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### The Missionary Call.

I believe that the call to be a foreign missionary, when allied to that which makes a man a preacher of the gospel at home, is distinct from such a one.

There is, in both cases, the same strong yearning for the salvation of the souls of men which constrains the one "called" to give his life to the work of teaching that salvation; and there is the same "setting apart" of himself, spiritually, from the worldly inclinations, which so easily rub the bloom from the freshness of soul consecration.

But what is that peculiar something that leads the happy and successful preacher to give up a loving and loved church at home; that takes the useful, earnest teacher from her class work in the Sunday-school, and from her place in the various societies of the church; that strange inner prompting that tugs at the heart of the thoughtful young man, even before he has ever entered a theological seminary, or decided upon his life work; what is it that decides each in his own sphere to lay aside clerical ambition, social pleasures, home ties, personal comforts, which have seemed necessities, all of these, in order to enter upon the missionary's career? Whatever this constraining force may be, it constitutes a missionary's call. When it is the true call of the Spirit of God it is peremptory, and a mistake as to this point need never be made, it seems to me, when this same Spirit is ready to aid in eliminating all self-deceit and false motives.

Perhaps the greatest snare which entraps the young of both sexes into unthinkingly making vows looking toward a foreign mission and even into undertaking such, is the glamour which, to a certain extent, must always linger about one who denies himself for his Master's cause, but which has become considerably attenuated, as personal dangers and difficulties have disappeared before the march of civilization in most mission fields. To be like Christ, in humble serving and constant patience, should be the missionary's ideal, rather than that of gaining the international reputation of such and such a noted missionary of the past.

Let him who is considering whether or not he has such a call, apply a few simple tests to his motives and judge of the results with all honesty. The following facts may be useful in suggesting his own search-questions. The new missionary, if stirring, progressive, and enthused with a desire to see immediate results, and accustomed to the stimulus of an admiring congregation and working church-membership in his native land, after the numberless worries of transportation from his own country to that of his adoption, feels himself another being, unknown to himself. He knows nothing of the language jabbered around him all day long, new restraints bore him, the strange climate enervates him, his brethren seem moving in a sluggish, almost motionless, current of work, and his heart faints at the prospect of growing to be what he imagines his fellow-missionaries have become.

It seems to me that just here the example of Christ's life on earth is of great value; his own personal sufferings from contact with hard, uncongenial surroundings, his patience, his charity, his unselfish love for sinners ought to be an inspiration to the truly "called," and should give strength and wisdom to bear with uncongeniality of every kind, from that of one's own circle to the utmost limits of social and business intercourse.

Let him beware who imagines himself "called" to a life of charming, foreign incidents, such as one would meet with on a touring expedition through China, Mexico, Italy or Africa, and to intercourse with the best people socially, who will pet and fete the foreigner. The truth is that most of the foreign element that will enter into the missionary's life will be the thousand inevitable inconveniences of daily domestic life in a strange land, and a conforming to trying, unnatural circumstances, in an intercourse with a class of people almost entirely outside of his sphere at home.

All this means that a truly called missionary has a firmly fixed conviction that work for the saving of souls in a country outside

of his own must be the work of his life; that he is ready to leave the preaching of the gospel at home to others whose convictions may keep them there; that he will possess his soul in patience through the first trying years of initiation, and not expect result nor applause as a reward of his work, except in so far as the inspired promises give hope to every laborer everywhere; and finally, that the work, so long as health is given him and his, shall be a *life work*. It is said that "hindsight is sometimes better than foresight," and some earnest workers have found to their sorrow of heart that a little more foresight would have been better for them before going to the great expense of moving themselves and families to a foreign country. Their consciences order them home, and they are right to come, and honest in doing so, but did their consciences sound absolutely clear notes in ordering them to go on the mission? Was there no inner remonstrance? Was duty quite plain? Sometimes the call to be a missionary seems to come long before the way is open to such a course. Life interposes many obstacles in all our chosen paths; it is not difficult to understand that a helpless or aged parent, dependent upon the solicitude of a son or daughter, is one of many God-given cares, such as are not to be idly thrown aside for a mission to the heathen. There may be cases where even this may be necessary, when it becomes a wife's duty to follow her husband's convictions and him to a foreign land, and oh, the heart-ache of it! First, let the husband be perfectly sure that now is the accepted time for breaking his own and his partner's home ties, and then let both go ahead in peace, for the Lord reigneth.

In my not very long experience of missionary life I have been much impressed with the fact that the disposition and habitual temper of the intended missionary should be taken into consideration fully as much as the question of tendency to disease of the body. It should be known whether his previous life has shown him fitted to deal with his kind; and, if not of natural gifts in that direction, how far the grace of God has aided him in overcoming propensities of fault finding, intolerance and uncharitableness, three of the "little foxes" that too often enter the vineyard. He who feels that he can be content with his Master's "well done," will find in the glow at his heart and the growing inspiration for his work an all-sufficient reward.

A MISSIONARY.

### Reading Novels.

Dear Bro. Bailey:—It may seem rather out of place for a young man to speak on such a broad subject; but from experience and continued observation, some thoughts have so pressed themselves upon my mind, that I want to say a few words to all the young people of our State. I say young people, for it is among this class that this habit is placing the blackest stigma.

There are some novels which every young person would do well to read, and by so doing would not only find interesting employment, but would be inspired to be more noble in life. On the other side, there are books (novels)—thousands of them—scattered all over our State and country—and they have found their way into Christian homes, too—which are doing more to corrupt the minds and hearts of the children than any other, yea, than any three other habits combined.

Can this be true? Reading, simply reading books, have such an effect on a person? True, you cannot see the effect on the life at once, and it may not be visible only to a close observer for a long time, but the work is being done equally as fatal though unseen, and sooner or later the person will discover that they have been affected more or less by the reading, while they may not admit it to the dearest friend.

Young people, and I may say young ladies, for they seem more addicted to this habit, for as a rule they have a stronger taste for reading than young men, be it said to their credit. They are not to blame every time in full, for they do not always know which are worthy of being read, and only take some one's word for it, and it may be one who is not competent of judging, or whose taste has been tainted, and hence not capable of judging. A young lady, with a true and noble heart, whose mind is almost entirely free from the stain of evil, with a mind looking forward to a noble and useful life to begin in the near future—and we have such ladies in our own State, with hearts as true as the world can afford, and from their life sweet influences, sacred and hallowed, are thrown around our lives both in Church and State.

But their hand by some mishap falls upon a novel, one not considered very bad, nor can any one point out the good points nor define the moral it contains. Some friend (if) placed it in their hands. They begin to read, only intending to read a few moments or a short time, while they have nothing specially to claim their attention—one page leads to another, and there seems to be no suitable place to stop, and soon they are entirely absorbed, hours pass away, while they unconsciously drink it in without discrimination.

They find sentences and expressions, which cause their cheeks to blush and burn, and which they would not repeat publicly for the world. Time to stop—no, not yet, it is so interesting—the book is finished. A friend comes in (lady friend). "I have a very interesting book which I have

been reading, it is very good. I am sure you would like it."

"Where is it, on the centre table?"  
"No, in my trunk."  
"Why do you hide it?"  
"Why you know Mr. A. is not willing for me to read it. You know he don't like such novels. He is rather 'cranky' and extreme on some things; but he will never know it."  
"Where is the moral in it?"  
"O, I don't know, but it is so interesting. You read it and you will be pleased."

A second novel by chance or purpose gets into her hands, with language less pure than the first. Some expressions too impure and vulgar to be read aloud—a time is selected when alone, or when others are asleep, and no one can see the burning cheek as they drink in the deadly poison. They can no longer find interest in the Bible—"it's too dry, not half so good as novels." Good books do not have the same interest for them they once had. True, they read the Bible sometimes for mere name, as they are sure it is very true and good for old people to read. Their taste has been degraded and lowered, their mind and heart are tainted with a blot which will baffle time to remove.

No longer is the once pure heart aspiring to a grander and more sublime life. The mind has been corrupted in a few short weeks more seriously than it otherwise would have been for years.

Read only such books as will fill your mind and heart with higher and nobler aspirations. If you do not know yourself, consult some one who does know, and whose judgment you are willing to trust, even before you read one page.

Have no book in your home that you are ashamed to have on the centre table.

Read no book which would cause your face to blush with shame should your best friend step in and find you reading it. The life will be filled with thoughts and actions corresponding to the food upon which the mind has been fed.

I had rather have a pure, noble heart that has not been stained by impure books or conversation; than to have all the wealth of this world and fame combined.

J. E. GREEN.

Bostic, Feb. 13, 1893.

### Gnats, Camels, &c.

SWALLOWING CAMELS.

A little girl being asked, "What was the special sin of the Pharisees?" promptly replied, "Swallowing camels." The Pharisees may have had a monopoly in that line some nineteen hundred years ago; but they have a good deal of competition in this progressive age. Many a good brother has great difficulty in swallowing a gnat, and finally not only gives it up, but points it out as a dangerous and deadly animal, but the camel, his camel, goes down with the greatest ease.

There is Bro. X., I have not heard from him on the subject; but I know his righteous soul is filled with holy horror as he contemplates the gnat evolved out of the minds and hearts of our sisters for raising a part of the Centennial Fund. Hear him speak of the plan. "The whole thing is wrong. We need no list of contributors to keep a hundred years. The plan appeals to pride, and has a tendency to lead us away from the true motive for giving. It would lead us to ignore the words of Jesus, 'Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.'" Good Bro. X. has a hard time with this, and many similar gnats, and maybe he is right, and this plan of the sisters is a snare and a delusion. Yes, Bro. X. has trouble with the gnat; but he has been known to swallow a camel, his camel, with the greatest ease in the world. He affirms that the left hand must be kept in ignorance of what the right hand does, and therefore condemns the sisters' plan; but when he contributes to any cause you always see his name with the amount opposite in the published list of contributors. When an agent visits him, and he decides to make a contribution, he always contributes for himself and each member of his family, and in the next week's paper you will see the name and contribution of each member of X.'s family. Rather a big camel in the light of Bro. X.'s doctrine; but he finds no difficulty in swallowing it. Consistency, thy name is not Bro. X. Reader, do you know Bro. X.? Perhaps, "Thou art the man."

THE OBJECTOR.

The objector is useful in one respect—he keeps you from stagnation. Every plan, every effort except his own, must run the gauntlet of the inevitable, "I am not in favor of that." Then comes the long and profitless discussion while the cause suffers. At length, when he yields the point, or you begin work without him, you have to overcome the opposition of many persons who would have entered heartily into the work if they had not heard that Objector objected. One of the easiest things in the world is to get people to do nothing. Brother Objector is a grand success along this line. Brother pastor, do you know him?

THE ARTFUL DODGER.

Perhaps you know him. He is found almost everywhere, and may be known by his skill in dodging work and collections.

A pastor once asked Artful Dodger for a contribution to State Missions. He replied, "I don't believe in State Missions; Foreign Missions is my special pet. When you take a collection for that purpose, I will help you." When the time to collect for Foreign Missions came, he called on him, and was

met with, "I have made up my mind that we are wrong in doing so much for the heathen in foreign lands, while there are so many heathen at home." He was always anxious to do something else, generally something impracticable. When he is cornered, and must give something, it would do you good to see him squirm. For any neglected duty he always has a splendid excuse. In this line he can beat the man that invented the excuse business. Artful Dodger is great on show days. He glories in protracted meetings, and makes a fine impression on the visiting brother. On such occasions he bubbles over with religion, and the visiting brother thinks of him as one of the pillars of the church. Sometimes he is a woman. T. J. TAYLOR.

### How to Pray.

Be short. Jesus, by word and example, inculcated this. He described the Pharisees as those who "for a pretence made long prayers." Persons who sought his aid offered short petitions. Peter in the water, the publican in the temple, and the thief on the cross made short prayers.

When I was a young minister I received through the post office a slip cut from a newspaper containing a college commencement poem. The pew was addressing the pulpit. Four lines impressed me:

"Sermons like wells should small circumference sweep,  
Be short in their diameter, but deep;  
And public prayer, as in the Scriptures taught,  
Beyond a cavil always should be short"

The last two lines were heavily marked about for my benefit. I never knew who sent the slip, but I pinned it over my study table, and kept it there for ten years; and then I did not destroy it, but pasted it in my scrap-book, and have it now.

Be specific. Prayer that is indefinite does not avail. "My son," "my daughter," "my servant," "my sight,"—that is the form of request; and the accompanying charge is, "Bring him to me." It was wonderful, in a revival in college, how our prayers were answered for classmates in the order in which we prayed for them by name.

Be importunate. The midnight prayer, "Friend, lend me three loaves," was short, specific, and importunate. And it was answered, not for friendship's sake, but because of importunity.

Pray with a forgiving spirit. "When ye stand praying, forgive." I once attended an ecclesiastical convention, and was entertained in a refined, Christian household. A young lady in the family in a conversation remarked, "I never offer the Lord's prayer." On my expressing surprise, she added, "I don't dare to; I don't dare pray. 'Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors'; I am so afraid that I have not a forgiving spirit that I dare not ask God to forgive me as I forgive others." I asked, "What do you pray?" She replied, "I say, 'As we ought to forgive others.'"

We must do what we can to answer our own prayers. A little boy heard his father pray that God would feed the poor; and when the prayer was over, he said, "Father, if you will give me the key to the granary door, I will answer your prayer myself." Frederick Douglass tells us that when he was a slave he prayed seven years for liberty, but received no answer; at length it occurred to him that he must answer his own prayer; and when, with his eye fixed on the north star, he prayed with his legs, his prayer was answered. If we pray for the conversion of a child, a scholar, or a friend, we must speak to that person and do what we can to bring him to Christ.

We must expect that our prayers will be answered. "For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." "Ask, and ye shall receive." Too many pray that the mountain may be removed, and when they open their eyes, say, "There, I knew that it would not be." "Without faith it is impossible to please God." "According to your faith be it unto you."—Dr. L. H. Read.

### Fault-Finding.

An old gentleman, a class-leader, one day went into the shop, and the blacksmith soon began about what some Christians had done, and seemed to have a good time over it. The old class leader stood a few minutes and listened, and then quietly asked him if he had read the story in the Bible about the rich man and Lazarus. "Yes, many a time; and what of it?" "Well, do you remember about the dogs, how they came and licked the sores of Lazarus?" "Yes; but what of that?" "Well," said the class leader, "do you know you just remind me of those dogs, content merely to lick the Christian's sores." The blacksmith suddenly grew pensive, and has not had much to say about falling Christians since.—Exchange.

Now, I want you to think that in life, troubles will come which seem as if they never would pass away. The night and the storm look as if they would last forever, but the calm and the morning cannot be stayed; the storm in its very nature is transient. The effort of nature, as that of the human heart, ever is to return to its repose; for God is peace.—Geo. MacDonald.

### Paying the Preacher.

Our church polity is such that the pay of the preacher is a matter of agreement between him and the church. There are no bishops or presbyteries to review and exercise a constraining power over the churches. This absolute independence of the local churches is not altogether without its disadvantages. Baptists are perhaps as liberal as other denominations, but there are those among us that believe in a free gospel in its fullest sense. They like to hear good preaching, and expect the preacher to be decently clad, and also that his family be well provided for, but deny his right to stipulate with a church for a specific salary. He ought, they say, to preach and leave the amount that is paid to the generous impulses of the church members, who often feel at liberty to disregard their obligations to the church. This position is unreasonable and is often a mere subterfuge, behind which the avaricious or impetuous member hides himself. The preacher is human and must needs have food and raiment as other men. Often he has a family to support, falling to do which he would be esteemed worse than an infidel. To secure these necessary things for himself and family, he must buy them as do other men, but cannot buy unless he has money. If wholly consecrated to the ministry, he cannot turn aside to earn it by a secular pursuit. If he buys and fails to pay, it destroys his usefulness and loses him his good name. Who would listen to a preacher who does not pay his debts? How can he do this unless he looks ahead and arranges for the means to meet these obligations? With so much at stake he would be unjust to himself and to his family were he to trust to the generous impulses of the average church member. But to take another view of the subject, to do his best work in the ministry, his mind ought to be untrammelled so that he can throw his whole soul and all his energies into his work. He cannot do this unless he is freed from financial embarrassments by giving him a liberal support. Many church members look upon their contributions to the support of the ministry as gifts, when in fact the minister has a right to it because he has rendered a valuable consideration therefor. Christ himself, when sending out the seventy to preach, said to them, "And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his hire."—(Luke 10: 7.) Paul, writing to the Corinthians, very clearly states the case when he says, "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them to do you service."—(2 Cor. 11: 8.) This last Scripture, if it means anything, very clearly teaches that the church, or churches, he serves should support him, and the word wages indicates that he has earned it by reason of his serving the church.

But not only has he the right to demand a support, but it ought to be so liberal that he may be provided with every comfort. On this point Paul writes to Timothy (2 Tim. 5: 8), "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine."

It is also best for the church. A religion without personal sacrifice, with out giving, is not the kind treated of in the Bible. Selfishness and the love of money go hand in hand. They are our most common sins, and the hardest to overcome. Giving tends to break down these sins, and to develop in us the spirit that prompted Christ to lose sight of self in his efforts to do good to others. Lastly, it is God's plan, for so hath he "ordained that they that preach the gospel shall live of the gospel." Under the Mosaic law he required tithes for the support of the temple service and of the priests who served therein. Not only did he lay a tithe on his people, but he made it specific in amount. How many of us now give one-tenth to the support of the gospel? But we may again call Paul as a witness. In 2 Cor., 9th chapter, he plainly tells the Corinthians that, having served them in spiritual things, he had a right to partake of their carnal things.

In conclusion, if the preacher has temporal wants, if we would have his best service in the pulpit and out of it, if we would develop the grace of giving, if we would pay the debt we owe him, if we would obey the divine teaching, we must pay him liberally and promptly for his services. The church that fails to meet this obligation or allows any of its members to shirk this plain duty, will not prosper, because it lives in disobedience to a plain command.—C. A. Board, in Co-Worker.

Is there not a disposition in the current preaching of this age to ignore or at least deal lightly with the exceeding sinfulness of sin? Of course it is right to "hold up Christ" at all times and under all circumstances, but it is equally important to show men their need of Christ. We may be mistaken, but it does seem to us as we look back, that in other days the conviction of sin was more powerful, more manifest and more distressing on the part of the penitent than it is in this day. This whole subject awakens very serious and important inquiries.—Central Baptist.

He who is faithful over a few things is a lord of cities. It does not matter whether you preach in Westminster Abbey or teach a ragged class, so you be faithful. The faithfulness is all.—George MacDonald.