

sarily demand the greater part of their time, finds it difficult to overtake all that frequently falls to its lot. And there are few churches that do not contain a sufficient number of persons to do all the work that has to be done, or that can be done effectively, by co-operation with the Session, if these persons only knew what particular duty they were expected to discharge. There is no church whose members possess so little influence but that each one can be of some service in the particular sphere in which he or she moves, and whose usefulness in the church would tell in the general sum total of a congregation's yearly returns. What is required in the vast proportion of congregations, is, a judiciously-managed organization that could be made to develop their inherent powers by giving to members, according to their ability, some portion of the church's work to attend to, for which they manifest a special adaptation; and by so doing, the latent energies of the individual would be drawn out in a specific manner in the interest of the congregation, and the whole church would be enabled to do a greater work for the glory of her Divine Head.

Since penning the above, the following article from Dr. Talmage's paper, *The Christian at Work*, has come to our notice. It bears so directly upon the subject, that we give it entire:—

THREE HUNDRED CHRISTIANS OVERBOARD.

"At a recent meeting of the Brooklyn Presbytery, the somewhat startling statement was made by the pastor of one of the best churches in the city, that the membership of his Church had 'increased' from six hundred and fifty to three hundred and fifty. He explained this marvellous 'increase' by stating that the roll had recently been revised, and that the result had been the retention on the regular list of only the three hundred and fifty who, on diligent search, could be found.

"What has become of the three hundred? Have they gone to heaven, or are they still bearing their burdens among the ranks of the Church Militant? If on earth, do they go to church, and if so, to what church? Are their church homes in Brooklyn, or in Omaha, or among the Patagonians? Do they remain Presbyterians, or have they become Baptists, Methodists, Mormons, or Shaking Quakers? How did they get

away, and how came it to pass that so many went, and through what oversight did it happen that they slipped overboard without anybody knowing about it at the time? Exactly how long this leakage has been going on is not reported. To get at the correct statistics of it would be as difficult as to discover the whereabouts of the missing three hundred. Justice to the pastor who made the statement requires the explanation that the leakage did not take place under his administration. Having recently become the shepherd of the flock, he diligently entered upon the business of looking up his sheep; but in his researches obtained the unsatisfying information that three hundred of them were as far away as the lost tribes of Israel. To set the missing ones aside on a sort of a retired list is easy work. But that does not settle the question as to what has become of them, or why they went away. The retired list represents no "reserved corps" which can be called into service in case of emergency. It is, indeed, more of a "reserved corpse" of the unburied and unknown dead, laid aside for funeral when the remains can be found.

"When these now missing three hundred originally joined the Church, public recognition of their admission was made, probably with thanksgiving to God for their coming into the fold, and for the prosperity of the Church evidenced by additions being made to its number. They were probably taken by the hand and welcomed into Church society, and were told of reciprocal duties; theirs to their brethren, and the corresponding duties of their brethren to them.

"Does anybody for a moment suppose that half the voters in any ward of the city could silently steal away, and the men who keep the election registers know nothing of their going?

"And this Church is by no means the only one where such marvellous discrepancies exist between the nominal and actual members. We knew of one, some time ago, in which the necessity of a close vote in a case of discipline involved the marshalling of all the forces. The membership, according to the roll, was about nine hundred. Diligent drumming up on both sides revealed the fact that only four hundred could be found, the other five hundred having surreptitiously slipped away to heaven or elsewhere.

"To drop a Church member is a very serious business. To allow him to wander away without showing interest enough in him to know where he goes, is not much like Christian fellowship. To let members of a fellowship or family slip away by the