

United Presbyterian and the Free Churches. As far as spiritual objects are concerned, there is no occasion for this union. At present there is nothing to hinder their joining in any plan to advance the interests of Christ's kingdom, and while separate each can act with more freedom and effect than if obliged to conform to the instructions of the ruling spirits among them. Some may imagine that if united they would hold a higher and more powerful position, and be more useful. I greatly doubt their increased usefulness in spiritual matters; but, to be sure, when acting with combined power, they would be far more formidable in social and political affairs. Don't delude yourselves with the idea that they would never condescend to come down from the high altitude of the spiritual to the lower regions of the earthly. We have had some small experience of this already. Scotch Members of Parliament have received the mandates of an ecclesiastical combination, embracing leading men in different churches, threatening them that, if they did not vote and act according to their dictation, they would take measures to have them turned out of office at next election. I have heard, though I don't know whether it is true or not—I hope it is not—that there is an agitation in our own body in England for the purpose of preventing the election of every candidate who will not support the Voluntary principle. This is just an indication of the ecclesiastical spirit, though it will be less formidable among independent churches, where each can only answer for itself, than if it were the utterance of a court representing two or three thousand churches. But as long as the Christian Church is sufficiently subdivided, none of its sections will be very formidable as a worldly power, while each will have full scope for the exercise of their functions in their proper sphere. We have reason to bless God that the truths of the Gospel are as purely preached in other denominations as in ours; nevertheless we hold that it is advantageous to all sections of the Church that Congregationalism should be maintained and supported. When some powerful proprietors have endeavoured to appropriate an open common belonging to the public, we have admired the patriotism of those who have struggled manfully and successfully for its being kept open for the benefit of the inhabitants, that they may enjoy the blessings of free air and healthful recreation. By the efforts of the Union formed this day, I hope that the healthy common of Independency will be kept open in Glasgow, and that not only those who are immediately connected with it, but that the community at large will derive much benefit from the purity of its atmosphere, and the excitement it affords to wholesome exercise, and the free use of their reasoning and moral powers.

Trans-Atlantic Retrospect.

Christmas and the New Year bring with them but little religious and ecclesiastical intelligence. Parliament is not sitting; there are no public meetings of importance; and the newspapers complain that they find difficulty in filling their columns. There is nothing to record of much interest to our readers. The Liberation Society and the Church Defence Society are each organizing their forces and gathering their strength for the next Parliamentary campaign: the one determined, earnest and confident of success; the other jubilant over the reaction of the past year or two, and anticipating its