

of some suitable sphere in which its newborn energy may be exerted. If we would take advantage of the latent energy which the Christian life creates, and if we would develop that life to the production of its proper fruits, we must establish some organization in our congregations which will give a sphere and supply an incentive to Christian energy. The consideration of the nature of an organization such as will accomplish these objects, I shall now attempt. I assume that we have not in our Presbyterian congregations any generally recognized and established organization such as I refer to. The Kirk-Session is the recognized court having the superintendence of spiritual worship and work in the congregation. But it is generally composed of a small number of Christian men of mature age and experience, and it does not necessarily imply any organization involving agents outside of its own members. The Kirk Session might properly form a part of an organization such as should be established; but in itself it is not sufficient to meet all the requirements of the case. Provision should be made for employing the efforts and calling forth the Christian energies of every member of the congregation, so that, if any one wishes to find anything to do in the service of the Lord, a sphere of effort will be open. I shall now enquire what are the different departments of Christian life and work to be provided for.

1. As the foundation of the life of the congregation, there should be laid a basis of Christian knowledge. It may be said that this is already provided for in the pulpit, the Sunday-school, and the weekly prayer meeting. Undoubtedly these are good as far as they go. For those who attend the church regularly and who study their Bibles systematically at home, the public services of religion may be sufficient. But there are a great many who do not attend the church regularly; and a great many who do not study their Bibles systematically; and, in fact, a large number of families who are scarcely ever seen in the church, and whose members scarcely ever open a Bible at all. Practically they are dead, as far as the religious life is concerned. Yet they are adherents of the congregation; and, if not, efforts should be made to bring them into relation with the life of the Christian kingdom. To do this a basis of Christian knowledge must be laid. And even in the case of those who are regular in their attendance at the services of the church, it is desirable that there should be a more social, informal study of God's truth than is met with in the church. I would propose, therefore, that there should be held Domestic Bible-Readings in different districts of the congregation. They should

be held in homes centrally situated, so that a few families from the neighbourhood could assemble. After a little friendly intercourse of a general kind, a portion of Scripture should be studied in a conversational way, so as, if possible, to give every one present an opportunity of taking part. Devotional exercises should be short, and taken part in by members of the congregation present. Special efforts should be made to secure the presence of any families in the neighborhood who are not regular in their attendance at the church, or who do not go at all. And the exercises should be made of a nature to interest every one present, especially the young. By having a Domestic Bible-Reading every week in a different district of the congregation, it might reasonably be expected that families which now take little interest in religious things would be brought to take more. The pastor would get to know the spiritual condition of his flock, and the people would know one another. And it might be hoped that this would be an important means of turning many who can scarcely be reached from the pulpit at all from darkness to light. When thought desirable, there might be an agency in this connection for the distribution of tracts or other religious literature; and efforts should be made to get all the children to come to the Sabbath-school.

2. Provision should also be made for agreeable social intercourse. It is important that the members of the congregation should be upon friendly terms with one another, and should have opportunities of meeting in a pleasant, informal manner. To accomplish this, congregational socials might be held, say, once a month, either in some private house or in a Sunday-school hall, or other suitable place. A public announcement should be a sufficient invitation to these socials, it being understood that every one should be expected to attend. Conversation, readings, music, and so forth, might form the entertainment of the evening, and refreshments, if any, should be light. The evening should be closed with devotional exercises. An occasional concert or lecture would serve to vary the character of these social meetings.

3. It has always been considered that an important fruit of the Christian life is practical beneficence. The giving of assistance to the sick or poor was one of the leading characteristics of the early church; and it was said of our Saviour, that "He went about doing good." Those who imbibe the spirit of Christ will also be marked by this feature of His character, and will strive, as they have opportunity, to brighten and render happier the lives of their fellow men. Every congregation should, therefore, see that provision is