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Toronto, Jan 13, 1898

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

While the negotiations for Union between the Free and United Presbyterian Churches of Scotland are moving through official channels, congregations in Scotland are taking the questions into their own hands. Four unions between congregations in Aberdeenshire are about to be consummated, and one, between two congregations in mid-Scotland is in progress. These unions are hailed with satisfaction by all concerned as indicating the popular feeling with respect to the larger question of union all along the line, which while progressing with cautious step is being regarded as a certainty in the near future.

Glasgow was recently the scene of a Sabbath observance struggle in which the thread-bare arguments so familiar to Torontonians were plied with unction if not with success. The question was the opening of the People's Palace on the Sabbath Day, and the City Council had to decide. To the credit of the Scottish Commercial Metropolis, a very decisive vote was given against the proposal to open the Palace, and the controversy proved the fact that the old love for the Sabbath is still a strong, and active principle in Scottish life.

In two respects, the *Independent* admits, the Raines Liquor Law to be a success. It reduces the number of saloons and increases the revenue from it. Professor Brown incidentally states, in his article on the Union Settlement, that under the new law the number of saloons in the district embraced by the Settlement has decreased one-third. According to statistics given out by the State Commissioner there were 22,957 licenses in the last year under the old law, and 15,989 under the new law the present year, while the revenue has increased from \$2,590,743 to \$5,941,744. The reduction of the number

of saloons must be accounted a real gain for temperance; the increase of revenue is a matter of comparatively small importance.

We extend hearty congratulations to our contemporary, the *Presbyterian Witness*, Halifax, on attaining fifty years of publication. It was first issued on the first Saturday of 1848, having been founded by James Barnes, father of the present proprietor. Mr. Murray, the respected and able editor, has occupied the editorial chair since 1858, a truly unique record. During its long record the *Witness* has been of immense value to the church and to the cause of truth generally, and at fifty the paper is more vigorous, fresh and interesting than at any time of its half century. Long may its bow abide in strength.

The programme has been completed for the Knox College Alumni Conference, which will be held from Monday, January 31st, to Friday, February 4th. A wide range of topics will be discussed. The speakers who will open the discussion will be the Rev. Principal Caven, the Rev. D. McGillivray, the Rev. G. Hanna, the Rev. D. McKenzie, the Rev. W. Frizzell, the Rev. J. McP. Scott, Prof. McCurdy, the Rev. D. Y. Ross, the Rev. R. H. Horne, the Rev. R. G. Murison, the Rev. Prof. Robinson, the Rev. W. R. McIntosh, the Rev. Dr. Laing, the Rev. D. McTavish, the Rev. A. McMillan, the Rev. M. P. Talling, the Rev. J. McNair, the Rev. A. McWilliams, the Rev. Dr. Cochrane, and the Rev. Dr. Somerville.

Dr. Crafts' addresses in connection with the Sabbath Observance movement have been greatly appreciated. His visit at a time when legislation is under consideration has been opportune and helpful. With his arguments our readers are familiar, but Dr. Crafts' presentation was forceful and fresh. He held that Sabbath breaking by the better class of people was largely the result of thoughtlessness, and grew by habit. What Canadians needed, he said, was an arrest of thought. He had been told that Sunday street cars in Hamilton and Toronto did not pay, and he looked upon the present struggle as a tug-of-war between the purse of the company and the conscience of the people. He hoped Toronto would redeem itself; its fall had been a blow to Christianity the world over. Five years ago in the United States few clergymen spoke against Sunday cars; now they almost all declared the Sunday trolley and Sunday cycle to be the greatest existing menace to morality and religion. He spoke of the rapid increase of Sabbath desecration wherever it had started. The trinity of the holiday Sunday was drink, lust, and Sabbath breaking. Canada was just beginning; now was the time to check it.

Discussing the question of the "Supreme authority" and "how we shall certainly know God's will," the *Independent* says: First and most important, we must assume that what God has put into the constitution of things and into the constitution of our own souls is the utterance of His voice. If we find it