

"I'm like to go out of my judgment," says the man, "with this dreadful neuralgia." His friend procures for him a bottle of extract; if he will only take a little, it may cure him. He takes the prescribed quantity; he repeats the dose: by and by, to his great relief, and astonishment, he finds a complete cure has been effected. Now, don't you see, it was not *the taking* of the extract that cured the man, *it was the extract which was taken*. And so we come to understand a little more clearly what faith is, and what it can do for us. My faith, be it the very best kind of faith, is, after all a poor weak thing, and, just because it is *my* faith, it can never save me. If I am to be saved it must be by something that is not my own. So then faith is the hand that takes hold of the atoning sacrifice. By the blood of Jesus Christ alone is the remission of sins.

But when should a man begin to realize the possession of everlasting life. At the moment of his conversion: instantly. He that believeth *hath*—it is not said that he shall have, or that he may have, but he has it already. And why? manifestly, because to believe in Jesus Christ is to have Him in you the hope of glory, and, to have him is to have everlasting life, for, Christ *is*, himself, *the Everlasting Life*.

Some of our readers remember the beautiful illustration with which the discourse was closed. "Sometimes as I have been walking from my own church to my house in a distant part of the city, of a bright starry night, gazing with admiring wonder upon that innumerable host which studs the galaxy in our northern skies, and which are familiarly known to us as the fixed stars, I have given full rein to my imagination, and, as I looked at Sirius and Orion and Aldebaran and Arcturus, and the Pleiades with their sweet influence, the thought has often occurred to me,—What, if God saw fit so to change the relative positions of these shining orbs as that they should be grouped together in the form of letters and words. And suppose this sentence thus written across the sky in resplendant letters of stars so that every eye could see them,—"*VERILY. VERILY. I SAY. UNTO YOU. HE THAT BELIEVETH IN ME, HATH EVERLASTING LIFE.*" What a commotion it would make! All the astronomers in the world would be at their wits' end, and people every where would be struck with amazement. But, astounding though it may seem, God has written that sentence in infinitely grander characters than in letters of stars. Where are they to found? Here, in His word. What do I read? These Heavens and this earth shall pass away, but *THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURETH FOR EVER,*

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP. DOES IT MEAN ANYTHING?

It once did. It meant not words but deeds, God-ward and man-ward! Now, it means with not a few, much less than a Benefit Club, or Free Masonry. Look at that congregation of two, three, four, or five hundred members, many of them rich in this world's goods, many of them with time hanging heavily on their hands: all of them well-dressed. Theoretically, that is a company of Christ's labourers, and the field is the world. What is the net result of their work? Theoretically, that is one of Christ's regiments, and the enemy is attacking at every point. How many of these enlisted and sworn soldiers get wounded in the fight? Theoretically, that is the body of Christ, and every one members one of another. In practice, how many of them give, even on Communion Sabbath, the price of a bonnet or the cost of a dinner party for their brothers and sisters who have become poor?

My friends, we do not mean to be inconsistent. It must be that we do not think about it. But, whatever the cause, there is something radically wrong in the way we have degraded church membership into an empty form. According to the mind of Christ it means business. According to our practice, it means something so paltry that we might as well call it nothing.

Our Church has about 650 ministers and at least 100,000 members—now what does a church exist for? Internally, to foster christian life, to refine christian character and develope it to all its rightful issues; to cultivate the communion of saints, to care for the poor and the bereaved, to bear the burdens of the weak, and reclaim the erring. Externally, to seek and save souls, by preaching the good news, to send the message to those who have not heard it; to build up the Kingdom of Christ at home, and to extend it abroad. How some of those objects are being carried out, we cannot judge. No statistics can measure the highest spiritual work. But, as to others, we can judge. The results are tabulated,