

widely varying circumstances. Some are numerically large; others are comparatively small. Some are located in busy cities and thriving towns; others are situated on the lonely prairie or amid the excitement of the stirring camp. But wherever placed, the societies are doing good work, and every department of church life and activity has received appreciable assistance from the young people.

But these societies are just beginning to realize their possibilities. When we consider that the members are young people, full of the energy and optimism of youth, and that they are banded together under the leadership of ministers and sessions for the specific purpose of becoming equipped for work within the congregation, we are justified in expecting larger results than have yet been secured.

The topic assigned for this meeting lies at the very heart of all possible attainments. According as societies find a practical solution for the problems therein suggested, they will make progress and become instrumental in advancing Christ's kingdom among the young.

OUR OWN SOCIETY.

The most important society in the world for any individual is his own. It is there that he should concentrate his plans and prayers and efforts. It is there that duty guides the willing feet and furnishes the best opportunities for service for willing hearts and hands.

Mrs. Jellyby had handsome eyes, but they had the curious trick of overlooking the nearest need and present duty. She could see Africa, and longed to furnish balm for all its woes, but the urgent claims of her own family were persistently disregarded. She was deeply interested in schemes for colonizing surplus population on the Niger, but her own children grew up dirty, ignorant, and uncared for, while her husband became bankrupt. There is continual danger of passing by the opportunities that lie nearest home.

The society that has the greatest claim upon us is our own society. No special enterprises, no campaigns against this or that evil can justify neglect of the work which is distinctly and emphatically "our own."

And in considering the claims of the society, it is well to remember that they are identical with those of the Church. Like the Ladies' Aid Society or the Women's Foreign Missionary Society, the Young People's Society exists for the Church; and it justifies its existence only as it exalts the Church, promotes its efficiency, and labors to realize its plans. It is an expedient adopted by the Church for the development of its young people. As soon as it becomes an end in itself, it has forgotten its mission.

Loyalty to our own society means first and foremost unequivocal loyalty to the claims of Christ within our own Church. Numerous side-tracks

are laid to divert the energies of the young people into other channels; and, while narrowness of sympathy must be carefully avoided, there is need that such a conception of the Church's mission and dignity should be inculcated that it should be counted worthy of receiving all that we have and are.

THE DEEPENING OF ITS LIFE.

The desire after a fuller life in Christ is one that is everywhere manifest. It is the scheme of many conferences and conventions. Books treating of the subject are widely circulated. There has not been a generation, probably, since the one that followed Pentecost, in which more concern has been shown for the possession of the full, victorious, serviceable, Christian life.

A movement, earnest and world-wide, is going on, and the Spirit Himself is directing it. This reaction from the ceaseless cry of "Work," "Work," and the desire for the abundant life which alone can make work for God effective, is one of the most cheering signs of the times. It holds the promise of fuller manifestations of the Spirit's grace and power.

It is clear that the life of the Society can only be deepened as the life of the members which compose it is deepened. The Society can only aggregate the interest, fervor, and power of the individuals. It cannot have more spirituality than they all possess. When the water is low in the river, the difficulty is not in the water or in the channel, but in the failure of the thousands of streams and rivulets and rills among the hills. When there is fullness in the streams and brooks, the river runs full to its banks, singing all the way to the sea. The Society will throb with spiritual life and power when every soul is aflame with holy love and every heart is like a glowing brand.

There is no great secret about the deepening of the spiritual life. The Holy Spirit has set forth the means for its possession and development with such clearness and definiteness that no one need miss the way. There is no new patent method by which the soul may be brought into right relations with God. The reading of the Word of God, prayer, and obedience to the divine will—these are the means which quickened and enlarged the spiritual life of Moses and David, of Paul and John, and they are as essential for us.

Nothing can take the place of the daily study of the sacred Scriptures. Those who feed upon the truths of divine revelation are recognized by their spiritual vigor and growth; while failure in this Christian duty unfailingly results in weakness and spiritual emancipation.

Equally necessary to the soul's true life is prayer. Withdrawal from common cares to enjoy communion with God brings one into direct contact with the source of spiritual power. It illuminates the mind, ennobles the desires, clarifies