

Our second President was Rev. George P. Hays, D. D., of Denver, Colorado, the Moderator of General Assembly, north—a typical “Western American”—tall, slender, handsome, clever and humorous, a genius, in short, of surpassing versatility. Now he had the house convulsed with laughter, next wiping tears from their eyes, and again his voice was drowned in applause. A discussion ensued on the report of the committee on a consensus of the Reformed Confession, *i. e.*, the desirability or otherwise of defining in one statement the articles of belief of the various churches embraced in the Alliance. Dr. Cairns, the convener, held with the Scottish section of the committee that the advantages of such a step would be outweighed by the risks attending it. It might lead to serious complications. Dr. Story deprecated the idea of reconstructing in any shape or form these formulas. Principal MacVicar said that this body was not a council to determine the orthodoxy of any of the churches composing it. Dr. Schaff held that the Council had already been travelling in the direction of formulating such a consensus and that they should not lose sight of it so soon. Principal Caven suggested that, without committing itself to all the reasonings of the report, “the Council hold it inexpedient at present to define the consensus.” This became substantially the verdict of the Council. Another lively discussion took place on the report of the committee on the Reception of Churches. Should the Cumberland Presbyterians be admitted into the Alliance? This is a body of 1,422 ministers with 115,749 communicants, and all the educational appliances of a well organized church. It was their third time of asking. Principal MacVicar moved the adoption of the report. Dr. Martin, of Kentucky, the champion of the ultra-conservative party in the Southern States, stoutly opposed the motion. Admitting the zeal, ability and piety of these men as a body, they should not be received. Their creed was not in harmony with the Westminster Confession of Faith. The Southern Church had twice rejected overtures for union from them, and since then they had, by revision, mutilated that venerable symbol. Principal Cairns poured oil on the troubled waters. Dr. Story would not follow the apologetic tone of some of the speakers. He would welcome these

brethren as having done what it was their highest prerogative to do, and looked forward to the time when all the churches of the Alliance would have the grace and wisdom to follow their example. But, apart from that, the Westminster Confession was not the symbol of the Alliance. Ex-provost Campbell of Greenock and Dr. Thomas Smith of the Free Church of Scotland counselled delay. Dr. Hall, pleading that charity that “beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things,” would admit them. The action of the Cumberlands in “expunging Westminsterism” from their standards was not endorsed by the Council, but they were admitted by a large majority.

A pleasant break in the proceedings took place when a deputation from the Irish Methodist Conference consisting of ten ministers and laymen ascended the platform. For a short time there was danger of the Council becoming a mutual admiration society. After the flattering words that fell from these brethren one almost expected to hear them apply to be received into the Alliance. As it was, they left no doubt in our minds as to our common faith, and reminded us that the motto of their Church was,—“The friends of all, and the enemies of none.”

There were sixty papers on the programme, and the most of them were read in whole or in part. Deducting the opening and closing days, the Sunday and holiday, that was at the rate of ten papers a day. Prodigious! Was it not? And yet, what would the Council be without these paper makers? It was their names and reputation that drew the crowd. Without them the Conference would possibly have degenerated into twaddle. Professor Charteris led off with a thoughtful paper on “the authority of Holy Scripture in the early Christian Church.” Dr. Hodge read from a printed document selections on the same topic. Two papers followed on Biblical Criticism, one by Dr. T. W. Chambers of New York, the other by Professor Gautier of Lausanne, a young man of striking appearance. Dr. Matheson of Inellan, who is blind, spoke with great power and animation on “The Religious bearings of the doctrine of Evolution,” and resumed his seat amid a storm of applause. Dr. Blaikie surveyed the whole family of Presbyterian Churches. “Lessons from other Churches” was the subject of Rev.