

ence but what may be treated by millennarians with solemn and impressive effect. There can be little doubt that good must come from such discussions. Such a Conference is in itself a grand testimony to the system of doctrine which is received for man's salvation. It is a proclamation of God's almighty power to save. It gives voice to the Saviour's loving and entreating invitation: "Come unto Me."

### THE CONFERENCE AND THE LAPSED MASSES.

WE have received a well-written letter from a person into whose hands had accidentally fallen a copy of the CANADA PRESBYTERIAN in which we published two articles upon the above subjects. The letter, which is too long for insertion professes to come from one of the lapsed masses. The writer takes us to task for saying that the Conference was a "pronounced success," when we had to refer in terms of sorrow to the interruption given by Dr. Potts to the remarks of Mr. Denovan. He quotes our remarks about a Christian Conference being only possible when persons of different views agree to suppress these and to occupy the same platform of the vast amount of truth which they hold in common. He gives as his reason for being one of the lapsed masses, that the Churches are so divided. He puts a case very well in reference to our remark that if every Christian were an Andrew bringing a Peter to Christ, solid inroad would soon be made upon the lapsed masses, by saying that if there were only one Andrew to bring a Peter it would be all very well, but there are six Andrews setting upon Peter all at once, and each saying, "Come with me and I will show you the truth."

We wish to do our correspondent the fullest justice, and to endeavor to aid him in seeing that there may be a difference of view as to the science of religion, while those thus disagreeing are united upon the art of religion. For example, half-a-dozen medical men are called in council upon a case of complicated disease. Each gives his own diagnosis. One may say it is disease of the heart, another of the lungs, another of the circulation, and so on. These different views do not necessarily oppose one another. For it is well known that one of these organs may involve the neighboring ones. But this does not prevent these physicians from uniting in doing their utmost to save the life of the patient. Or again, scientists may entertain different theories as to the constitution and purpose of globules of blood. Each of them has his own view, but they agree to do their best for one who is suffering from stagnation of blood. There is common ground on which they can stand shoulder to shoulder, and without giving up his own theory or unnecessarily parading it, each is determined to unite with his brethren upon resorting to every expedient to meet the case. Consider for a moment the Evangelical Alliance, which unites the Protestant Christians of the world upon the basis of brotherly love. They agree upon the fundamental principal that man is a sinner, while they may have many views as to the origin of evil or the imputation of guilt. But they agree in this, that sin requires a remedy, and they are ready to point with equal earnestness to the Lamb of God which taketh away the

sin of the world. Again, upon the atoning work of Christ they are agreed, and yet each denomination represented in the Alliance may hold to a special theory of the atonement without infringing upon the brotherhood constituted by what they believe in common. Or again, they hold by different theories of Church government — one is Episcopal, another Presbyterian, another Baptist, and so on, but they agree to unite their forces in aggressive work upon the world and the devil. It would be fatal to such a union if every man were insisting upon his own view being adopted by all the rest as a necessary condition of union. What is wanted is to occupy common ground, to cultivate brotherly love, to be in throbbing sympathy with one another, and united effort will follow, to do what they all agree ought to be done. Or take the International Council that was recently held at Berlin. What would our correspondent say of Lord Beaconsfield if he had occupied valuable time in insisting upon the body thus constituted accepting the theory of the British limited monarchy, before proceeding to the special business for which it was convened, or of Count Bismarck demanding the endorsement of absolute monarchy as a necessary condition before they could proceed to questions relating to Turkey and Russia. The plenipotentiaries agree to differ in things that are non-essential to the matter on hand, and to proceed to the task of evolving such a treaty as would commend itself to the general sense. And so we think that a Christian Conference can be successfully held by those who entertain different views as to matters which, while essential in other relations, are non-essential in the circumstances. Perhaps Mr. Denovan erred in being too scientific in the treatment of his special theme, and we think it would have been well if others had followed the example of many, who in the presence of a felt joy and satisfaction at the thought of meeting their brethren on a common platform, were ready to overlook any divergence from their particular theory, and to join hand in hand in the discussion of questions of common interest and of great practical value to all the Churches.

We can assure our correspondent that there is a grand brotherhood of Christians in the midst of their many diversities. The Churches that were represented at the Conference hold by the one Saviour. They are not contradictory, although they may be opposites, to use a mathematical expression which our learned correspondent will appreciate. And we can safely say as representing the views of the many ministers of different denominations who were present, that not one of them would encourage the abortive plan of half-a-dozen Andrews going after the one Peter, in the manner and the spirit described. If the half-dozen Andrews went after the one Peter, it would be to point to the one Redeemer. There was a time, we grant, when much harm was done by endeavoring to convert a sinner rather to a Church than to Christ. There was a time when missionaries upon the same field thought proper to proclaim Churchism rather than the great salvation. They were earnest men, too. But all this has for the most part passed away. We take it upon ourselves to say that were a convicted sinner to go to Dr. Potts, to Dr. Castle, to Mr. Rains-

ford, to Mr. Dickson, or to Principal Caven, he would not hear a single word about Methodism, or Baptism, or Episcopalianism, or Independency, or Presbyterianism, from one or the other of those ministers. He would be led to the Saviour. He would be commended to the Word of God. Prayer similar in spirit and meaning would be offered for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the man would be left free to choose for himself the particular Church to which he might become attached. If he were, after conversion, to ask advice of any one of these ministers as to the important matters of doctrine and Church government, each would doubtless do his best to enlighten him from his own point of view. But the one all-predominating purpose of every faithful minister would be to have the person safely in the ark of the covenant. And it is upon this understanding that we welcome such a Conference as that which was so recently held in Toronto.

### NOTES FROM NEW YORK.

New York society has been thrown into even a greater flutter of excitement at the prospect of the promised sermons of Dr. Talmage on "The Night Side of New York and Brooklyn Life," than over the visit of Dean Stanley. Dr. Talmage announced his subject and plan of operation a week or two ago. He asked the favor of two policemen, and in the company of two of his elders he made an inspection of the "haunts of iniquity" and dens of vice in the city. He has taken copious notes and has made a thorough investigation of not only the shadows, but the black realities of city life. As he said, his task was before him, and he intended to plough the field from fence to fence, leaving not a clod unturned.

As the first sermon of the course was announced for Sabbath 13th, crowds early turned their steps toward Brooklyn Tabernacle. At least two hours before the time for service there were numbers, enough for several ordinary congregations, waiting at the gates. On the doors being opened the spacious building was soon filled to overflowing, filling the street from sidewalk to sidewalk. The Tabernacle comfortably seats 5,800, but, with the aisles and vestibules filled, it is estimated that Mr. Talmage yesterday preached to upwards of seven thousand people and even then hundreds had to turn away.

The text chosen was Ezek. viii. 8, 9, 10: "Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall: and when I had digged in the wall, behold a door. And he said unto me, go in and behold the wicked abominations that they do here. So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things and abominable beasts." This he took as the charter for his course of action, on account of which he has been and is being severely criticised, in some cases by vile cartoons.

It cannot be denied that Talmage has his faults. Some people would have their feelings hurt at the laughter and applause which a few of his remarks elicited from part of his audience; others would object to his manner of "putting things;" while others will honestly mourn at his present course of action; yet he is actuated by the purest motives, and the noblest ambition to rescue multitudes from the blighting grasp of these dens of iniquity. He has taken the course which he conceives to be the most effectual, and that in face of the bitterest criticism, and with a determination, a power of will, and Christian zeal which should call forth the commendation rather than the criticism of his Christian brethren; which should elicit their sympathy rather than their opposition, their "God speed you, my brother," rather than raising their hands in holy horror, with their timorous cry of danger. In speaking of the press, Dr. Talmage said he owed it a great debt, for it afforded him a weekly audience of three millions of people, and so he was willing to stand their abuse. The course is to consist of a series of Sabbath morning sermons, giving the details of his investigations, without hiding the great iniquities, yet so as not to call a blush to the cheek of the purest-minded in the assembly, but to inflame the hearts of the righteous with words which will make their ears tingle, and rescue ten thousand of men from going down to death.