

Lay Members TO GO FORTH

There is a much greater work devolving upon the individual members of the church than they realize. They are not awake to the claims of God. The time has come when there should be devised every means that can aid in preparing a people to stand in the day of God. We must be wide awake, refusing to let precious opportunities pass unimproved. We must do all that we possibly can to win souls to love God and keep His commandments. Jesus requires this of those who know the truth. Is His demand unreasonable?

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Do we not have the life of Christ as our example? Do we not owe the Saviour a debt of love, of earnest, unselfish labor for the salvation of those for whom He gave His own life?

Many of the members of our large churches are doing comparatively nothing. They might accomplish a good work, if, instead of crowding together, they would scatter into places that have not yet been entered by the truth. Trees that are planted too thickly do not flourish. They are transplanted by the gardener, that

they may have room to grow, and not become dwarfed and sickly. The same rule would work well for our large churches. Many of the members are dying spiritually for want of this very work. They are becoming sickly and inefficient. Transplanted, they would have room to grow strong and vigorous.

It is not the purpose of God that His people should colonize, or settle together in large communities. The disciples of Christ are His representatives upon the earth, and God designs that they shall be scattered all over the country, in the towns, cities, and villages, as lights amid the darkness of the world. They are to be missionaries for God, by their faith and works testifying to the near approach of the coming Saviour.

The lay members of our churches can accomplish a work which as yet they have scarcely begun. None should move into new places merely for the sake of worldly advantage; but where there is an opening to obtain a livelihood, let families that are well-grounded in the truth enter, one or two families in a place, to work as missionaries. They should feel a love for souls, a burden of labor for them, and should study how to bring them into the truth. They can distribute our publications, hold meetings in their homes, become acquainted with their neighbors, and invite them to

come to these meetings and Bible readings. Thus they can let their light shine in good works.

Let the workers stand alone in God, weeping, praying, laboring for the salvation of their fellow men. Remember that you are running a race, striving for a crown of immortality. While so many love the praise of men more than the favor of God, let it be yours to labor in humility. Learn to exercise faith in presenting your neighbors before the throne of grace, and pleading with God to touch their hearts. In this way effectual missionary work may be done. Some may be reached who would not listen to a minister or a colporteur. And those who thus labor in new places will learn the best ways and means of approaching the people, and can prepare the way for other laborers.

A precious experience may be gained by one who engages in this work. He has upon his heart the burden of the souls of his neighbors. He must have the help of Jesus. How careful he will be to walk circumspectly, that his prayers may not be hindered, that no cherished sin may separate him from God. While helping others, such a worker is himself obtaining spiritual strength and understanding, and in this humble school he may become qualified to enter a wider field.

Christ declares, "Herein is my father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." God has endowed us with faculties, and has entrusted us with talents, in order that we may use them for Him. To every man is given his work,—not merely work in his fields of corn and wheat, but earnest, persevering work for the salvation of souls. Every stone in God's temple must be a living stone, a stone that shines, reflecting light to the world. Let the laymen do all that they can; and as they use the talents

they already have, God will give them more grace and increased ability. Many of our missionary enterprises are crippled because there are so many who refuse to enter the doors of usefulness that are plainly opened before them. Let all who believe the truth begin to work. Do the work that lies nearest you; do anything, however humble, rather than be, like the men of Meroz, do-nothings.

We shall not be stinted for means if we will only go forward, trusting in God. The Lord is willing to do a great work for all who truly believe in Him. If the lay members of the church will arouse to do the work that they can do, going a warfare at their own charges, each seeing how much he can

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accomplish in winning souls to Jesus, we shall see many leaving the ranks of Satan to stand under the banner of Christ. If our people will act upon the light that is given in these few words of instruction, showing that they sincerely believe the truth which they profess, we shall surely see of the salvation of God. Wonderful revivals will follow. Sinners will be converted, and many souls will be added to the church. When we bring our hearts into unity with Christ, and our lives into harmony with His work, the Spirit that fell on the disciples on the day of Pentecost will fall on us. ①

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