

away by the exploding dynamite and never return. So it is in this type of revival, while some by its means may be roused, there is reason to fear that others are hardened, while others again are disgusted and driven away by the coarse illustrations or slang phrases so frequently employed to sustain the interest or rouse the emotions. In all such cases, where the feelings alone are appealed to, there is sure to be a reaction, sensuous excitement is mistaken for religious feeling, nervous prostration for spiritual power, conviction for conversion. There follows a constant craving for spiced food and a consequent disrelish for solid nourishment, the ordinary means of grace are depreciated and the congregation sinks into a state of lethargy from which it becomes more and more difficult to rouse it.

But how, it may be asked, may these abuses be prevented? We need, in the first place, we reply, to get rid of the idea that revivals can be "gotten up." We should watch for the leadings of Providence, for manifestations of the presence of God's Spirit and we observe such, at once seek to put ourselves in a line with them. A revival should begin from within, and not from without. It should not be "gotten up", but gotten down. Each congregation has the means for a revival within itself. It has the privilege of prayer—free access to the throne of heavenly grace, a throne ever open to the earnest suppliant, it has the quickening spirit ever present to energize the means employed, it has the ever-living Christ present "to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God through Him." There is no reason why every Sabbath service should not be a revival service and every means of grace a pipe through which life would constantly flow into the believer's heart. If each parent began with the revival of his own heart, the revival would soon extend to the members of his home, then, to the Church, and then, in ever widening circles to the community, and all would in some measure, share in the blessing received.

But another remedy for the abuses referred to, would be the employment, where deemed necessary, of well accredited evangelists or neighbouring pastors, who may have evangelistic gifts. We prefer the latter, because such pastors, from personal experience, will naturally be more in sympathy with a regular pastor's work, with his difficulties and trials, are more likely to be free from hobbies, and will be more apt in their addresses to preserve the balance of truth. Professional evangelists are very often hobbists, they emphasize certain aspects of the truth, to the depreciation of other aspects equally important, thus leading to distorted views and resulting in these wild extravagances which we associate with the sensuous type of revival. Very pertinent, on this subject, are the words of Dr. Arthur T. Pierson, who speaks from ripe experience and exclaims, "that if pastors need occasionally in their churches, the assistance of evangelists, in times of special religious interest, it might be well, if other pastors, having decidedly evangelistic qualifications, might come to the aid of their brethren at such times, and thus fill up the gap, leaving the professed evangelist free for the other and larger work among the neglectors of Christ and the Gospel. Such methods are largely followed in the Anglican Churches to-day. Such pastors might be known as "pastoral evangelists," coming to stand by the side of their brethren in the ministry, in full sympathy, with all the trials of a pastor's life, amenable to the same ecclesiastical jurisdiction and in assured sympathy as to doctrinal views and practical methods. In such cases, also, the reins would not be passed out of the pastor's hands. He would be still in the conduct of the affairs of his own Church, having another pastor at his side, as a temporary helper." Were these cautions observed, we believe, that the so-called abuses of revivals would seldom occur, the prejudice exhibited by some towards revivals, would disappear, with the objectionable features to which we have referred, revival services would fall

into their proper places along with the other means of grace, as helps for the conversion of sinners and the deepening and developing of the believer's life, when the circumstances of a congregation were such as to demand them, and our congregations would eventually reach such a healthy state, that less and less would such special efforts be needed to deepen their interest or quicken their life. This should be the ideal which we should ever keep before us. Our aim should be to keep our congregations in a constant state of revival, of vigorous, spiritual life, and to receive this, we need not so much new methods as the infusion of more life and energy into the methods we already have. We have lately read the statement made by an earnest and aged minister that he had taken particular notice of the fact that the Churches whose growth during fifty years was largest and most steady were those which never had an evangelist within their walls whose pastor was an Evangelist and educator at the same time. Of this we are convinced, that if the ordinary means were more diligently and faithfully employed, if pastors expected and taught their people to expect a perpetual blessing on the use of the means of grace, that a state of coldness and indifference would be exceptional, and our congregations would be kept in a constant state of revival so that few Sabbath services would be held, or sermons preached or Sabbath school lessons taught without being fruitful, if properly followed up, in the conversion of sinners and the revival of believers.

The Manse, Woodlands.

SYSTEMATIC BENEVOLENCE.

The following is the substance of the report on Systematic Benevolence presented to the Presbytery of Whitby, 17th January, by Rev. S. H. Eastman, B. A., Oshawa, Convener of Committee. It is now published by request of Presbytery.

The Assembly's Committee sent down to sessions five questions, the answers to which form the basis of the report.

1. The first question inquires by what system congregational funds are raised. Of the twenty separate congregations composing the thirteen charges of the Presbytery, six contribute by subscription, two by pew rents, and twelve by envelopes. One report mentions "socials" as a supplemental source of revenue, but adds that this method of raising funds is being discouraged, and the more excellent way of direct giving encouraged. This is in the right direction, while occasional social gatherings to promote Christian sociability are good, as a measure of raising money for the Lord's work, they ought not to be relied upon or resorted to by the church of Christ.

Another mentions — and mentions to condemn — "rent of horse sheds" as a source of revenue.

2. Payment of pastor's salary. Six pay half-yearly; nine, quarterly; and five monthly.

3. "Have any steps toward weekly giving been taken during the past year?" Twelve congregations say nothing new has been done. In two an effort has been made to introduce the system, and six report the weekly offering system as already in use.

There is progress in this respect. But it is to be regretted that a system simple, scriptural, and profitable — financially and spiritually — is not more generally adopted. The plain Bible rule is "On the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him a store as God has prospered him (I Cor. 16, 2.) In rural communities this would require a little forethought. But if giving from right motives is as truly an act of worship as praying is — and it is — God's people should be willing and anxious to exercise the forethought that they may engage in such worship "on the first day of the week" — of every week.

4. As to methods of contributing to the schemes of the church: In nine congregations collections are made annually in one, half-yearly; in three, quarterly; in two, seven times per year by envelopes; and in four monthly. One contributes by envelopes and subscriptions — frequency not mentioned.

This Presbytery has adopted and reaffirmed a recommendation, urging all the

congregations to contribute to the "schemes" monthly, either by envelope or collectors (with a canvass at the beginning of the year by elders or others, for promises of amounts to be given.) Only four congregations have as yet reached the standard recommended, while nine out of the twenty — or nearly half the whole — contribute only once annually to the vastly important work intended in the term "schemes of the church."

Some congregations may not yet see their way to monthly contributions to the "schemes," but surely all could give more than once a year; and if any interest awakened by missionary sermons, or addresses, or information is to bear fruit in increased offerings, the opportunity of contributing should be afforded as frequently as practicable.

5. Inquiries whether, and by what system, the Sabbath schools contribute to mission funds. Fourteen schools contribute — four by weekly offerings: three monthly: one quarterly: and five vote a sum annually from the funds raised during the year. Six schools contribute nothing to missions, but use their funds to provide help for teachers, and paper for pupils, etc. In pleasing contrast one report mentions that "the total offerings of the S. S. go to the schemes, the expenses of the school being met by a grant from the managers," an example that is heartily commended to other managers and congregations. It is of prime importance that the young should be imbued with the missionary spirit, and one of the means of developing a practical interest in missions is to encourage the S. S. children to give weekly — and as far as possible, out of their own earnings or savings — for the spread of the Gospel.

Let the congregation provide for the needs of the school, and this will be practicable.

The following recommendations were unanimously adopted:

1. That pastors continue to urge upon their people the importance and scripturalness of direct, frequent, systematic, and proportionate giving for the Lord's work — exchanging pulpits, if advisable, to further the object. Also to keep the people informed as to the work of the church, availing themselves, when practicable, of the services of missionaries, or other good "specialists."

2. That congregations which have not yet adopted the system of weekly offerings for the schemes of the church, be earnestly urged to take the steps in that direction.

3. That congregations be urged to provide for the needs of the Sabbath school and that earnest attention be given by sessions to the fostering of a missionary spirit in the young encouraging them to devote their weekly offerings in the S. S. to missions, organizing them into societies for the study and support of missions, and otherwise, as may be practicable.

4. Recommended again, "That the committee on Systematic Benevolence be authorized to arrange for the sending of a deputation to confer with congregations and office bearers in regard to the adoption of better methods than those now in use, wherever such visits may be desired.

5. That we again call the attention of the Assembly's committee on Systematic Benevolence to the desirability of using the press more largely to promote Systematic Benevolence, e. g., by occasional articles in the "Records" or church papers, by issuing leaflets occasionally on some phase of the subject, etc.

Meantime recommend our own sessions to take advantage of the generous offer of Mr. Thomas Kane, 310 Ashland Avenue, Chicago, to supply to applicants, free of charge, tracts on this subject.

Christian Endeavor.

TOPIC OF WEEK.

BY REV. W. S. M'AVISH, B.D., ST. GEORGE

JAN. 29.—(Christian Endeavor Day)—The day of small things. God's blessing upon it. Zech. iv, 10. Job viii, 5-7.

It was foretold by Daniel that the kingdom of Christ would be very small and insignificant in its beginning, but that it would ultimately become universal. The prophet saw that before the last of the four world powers, which were represented by the great image, had passed away, another kingdom would rise. So insignificant was this kingdom to be at first that it was represented by a stone cut without hands out of a mountain, but so widespread was it to be at last that the stone was represented as becoming a mountain, and filling the whole earth. Our Lord himself, in the parable of the Grain of Mustard-seed, indicated that though there would be nothing auspicious in the first establishment of His kingdom, its growth and development would be remarkable. And when we look at the history of the early Church, we can see how apt were the figures employed by the pro-

phet who foresaw the kingdom, and by the Saviour who came to establish it.

It was certainly the day of small things when Christ took leave of His disciples at Bethany and returned to His Father's home on high. Only 120 disciples waited in that upper room at Jerusalem, but in ten days 3,000 more were added. From that day forward, the numbers increased till, in A. D. 325, Christianity had mounted the throne of the Caesars and was duly recognized as the religion of the Roman empire.

In looking back over the history of those movements which have been signally honored of God in developing and extending the kingdom of Christ we can see abundant illustration of the fact that it is not prudent to despise the day of small things. It was the day of small things when Luther nailed up the ninety-five theses on the door of the church at Wittenberg. But that day there was inaugurated a movement which aroused the sleeping Church, which excited the moral sensibilities of a people dead in trespasses and sins, and which shook the continent of Europe from the centre almost to its utmost limits. May 2nd., 1792, was a day of small things in mission work under the auspices of the Baptist Church. But on that day William Carey preached his famous missionary sermon on Is. 54: 2, 3, before the Baptist Association at Nottingham. As a result of that sermon a missionary society was organized in six months at Kittering. The many missionary societies in the Baptist Church to-day are a standing proof that large oaks may grow from small acorns. It was the day of small things when Robert Raikes gathered a few boys and girls together on the Sabbath for the purpose of instructing them in the Bible and catechism. To-day there are about 15,000,000 children in Sabbath Schools. No man to-day would speak as contemptuously of Sabbath Schools as some men, even professing Christians, spoke of them one hundred years ago. It was a day of small things when Samuel J. Mills and four of his fellow-students assembled under the shadow of a hay-stack for the purpose of devising ways and means of sending the Gospel from America to the heathen. But the result of that day's proceedings was that the American Board of Commissioners on Foreign Missions was organized. "Five only assembled at its first meeting. Thousands are now assembled at its annual meetings. Its missionaries are in almost all parts of the globe. It has raised nations from the lowest form of heathenism to Christian civilization." May 7th., 1804, was the day of small things so far as the Bible Society was concerned, for it was on that day that Mr. Charles proposed to form a society to give Bibles to the people of Wales. Now we have a Bible Society for the world. Through the agency of that society the Word of God is given to almost every people and tongue in their own language. That was a day of small things in 1834, when Mr. George Williams and about a dozen others assembled in an "upper room" in the rear of Mr. Williams' warehouse and organized a Y. M. C. A. There are now about 3,000 of these societies in existence, and they are planted over almost the whole of the civilized world. That was a day of small things in woman's foreign mission work, when a few ladies met in Toronto for the purpose of organizing a W. F. M. S. One lady, in writing about it afterwards, said, "The society was like a little rill that trickled from the mountain side, but it has grown in volume till now it is a mighty river." Feb. 2nd., 1881, was a day of small things in Christian Endeavor work. On that day the first society was organized in Williston Church, Portland, Maine. Nearly nine months passed before the second society came into existence. It is not necessary to say anything about what has been accomplished in the United States, or Canada. It might be mentioned, however, that Christian Endeavor societies are now being introduced into France, and that there are 30 of them in the island of Madagascar. Dr. Clark, who is now taking a trip round the world, speaks in glowing terms of what is being accomplished in Australia through the instrumentality of this society.

This subject, then, is calculated to teach us our dependence upon God, and to encourage us to undertake greater things than we are able to do. However auspicious the circumstances under which a movement is launched for Him. However auspicious the circumstances, its work will be a failure unless God blesses it. On the other hand, no matter how insignificant an organization may be in the beginning it cannot fail if the blessing of God rests upon it. Let us, therefore, cheerfully, hopefully and resolutely prosecute our work and let us seek the blessing of God upon it. The society with which we are identified may be small in numbers and the obstacles in the way of its progress may be many, but there is no reason for discouragement, much less for giving up in despair. Our cause cannot be more disheartening than was the prospect before Zerubbabel, but as the mountain before him became a plain, so will the difficulties before us be removed. "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."