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The Rev. ROBERT V. MCKIRKIN, 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, 1st Aug., 1900.

CONCERNING "USE AND WONT."

If, in any of our Church Courts, a good precedent can be cited for a proposed course of action, the member who has introduced it is fairly sure of carrying his measure through. If, on the other hand, a radical member introduces a measure which looks to the setting aside of a long-established custom, though the measure may commend itself to the good judgment of the majority of his fellow-members, it will not carry at first. We are at heart conservative, especially in matters bearing upon Church government and procedure. We hate to leave the beaten track and strike out upon a new trail.

A minister is curiously conscious of this conservative strain in his make-up when he contemplates some departure from established custom in the order of service, or in his mode of conducting his pastoral work. He may be convinced that the new method would be most beneficial, even that it is all but necessary in the condition about him, yet he cannot bring himself to inaugurate it. It is not altogether that he fears the conservatism of his elders or of the rest of his congregation. Something within himself responds to the appeal to observe use and wont, and to beware of innovations.

Some odd illustrations of this have come to light in connection with the introduction of the outdoor Sabbath evening service in many cities of the United States. Several of the ministers who have taken to the outdoor services would never be charged with conservatism, and yet it has been after a more or less prolonged struggle that they have adopted the outdoor preaching. When away from their home field, assisting a brother who had broken away from use and wont to the extent of holding the outdoor evening service, they have been enthusiastic in their endorsement of it, and have determined to introduce it as soon as they reached home again. But when the familiar atmosphere of the home life was

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about them again, they have hesitated and delayed action, and only in a few cases have they put their determination into practice.

Doubtless this natural conservatism has saved the Church from the introduction of many foolish innovations. But we believe it has also hampered the Church in her effort to overtake her legitimate work. There is more work than can be done by the old methods. There is more work to be done in a congregation than a single minister, unassisted, can undertake. The congregation cannot, in the majority of instances, afford to provide an assistant pastor. But in every congregation there are good women who can do much of the pastoral work, sick visiting, ministering to the poor, talking to the burdened and heartening them up, quite as well as an assistant pastor of limited experience could do. Why should we not make use of this body of helpers who stand in the marketplace waiting? It is not use and wont to engage the women in pastoral service! Isn't it about time we rose superior to the bondage of "use and wont?"

The deadly peril of our missionaries in China has lain heavily upon the hearts of the people of Canada during the past fortnight. Not only in the homes of those whose sons and daughters are in danger has earnest prayer risen for the preservation of those who are representing the Church in China, but from every Christian home and from every Christian heart prayer has gone up that their lives might be spared. And all this has drawn us nearer to God, and made us realize to a greater degree than before how weak we are, and how omnipotent He is. Surely we shall not need to be taught to trust Him with such patient persistency in the future!

THE LATE PROFESSOR MOWAT.

The Rev. Dr. J. B. Mowat, Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Exegesis, who recently passed to his well-earned rest, had given to the Presbyterian Church of Canada fifty years of faithful service. On the first of May last he celebrated the jubilee of his ministry, and received the congratulations of a wide circle of friends. It was then hoped that as his academic labors had been somewhat lightened he would still have several years of useful and comparatively restful life. But Providence has ordered things differently, and while a faithful servant has been called to "the rest that remaineth for the people of God" our sympathy goes out towards those who have been bereaved. He himself remarked at the jubilee meeting that there was no particular merit in a man living through a long term of years; perhaps the merit belonged rather to his parents in having given him a good constitution. In that remark the Doctor displayed his usual modesty, but had to modify the original statement so far as to admit that a man might be commended for retaining the regular and temperate habits which tend to preserve health.

We wish to say now that the great merit is not in living long, but in living well; and

that the late Dr. Mowat's life was in its own way a life of true nobility. Its characteristic feature was its gentleness. Going quietly to each day's duty. Taking to himself the opportunities of each new week he accomplished much, and in many ways. At one time in the history of the college he had to deal with a variety of subjects, but he entered upon all his work with a spirit of devotion to the best interests of his students. He was not showy in his style but possessed a quiet, impressive power which kindled the affection of those who came into close contact with him. His work must now pass into other hands; but his memory will long remain as a sacred possession and blessed inspiration to those who worked with him. He was ever willing to help his brethren and to minister to the needs of the sick and sorrowful. Being dead he yet speaketh. In this fretful, fussy age he teaches us the great lesson that the divine blessing rests upon a life of quiet, faithful service.

It is unfortunate when the spirit of criticism warps a good man's judgment. The following criticism of Dr. McGiffert, which appeared in an American religious paper, is surely born of a desire to find fault:

Dr. McGiffert, in a sermon preached in Madison Square Presbyterian church, June 3, is reported as saying: "There is too much thought about conduct, too little thought about character; too much effort to copy Christ's deeds, too little of the effort to possess His Spirit; too much imitation and too little following." We can only know by a man's conduct what his character is. Most of us, Dr. McGiffert included, do not sufficiently possess the Master's spirit, but none of us imitate Him too much. When one undertakes to decry all creeds, even the one he vowed to uphold and defend, it is not surprising that he speaks foolishly. Think of this coming from the pulpit once occupied by Dr. William Adams!

Had this been spoken by Dr. McGiffert under an assumed name, it would have been quoted and commended.

CHINA.

During the past few weeks China has bulked largely in the thought of the world. Though the war in South Africa was by no means ended, it was so to speak shifted from the prominent place it had so long held on the world's stage, and the great unwieldy Chinese Empire took its place. Men's minds were everywhere full of anxiety. The despairing cry for help came; then the connections were cut and there was no news; and instead of definite information, conflicting rumor and wild suspicion. It is likely that it will be some time before we shall know what really has taken place; and there are no doubt many dark things the details of which will never be fully revealed. We already know enough, however, to be able to say that this is no mere palace intrigue, or local revolt; it is a great crisis in the history of China, and of the world. It is a thing also of absorbing interest for the church. Many missionaries have been sacrificed and others are in deadly peril. The thoughts and prayers of earnest Christians are at this time directed towards that strange, populous land, where so many noble men and gentle women