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C. BLACKETT ROBINSON,
Manager and Editor.

THE REV. ROBERT V. MCKIBBIN, M.A., has been appointed Special Representative and Field Correspondent of THE DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN; and we commend him to the kind offices of ministers and members.

Ottawa, Wednesday, 21st Nov., 1900.

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We notice that Presbyteries are beginning to discuss the constitutional question of granting increased power to Synods. We would respectfully bespeak for this question a most careful consideration. The Synod has come to be considered a cumbersome fifth wheel to the church car. It does little more than guide measures on their way to the Assembly. It issues few measures, it originates still fewer. This one of increasing the powers of the Synods originated in the Synod, it is true, but had so little vitality when born there that it has been resting under the table unnoticed for years. Now that it has reached Presbyteries it is to be hoped that exercise will develop strength, and that it will reach the Assembly in June next, full grown and lusty.

The Synod of Manitoba met in Winnipeg last week. There was a good attendance of members, and the business transacted was important. The Synod of the Maritime Provinces held its meeting a few weeks ago, and had also a good attendance, and an interest in the business beyond that secured by many of the Synods that meet in May. When the meeting of the Superior Court is but one month off, and many of the members of Synod are already making their arrangements to be present at the Assembly, they are not likely to take much interest in meetings that do little more than pass on business to the higher court. Would it not be well to consider, with the Remit on increasing the powers of the Synod, the question of appointing the meetings for the fall of the year instead of crowding them into the spring and just before the meetings of the Assembly. The autumn meeting would afford an excellent opportunity for the fall conference that many presbyteries recognize as a helpful adjunct to the ordinary business sederunt.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE BIBLE.

Perhaps our title ought to have been "Ignorance of the Bible" for that is, at present, the cause of much complaint. All impartial thinkers admit that the English Bible of 1611 has had a tremendous influence on the literature and life of English speaking people. Our great poets and orators weave allusions to its histories and incidents into their finest passages. Yet we are told that intelligent young students of our own time do not understand these allusions, and in fact would have as much difficulty in explaining them as if they referred to the more out of the way points of ancient Greek mythology. As a result of a recent examination in an American college, "a Christian college" that "out of 85 no less than forty knew nothing about the story of Esau or that of Ruth, or the name of Cain; 75 did not remember ever hearing of Hezekiah and his sward on the dial, and 66 confessed their ignorance of Jonah and his gourd. One said that Joseph of Arimethea was the father of Christ, and wore a coat of many colors!"

And yet we must confess that in a sense there never was greater interest in the Bible, as an ancient literature and a sacred book; it is published in all kinds of editions and subject to the most varied treatment. What is the cause, then, of this ignorance, and how is it to be remedied? Some tell us that the scepticism and the higher criticism is the cause of this woeful ignorance. We question, however, whether that gets to the bottom of the matter. There was scepticism and criticism during the last century, of a rougher kind and more of it; but Christian people knew their Bibles, and children in Christian households were taught to revere the book of books. Now what is needed to give a real knowledge of the Bible is a loving reading of it in youthful days, at an age when critical theorizing has no place. Those who know the Bible best are as a rule those who read it with interest when they were children. In that way its wonderful histories become a treasured possession and many of its most stirring sayings are fixed in the memory. This is the testimony that would be given by an orator, such as John Bright; a master prose writer, like Ruskin; or a great poet, as Tennyson. If this is so in dealing with ignorance of the Bible we must go a long way back and fix upon the home as the place, where and the earliest years of life as the time when the remedy should be applied. The Sunday school, imperfect as it often is, does something, does in fact a great deal, but it cannot do all. By all means let us have more teaching of the Bible in schools and colleges; but let us remember that if the Bible is to retain its power as a living literature it must begin its influence over us in our earliest years.

It may seem a strange thing to say but children have too many helps, and too many books of a light kind, and the Bible is in danger of being crowded out at a time when it can wield tremendous power. Those who love the Bible in their youth have obtained one of the strongest protections against scepticism; and those who are familiar with the noble English version will be the better prepared to appreciate the best results of critical study. We trust that in the new

century parents will seek to interest their children more in the old book, that it may be not only the preacher's text book, but also the book of the people.

THE LORD'S DAY ALLIANCE,

The secular papers, in reporting the recent Convention of the Lord's Day Alliance, take occasion to express themselves pretty freely upon the aims and accomplishments of the Alliance. It is quite evident that some of the articles are not inspired by friendliness to the object for which the Alliance exists. It is misrepresented and made to appear as if it menaced public liberty. On the contrary the object of the Alliance is to safeguard public liberty.

The employee of a corporation that does not respect the Lord's Day is not free. He is magnanimously told that his religious scruples will be respected in the matter of Sunday labor, and with public opinion as it is doubtless they will be. But if it comes to a choice between the man and another who has no religious scruples about working on Sunday the latter will win every time. This man's penchant for keeping Sunday as the employer considers it, will stand in his way of securing the place. Men know this, and are influenced by it.

The Alliance is made to appear as if it were forcing its peculiar way of keeping the Sabbath upon the community. Since moral suasion is powerless to make men go to church, or to prevent men from spending the Sabbath in a manner that the members of the Alliance deem sinful, the strong arm of the law is invoked to force men to go to Church or to refrain from sinful practices. Nothing could be more absurd than this presentation of the aims of the Alliance, unless it be the avidity with which people accept it as true. The Alliance has no desire to force people to go to Church. It does not concern itself with Church attendance at all. It aims to secure for all men the day of rest from enforced toil, and thus secure for the Christian workman the liberty to worship which he so much desires.

Men have not at present this liberty. We have personal knowledge of a score of men who would fain have their Sabbaths for worship but who are forced by an unscrupulous corporation to go to work on the Lord's Day. It is said that they do not need to remain in the employ of such a corporation! Why should any Christian workman be forced to give up his position because an employer demands his services on the Lord's Day? He is presumably protected by the Lord's Day Act! Why should any body of men be vilified by the press because they seek to secure the rights of Christian workmen to their day of freedom from toil that it may be given to the worship of God?

It is easy to point the scornful finger and cry "Fanatic"! Is it worthy of that part of our secular press that is considered above purchase? A section of the press is purely mercenary, and will take up the cry of any man or body of men whose pay is liberal or whose patronage