

## Review of the Times.

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The assembling of the Evangelical Alliance in Montreal this year, is an event which cannot fail to be fraught with good. Such conferences, even if there is only a small residuum of intellectual benefit, have a powerful moral and spiritual influence; and, certainly, such forces are not to be despised in these days of semi-scepticism and open unbelief. The grand argument for Christianity is its moral and spiritual power. When the natural barriers of selfishness and exclusiveness, not to say bigotry, are broken down, and men of different habitudes, of diverse education, of opposite temperaments, and, in many respects, of widely diverse views, are brought to feel together as of one heart and one soul, a sure demonstration is afforded that a force mightier than any mere natural sympathy is at work. It was from a profound and perfect knowledge of what was "in man," that the Divine Saviour connected the conversion of the unbelieving with the unity of His people. "That they all may be one," is, "that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." "See how these Christians love one another," is an argument from fact and experience, which will develop a far more powerful conviction than any examination of outward evidences.

Such gatherings, then, as Conventions of Young Men's Christian Associations and Conferences of the Evangelical Alliance, are of far more value than might be apparent at first sight. They bring Christians of different theological schools to pray and sing psalms together, and, ere-long, these all find themselves "speaking one language." The confusion of tongues that scattered mankind at Babel is reversed. They find themselves one by a deeper unity than any they had imagined. In the real

heart and essence of religion, that, namely, which concerns each man's relation to and dependence upon his God, they find themselves, not merely wonderfully alike, but absolutely identical. But the intellectual value of such a conference as that recently held in this city is very great. As Christianity is not only a religion, but a system of philosophy, it has an intellectual aspect which claims attention, as well as its spiritual developments. Such papers, therefore, as those of Mr. Fraser's, on "The Relation of Art to Christianity;" Mr. Grant's, on "The Church of the Future;" with others that need not be mentioned particularly, are extremely valuable as tending to bring about a unity of thought on topics, which, when looked at from the narrow standing ground of our diverse denominationalisms, are apt to provoke sectarian disputes. Every age develops new issues, and new lines of thought, and contention.

The old truth of the revealed Word is as ever it was. The foundation of the Lord standeth sure. But everything human in religious belief is being sifted and tested, both speculatively and practically; and no greater service can be rendered to truth than such a sifting. It is no less true of Christ's truth in a written form, than of His personal presence, that His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor. During such a process the chaff of human fancies flies away, but the wheat of Divine truth remains. It is well, then, that brethren of diverse churches, all holding the same fundamentals, should often compare views on the current topics of the time, and on the many-sided subjects of religious speculation. The Conference at New York, last year, gave rise to a remarkable variety of able