a dream as was a universal empire.

A PUBLIC RECEPTION

took place in the Industrial Museum in the evening, when about 5,000 persons were present. Addresses of welcome were delivered by the Lord Provost, Lord Balfour of Burleigh, and the Rev. Dr. Blaikie. The address of Lord Balfour was one of great beauty and power. He thought the number of delegates and associates who were present, and who,

he understood, represented more than 20,000 congregations of Presbyterians scattered all over the world, formed a striking proof of the life and vigor which existed in Presbyterianism at the present day, and he believed he was not wrong in thinking that is also bore ample testimony to a bond of sympathy which existed between the Scotch and the other Churches represented, and which he considered to have been engendered entirely through their united adherence to the forms of Presbyterian Government. It had been objected to such a Council, and to the alliance they proposed to form, that no practical good could arise from it, because no permanent union was likely to ensue. But to that he replied that they did not seek an absolute union. If by union was meant a merging of the individuality of their respective Churches into one Pan-Presbyterian union he thought that they should at once say that such was nothing more than the mere dream of an enthusiast. They should probably all admit that the spirit of separation, which had been engendered by years of separate existence—it might be in different countries under different forms of civil government—could not be annihilated by a stroke of the pen; but what they hoped they could do by means of the Council was to encourage a greater spirit of unity, to establish a more loyal co-operation among the different branches of the great Presbyterian family, and to form a means of communication, and to hold conferences upon subjects in which they, as Presbyterians, were all interested, perhaps he might not say invidiously, to the exclusion of other members of the Christian Church. Another thing they desired was, that those barriers of mistrust and misunderstanding which were apt to rise among them should be broken down. Such being their common aim and end, he asked them to join with him in wishing that the Council, which had been commenced in order, might be continued in harmony and ended in