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THE NATIONAL COUNCIL'S DOCTRINAL BASIS.

We commend to the special attention of our readers the article of Professor Bartlett, which we copy from the *Advance* of the 18th January. It is a historical document of no slight importance.

Ever since the meeting of the Council, the *Advance* has been jubilant over the "New Departure" of the Congregational body in the United States, contending that the doctrinal basis there adopted put Calvinists and Arminians on an equal footing. The basis was so understood and commented on by the organs of other denominations. But Dr. Bartlett's argument seems to knock all this on the head, and make us ask again: Where are we?

Having been present at the Council, and followed the whole debate with the closest interest, we will give our own impressions at the time. They were, first, "This is rather indefinite; there seems a bit for either wing of the body,—'Evangelical Doctrines' for the Liberals, 'Early Times' and 'former general councils'—for the Conservatives." Dr. Bartlett spoke of it as probably not wholly satisfactory to either side, yet such a statement as had been agreed to all round. We thought to ourselves, "Surely, this will not pass unquestioned." But to our amazement, not a man rose or opened his mouth! We could not understand it. But now all is explained. The adherents of the old confessions regarded these as sufficiently recognized, while the advocates of wider "comprehensiveness" could understand the general reference to the ancient documents, as suited themselves.

It is not a satisfactory state of things. But the fact is, that this creed-making is about the most difficult business under the sun. And on this occasion, the brethren assembled were satisfied with one another, and had no heresy to condemn. The great cry was, "Don't let us waste time over doctrinal statements, when we have so much to do. To work! to work!" They were glad to get rid of the question, and to hasten to practical matters.

We expect that the local councils and associations will continue to do as they