

adopting the Gothenberg system, or the reduction of the number of licenses, or more vigorous enforcement of the law as it stands restricting the traffic.

In the Synod of Huron, the subject of gambling was brought up, its increase at present noted, and deplored, and its suppression strongly urged. In this Synod also, the question of allowing women to vote in vestry meetings was broached but found no quarter.

From the reports of the meetings as a whole, the impression left upon the mind is that, the question of the means by which the Anglican Church in Canada may hold its own, as compared with other religious bodies, is one of vital interest to all to whom the history, doctrine, government and form of worship of that Church are dear and by whom it is venerated.

### THE WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING.

BY A PRESBYTERIAN ELDER.

There is a very remarkable agreement in the columns of the religious press of Canada and the United States, whenever the subject is referred to, that the weekly prayer-meetings of the Christian churches are in a most unsatisfactory state as regards attendance and vitality. The inference is inevitable that many Christian churches are affected with dry rot, if we may be permitted to employ such an expression to characterize a religious condition. The attendance of church members, and especially of young church members, is appallingly small. The latter seem to regard the weekly prayer meeting as the "old folks' meeting." "If the prayer meeting is the pulse of the church," as one writer puts it, "it is evident that the spiritual vitality must be low in many, if not in most, of our churches and the dearth of revivals is easily accounted for. When the first disciples of our Lord were with one accord in one place, and praying, the Holy Ghost came down upon them. And the miracle of Pentecost would, no doubt, be repeated if the conditions of the Saviour's promise were met." Will anybody seriously dispute this proposition?

Well, what are you going to do about it, somebody asks, not flippantly but seriously. That is just the problem to which pastors and elders and Christian workers have need to address themselves. There is not likely to be much improvement so long as matters are allowed to drift. Large attendance of members and adherents at the weekly prayer meeting may not in itself be absolutely necessary to profitable prayer meetings, for the largest meetings may be very cold, and there is the promise that "wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Nevertheless, the sympathy and influence of numbers must not be overlooked. Few men (or women) can be effective and earnest in ordinary circumstances when their audience consists of one third people, setting apart like so many icebergs, and two-thirds empty seats. That is the sort of thing which chills and saddens the heart of many a pastor and drives from his memory the Saviour's promise just quoted. On the other hand large attendance of members, and especially of young people, would cheer the hearts of

pastors, would in some measure at least, be evidence of a desire for the promised gospel blessings, and indicate an awakened interest in congregational work, which, followed up and wisely cultivated, would be productive of great blessings.

How then shall we secure such prayer meetings in these days of wide-spread gospel privileges? One writer answers the question in the following way: "We must magnify the importance of the prayer-meeting. We must convince all our communicants, and the young especially, that to attend it, and help to sustain it, is vital to the true life of every believer, and the organic life of the church. Then the pastors and elders must try to make the prayer-meeting as interesting as possible. Let topics that will be spiritually edifying be selected, and announced on the preceding Sabbath. Let hymns be chosen that are in harmony with the topics to be discussed, and so familiar that all can join in the singing, and then let the hour of devotion be followed by a quarter of an hour social intercourse—not of mere gossip, but of mutual sympathy and fellowship as brethren in Christ. And, finally, let those who love the prayer-meeting talk about it during the week, and urge all whom they meet to attend. We must get up a prayer-meeting enthusiasm. A crowd draws a crowd. If we can double the attendance in a month, it will double itself again next month by the new momentum. We can get at least half of our Sabbath congregations to attend the prayer-meeting by a little earnest effort." But why be content with "half" the Sabbath congregations?

Then we must revolutionize our methods of conducting the prayer-meeting. We don't want any new gospel; we simply want "the old, old story" told and impressed simply and lovingly just as the Master himself used to tell it when the spiritually famishing multitudes hung on his words; or just as he told it to Nicodemus in that wonderful interview, held in that wonderful interview, held in the quiet hours of the night, which gave the world that wonderful gospel proclamation: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

But we do want methods of conducting prayer meetings which will divest them of the character of being mid-week preaching services, the burden of which falls mainly upon the pastors; and we want them conducted in a social way which will enlist the hearty co-operation of those who attend and enable them to realise how much they can do to awaken interest and strengthen the pastor's hands. In this way the latent powers of the church membership will be developed, pastors will begin to realise that they have the sympathy and active support of their people, and no longer will they be compelled to say of spiritual conditions that "the heavens above are as brass and the earth iron." When pastors and elders and people come together with "one accord" in the name of Jesus and in "full assurance of faith," why should they not expect a Pentecostal blessing?

"Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts if I will not open you the windows of Heaven and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

God's Word makes it plain to us that the world is to be evangelized by the preaching of the gospel, but it also teaches that the preaching must be followed up by watering and cultivation by the agencies which are at the disposal of the Church, among which agencies the weekly prayer meeting should always hold a prominent place. The prayer meeting affords splendid opportunities for Christian workers to do efficient personal work for the Master, and lack of personal work by the professed followers of Jesus is one of the drawbacks which meet every pastor.

### THE CHURCH PAPER.

The influence of a good religious newspaper cannot be overestimated. In our day, when the facilities for communication all over the world are so great, and the tendency is to disseminate that class of news which appears most shocking and sensational, should we not pause for a moment to consider the claims of the religious press of this country, and its mission? People express surprise at the amount of pernicious literature read. Yet, in frequent cases, how little have Christian parents done to check the evil by about the only possible method, namely, that of creating a better taste by a supply of better food! Who can estimate the value of a beautiful thought or a precious truth impressed upon their memory which may never be forgotten. The religious newspaper is the champion of every righteous reform, the advocate of every good cause. Although it is not a paper to supply general news, it is eminently designed to stimulate and encourage humanity; it is the ally of every pastor and church officer, and the friend of every worker. The religious paper is a great and important factor in all forms of Christian activity. It is universally the testimony of pastors that their most efficient and earnest helpers are readers of church papers.—*Christian Life*.

### The James Robertson Memorial Fund.

At its recent meeting, the General Assembly unanimously approved of the James Robertson Memorial Fund, and it was agreed to endeavor to raise at least \$10,000 towards founding a James Robertson Lectureship on Home Missions, the money to be permanently invested, and the interest to be used in meeting the expense of a course of lectures each year in every one of the Colleges of the Church, on some subject pertaining to Home Mission work. The lecturer will be specially selected from year to year. It was agreed to give Mrs. Robertson \$2,000 in money, and this to be a first charge on the amount raised.

For several reasons it is desirable that the amount should be got without delay. As many have been waiting to learn the action of the Assembly, it is hoped that every minister and congregation intending to contribute will do so during the month of July. I am sure that all our ministers will regard it a privilege to aid in this work, and that, especially, every missionary and congregation in the North-West will desire to be sharers in it.

ROBT. H. WARDEN.