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Notes of the Week.

RECENTLY the Free Church General Assembly's Committee on the Revision of the Confession of Faith remitted to a sub-committee to select matters from the Confession of Faith which might be made the subject of a Declaratory Act. The sub-committee met in the Free Church offices and selected certain doctrines which, it is said, will probably be sufficient to occupy the time of the committee till the General Assembly meets. There is no intention whatever of hurrying through the work, and it is stated on good authority that about two years will pass before the Declaratory Act can be formally presented to the General Assembly.

THE *Sunday School Times* in a recent issue contains the following notice: A word from Mr. Gladstone, on any subject that is of interest to him, is sure of a welcome from Americans generally. But when Mr. Gladstone writes concerning the Book of books, an added interest attaches to his words in the minds of all. The first of a series of articles on the Bible, from his pen, now appears in these pages. Other articles in the series are to be given at intervals of a month. These articles are, by special arrangement with their writer, to appear on the same day in the *Sunday School Times* in this country and in *Good Words* in London.

WITH a view to interesting the young in humane work, the Toronto Humane Society has decided to offer \$100 in prizes to the school children of the city for compositions on the following subjects: 1. The duty of kindness to animals; 2. Why birds and their nests should be protected. All children under sixteen years of age are invited to write on these subjects and send in their efforts to the Society's office, 103 Bay Street, before the end of June. The compositions should be plainly written on one side of the paper, and should not be longer than two pages of foolscap. It is hoped that many young people will write on the above subjects, and secure one of the Society's prizes.

THE Irish Presbyterians are making great efforts to improve the musical portion of divine worship throughout the bounds of their Church. Their Psalmody Committee have insisted that the divinity students shall attend a class for practical and theoretical instruction in Church music. The rule rendering this attendance compulsory was passed a year ago, and a licentiate of the Church, the Rev. George Bell, M.A., who is a doctor in music of Trinity College, Dublin, was appointed to superintend the classes in Belfast and Derry. The result this session has been most encouraging. The students have developed a considerable amount of musical ability, and it is to be expected that, as a singing ministry, they will produce singing congregations. A searching examination in practice and theory was held at Belfast.

WE are told on good authority, says the *British Weekly*, that the congregationalists of London are likely to make a strong effort to secure the Rev. John McNeill permanently for one of their largest chapels. Four Sunday afternoon services at Westminster Chapel has shown them that "there is a lad here" who can not only feed, but gather the thousands to be fed, even at an untimely hour on Sundays. The man who drew the crowds in Scotland has proved that he can do so in London, and it is evident that the staid Presbyterians of London must move on, and give more room than Regent Square Church can afford, or other churches will. Probably the Sunday afternoon services being arranged for Mr. McNeill, to be held in the Holborn Central Hall, commencing April 13, may be the forward movement towards the future North London Tabernacle. Surely the Presbyterians will not allow a great opportunity to slip out of their hands.

THE College Committee of the Free Church met in Edinburgh for the purpose of resuming the adjourned consideration of the report drawn up by the sub-committee, which was recently appointed with reference to the case of Professor Dods. There was a large attendance of members, and the chair

was occupied by the Rev. Dr. Laughton, Greenock, who has been appointed to act as Convener in consequence of the death of the Rev. A. Cusin. The sub-committee's report, it is understood, was mainly devoted to explaining the bearings of the whole case, and focussing its essential points so as to facilitate further discussion and procedure. It was very fully gone into in the course of a sitting which lasted over an hour and a half, and the result ultimately arrived at was that it was remitted to Dr. Laughton to bring up a draft report on the whole matter for presentation to the approaching General Assembly. This draft report was to be considered by a meeting of committee to be held on the 15th inst., and as then adjusted, it will become the deliverance of the committee to the Supreme Court.

AN address, says an English contemporary, has been privately issued to Christian ministers urging them to deal with the moral relations between the sexes. It is signed by the Revs. S. A. Barnett, of Whitechapel, W. Benham, B.D., C. A. Berry, Stopford Brooke, R. Bullen, R. Lant Carpenter, Dr. John Clifford, W. J. Dawson, Dr. Marcus Dods, J. W. Horsley, J. S. Jones, Dr. Alexander McLaren, Mark Guy Pearse, and John Presland. The address says: "We are emboldened to approach you on the subject of the moral relations between the sexes, by the earnestness of our conviction that the need of to-day is for brave speech and careful removal of ignorance. We know well how natural is the disposition to shrink from openly dealing with this solemn question; we can deeply sympathise with the doubts of spiritually-minded men who are afraid of aggravating the evil by calling attention to it. But we are convinced that there is a method of dealing plainly with this subject without soiling any youthful purity of heart, and that for the sake of numbers who are perishing for want of knowledge and timely guidance, the demand of God upon his servants is that they shall speak in the spirit of the prophets." The address concludes, "our duty is exhausted in urging upon our ministerial brethren a more prompt and active attention to the subject of sexual morals."

THE Prisoners' Aid Association is doing a most excellent work in a quiet and unostentatious way. It is one that deserves most cordial support. It has a good account to give of itself. The annual meeting of the Association was held last week, and was presided over by Hon. S. H. Blake. At the meeting it was stated that in reply to a letter from the Secretary, Hon. Mr. Mowat wrote saying that it was intended to appoint a Commission of perhaps three persons on prison reform. They would be charged with the duty of collecting all information on the subject, in order to aid in any improvement that might be desirable or practicable. Mr. Blake in his address reviewed the history of the association from the time fifteen years ago, when a band of five Christian workers met to impart religious instruction at the gaol. They now had missions in the Central Prison, the Reformatory for Women and in the gaol, besides employing an agent who gives his time for the welfare of discharged prisoners. The following clause from the report gives a concise idea of the work accomplished during the past year: Total number discharged from the city prisons during the year ending December 31st, 1889, 2,292; the number assisted by the Society, 761; employment found for 181; provisions given to eighty-four families; thirty-two articles of furniture given; rent paid for fourteen; articles of clothing given, 226; forty assisted with tools; railroad fares to homes paid for thirty; loans to discharged prisoners, \$350.25; repaid during year, \$239.85. Special attention was called to the large amount of loans repaid. The following officers were elected: President, Hon. S. H. Blake. Vice-Presidents—W. H. Howland, Hon. Edward Blake, J. G. Hodgins, LL. D., John Hoskin, Q.C., E. A. Meredith, LL. D., W. B. McMurich, Sutherland Stayner, Clarke Gamble, A. Farley. Secretary, Samuel E. Roberts; Treasurer and Corresponding Secretary, A. M. Rosebrugh, M.D.; Assistant Treasurer, Edmund S. Roberts. Warden Massie, of the Central Prison, spoke of the faithfulness of the Christian workers and clergy who conducted the services in that institution. In the letters sent to relatives, the prisoners expressed their

appreciation of the efforts made for their spiritual welfare, and many had been led to take a more hopeful view of life. He moved a resolution, seconded by Mr. Robert Kilgour, bearing testimony to the excellent work performed by the Christian teachers in the various institutions.

FROM the Vancouver, B.C. *Daily World* we learn that the Rev. E. D. McLaren preached a telling and effective sermon on the Sabbath law. He gave four reasons for the keeping of the Sabbath: It is a divine institution, the law had an educative force; Sabbath desecration was always closely connected with other forms of wrong doing. The fourth reason for a Sabbath law was that it protected the weak from the grasping selfishness of the strong. He was glad to learn that the workmen of Vancouver recognized the fact and gave their support to a stringent Sabbath law introduced into Parliament by a Presbyterian elder. In the struggle, without the protection of the law, the weak will always go to the wall. He then spoke of the power exercised by corporations. It had been said that corporations had no souls, but it would be found that the members were individually responsible before the bar of judgment. He deprecated the running of street cars on Sunday, thereby compelling their employees to labour on the Lord's Day. The people were wrong in demanding these cars; those who asked for the cars became responsible for requiring their fellowmen to work on the Sabbath. It was claimed that Sunday street cars would give the poor equal advantages with the rich; but if begun, it would be the thin end of the wedge, which would lead to forcing those same poorer people to work on Sunday. Railway trains were run on Sunday, taking away from many of their employees the privileges of the Sabbath. This he thought was wholly unnecessary. The post-office, too, was kept open. What right, he asked, had the people to demand that these clerks work on the Sabbath? This work also was not required. The public would be highly indignant were a drygoods man or a hardware man to keep his place of business open and require his clerks to attend. What greater right has a corporate and powerful company to make this demand upon their employees, or the general public to expect certain of their servants to attend on them?

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Chicago Interior* gives the following description of the Mennonites in Manitoba: This peculiar people are followers of Simon Menno, who was born in 1496 and who died in Holstein in 1561. In the year 1780, after many wanderings and bitter persecutions in Germany, they accepted the invitation of Catherine II. to settle in southern Russia. The Russian Government gave them lands free from taxation for twenty years, with exemption from military service and freedom to worship God according to their own convictions. They were also provided with lumber for their houses and money and implements of agriculture to aid in commencing life in the land of their adoption. For protection against robbers and for schools and churches, they settled in villages, as their descendants still do in the British North-West. The favours granted by Catherine were continued eighty-five years. Then by a cruel edict they were required either to submit to military service or leave the Russian Empire. They determined to leave. Five years were granted them in which to sell their lands and clear out bag and baggage. In that time a great many Mennonites emigrated, some to the United States, others to Canada. July 23, 1873, Henry Wiebe and Jacob Peters secured a grant of a reserve in Manitoba from the Dominion Government at Ottawa. The area of this reserve is forty-eight miles by eighteen, the finest wheatlands in Manitoba. In 1875 the colonists came from "Rushland," and settled upon it. In that year they had ten villages. This year, 1890, they occupy fifty villages west of the Red River. They number 6,000 souls. To help them emigrate and settle, the Dominion Government loaned them \$100,000 for ten years at six per cent. This large amount was all repaid in 1889. The Rev. C. Pochlman, a German brother from Schleswig-Holstein, in Europe, and more recently from Mount Forest, in Ontario, is at present engaged in evangelistic work among these Mennonites in Manitoba.