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From China—The Missionary Call.

Dear Recorder:—In reply to your invitation given to missionaries and others to discuss those very practical questions relating to the missionary's call, I had begun a short communication which assumed that the preacher of the gospel is, or should be, called of God, with such a clear recognition of God's voice by way of authority that he could not doubt his being set apart personally, directly, of God's sovereign will by the Holy Ghost; so that whatever his disposition towards the work of the ministry may have been previously, his heart echoes the cry, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." And while with no miraculous appeal to the organs of sense, He does come, whether in the quiet hours of the night, or during the press of other duties of the day, with a voice which the man must hear in his inmost soul, and with a command he cannot disregard.

But Bro. White's letter in the RECORDER of Feb. 1 shows that this is hardly a safe premise to lay down, because there may be some who do not believe in a divine call to the ministry.

Not wishing to provoke a discussion of a question which is a trite one to most of our North Carolina Baptists, I feel it wiser to add a few lines by way of preface to what I would say as to the missionary's call, that what I write may be clearly understood.

This is a plea for the recognition of God's sovereign, electing grace manifested not only in man's salvation, but in setting apart whom he will to the sacred work of proclaiming his revealed will, as messengers sent of God who, like Elijah of old, feel themselves standing as they preached in the presence of Jehovah and responsible to him for every word they utter.

I venture to affirm that the Scriptures teach that God elects whom he will from among his people, and provides them with such qualifications as are needed to do the work of divinely appointed teachers of his word.

And further that the churches of God have a solemn warning to be very careful to lay hands on no man suddenly in setting him apart to this work, lest they be found to send a man whom God has not chosen. Is it not strange how distasteful Pauline doctrine is to some people when they once commit themselves to advocating lay preachers and women preachers, and "cyclone evangelists"—thank you, Bro. Editor, for this last term. If you find a man shaky on the sovereignty of God, whether displayed in man's salvation from sin, or in such unerring guidance and masterful control of man by his Spirit as to put whom he will into the ministry, and to save by such instruments as he himself chooses, then you can expect to find him trembling and uncertain about other teachings of God's word.

Does God call men without consulting their preferences? Yes, and by that supreme law of magnetic control, "The love of Christ constraineth us," he makes the work of service sweet, and sustains by his almighty power even to death. These truths are so manifestly taught in God's word, and verified in human experience, that the writer thinks it quite sufficient to pass on to the subject proper.

Is there a specific call of God to the foreign field? In reply, I would say there is. Let me define my position more clearly by saying that the foreign field is only a convenient term for designating a particular field of work. A parallel case found in early Christian church history was the preaching in Jewish and Gentile lands.

That one who has entertained a distinct call of God may be led to change his field of labor without the conviction that God is calling him to another field as surely as that he called him into the ministry, though perhaps through different means, and with different experiences, I admit may occur, but think it should not occur. So that the call transferring a preacher from the home field to the foreign, may not mark so important a transition in his religious experience, or be accompanied with such spiritual and mental exercises as he knew in his call to the ministry; still if the question is carefully weighed and decided cautiously, apart from romantic or poetic fancies, he must pass through a struggle, and should only be led to give him-

self to this work because he feels that the Spirit of God is striving with him, and that in heart experience, in providence, he hears the still small voice calling him from home to go to a heathen land. It may cost no long, bitter struggle, but if he can not say I am called of God to this work, then I see no reason why he should go.

As bad as the work needs missionaries, let us have no men who have not been sent of God. It is almost sure to be a sad sequel if one comes to the foreign field without decided convictions on this point. That one may be called to the foreign field without a previous call to the ministry is clearly taught in Paul's experience. God said to Ananias, "For he is a chosen vessel to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel." Notice here God's sovereign choice and the selected field of labor. When he would remain in Jerusalem to testify before those who had seen his previous persecution of the church, the Lord distinctly reminds him of his call to another field. For further proof of the divine nature of Paul's call to a specific field of God's sovereign will, see Acts, 13th chapter and first few verses. But I would call attention to Paul's experience related in Acts 22: 21. Paul, before the call of the Holy Ghost to the church at Antioch to set apart Paul and Barnabas to the Foreign Mission work, was pleading with God to be allowed to remain at home, and for what seemed weighty reasons; but notice again the two points of God's sovereign voice not in argument, but command, "Depart," and the specific field designated, "for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." Other teachings of God's Word are quite confirmatory of this position. This does not exclude an occasional overlapping of fields of work, so that the missionary may preach anywhere and to anybody, only it fixes beyond question where the path of duty lies as ordained of God, and where his life-work should be.

As to whether the call is to work for life in the field chosen for him, this should be a matter decided by himself according to God's guidance. Providentially God decides this matter for most of his servants whom he sends to the foreign field by giving them such environments as to make it necessary that the worker should give his whole life to this one field. Philip's call to preach to the Eunuch, and Peter's to the centurion Cornelius, had the limit of time fixed, and really did not take them into the foreign field. Theirs was more like the work which some of our churches are doing at home, who have Chinese and other heathen brought by God's providence to their doors. In the very nature of the case, now and all through the history of the Christian churches, the two fields were so distinct as to require separate calls, and to one or the other for life. Cases to the contrary seem to be exceptions.

Personally I believe my call to the ministry was to the foreign field, and not to preach at home. But I conceive it embraced the duty to preach at home, until God opened up the way for me to leave for distant China, and even here I hail with delight any opportunity to preach to my fellow-countrymen or to men of any other nationality, when it does not conflict with the duties of my specific life-work.

Now, come in the disturbing elements. What about laymen preaching? Are they called to the foreign mission work? And are godly women called of God to preach to the heathen, or to teach the truths of God's Word? Nowhere is practical wisdom and common sense more needed than on the foreign field. I see nothing in God's Word about laymen being called of God to preach; but I do think it teaches there is work for all to do in God's vineyard. Laymen preaching involves a contradiction of terms, and women's preaching as officially called of God to the pastorate or to public evangelistic services involves an absurdity, or worse, presents a sad example of the utter disregard of the inspired teachings of God's Word.

But that there is a grand work for godly women, and for men who do not feel called of God to the ministry in the foreign field, I think is clearly recognized. Only they should know what their work is, and should feel led of God's Spirit to conscientiously take up this work from a conviction of duty, with due reference to their wise co-operation with all other divisions of recognized church work. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." Great confusion is growing up in some circles of Christian work because of a disregard of these legitimate divisions of Christian labor, and their proper boundaries, and their relations to church work. Disregard the divine call to the ministry, and you find laymen preaching. This calls for women preachers. The current has set in strongly, and hundreds of men, unfitted for pastoral or evangelistic work, and women expecting to do indiscriminate evangelistic work, are coming into all Eastern countries. The reaction is inevitable, and is felt all over Christendom, even to the center of Baptist church life. The spirit of restlessness is in the minds of many of God's people. Great pressure of many artificial kinds are brought to bear on young men and women in all spheres of life. So that the question which once was, "Does God call me to go the foreign field?" has become "Why should I stay at home?"

Dear brethren and sisters, as bad as we need workers, and our cry goes up night and day, "Lord, send us more laborers into the harvest field," do not forget that God is never in a hurry. Let us not precede him, nor presume to direct where or how the Holy Ghost shall work. But let us be ready to answer when he does call us to do a given

work, "Here, Lord, send me." And let us pray God to call many more into the foreign field as ministers of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. L. N. CHAPPELL.
Chinkiang, China, March 15, 1893.

The Kwong Tung Association.

This body recently held its annual meeting in Canton at the chapel adjoining our mission residence. It has been organized seven or eight years, and is composed of five churches in this province of China. It is hoped that soon a church will be organized in the adjacent province of Kwong Sai, and then it is proposed to change the name to the Association of the two Kwongs. Bro. Simmons was chosen Moderator, and two Clerks were Chinese brethren. About fifty delegates were present and several visitors. The exercises were very much like those of an Association in North Carolina, though there were some features which resembled a Union Meeting. The opening service was a prayer-meeting on Wednesday night. At the close of this service, the pastor of the Shiu Hing church baptized two men who had been received for membership by the Tsing Yen church. One of them was a young Buddhist priest. The close of the meeting on Sunday was also marked by a baptism, the candidate being the wife of one of the members of the Canton church.

On Thursday the Association was organized in a very brief time, the committees were appointed, and the body was ready for business. The discussions were introduced by one to three papers, some written by the missionaries, others by Chinese brethren and sisters. Mrs. Graves and a native Christian woman wrote on "How to carry the gospel to the women of the villages," and Miss McMinn wrote on "The opportunities for carrying the gospel to women." These papers were read by some of the brethren. The paper of Miss McMinn is to be printed in the minutes. The papers written by the brethren were on subjects similar to the above. Following the reading of the papers, there were discussions of the subjects by many brethren, sometimes extended, nearly always interesting and pointed. Some brethren spoke more frequently than others, but there was quite a large number of speakers, larger than could usually be found in a North Carolina Association composed of fifty delegates. One paper was read by a brother who speaks the Hak ka dialect. Very few in the audience understood the reading. But the strange thing was that one of the clerks, who does not understand nor speak Hak ka, took up the paper at once and read it in Cantonese, so that all could understand it. The characters are the same for all dialects, and they have the same meaning in all, but they are called by different names in the different sections.

The order and attention were worthy of all praise. There was seldom any moving about, never any interruption from talking in the house, and always close attention to the speakers.

The entertainment was on a plan which would seem somewhat novel to a North Carolina community. The homes of average Chinese afford but little room for the entertainment of visitors, and the customs of Americans and Chinese are so widely different as to make it impracticable for missionaries to do their part in the usual way. There are several rooms connected with the chapel premises, quite sufficient to afford sleeping room for this number of Chinamen. Every Chinaman, when he travels, takes his bed along with him. So there was need only to provide something to eat. In the church here a collection was taken for this purpose, with this the food was bought, cooked by a man employed for the purpose, and they all ate in common. The noon-day meal, however, was given by Bro. Simmons and Dr. Graves, not only to the delegates from a distance, but to all who attended the meetings. For this purpose they sent to a neighboring eating-house, bought the desired delicacies of Chinese diet and passed them around to all present in the chapel. The first day, the principal item of the bill of fare was said to be five hundred Chinese dumplings and a smaller number of shrimp patties. A poor dyspeptic must forego such dainties. I can join them in drinking tea if it does not come too frequently, and I can do something in the way of eating rice, but many of their delicacies are too much for my feeble appetite and digestion.

On Monday following the adjournment of the Association, a meeting of a very interesting character was held in the Tung Shek Kah chapel in the eastern part of the city. This chapel formerly belonged to Bro. Roberts, once connected with this mission. In execution of the provisions of his will, the property was divided, and the residence fell to his heirs and was sold. The chapel with two vacant lots constituted the half given to the mission. In this chapel has lived for some years Bro. Chau Kam Shing, one of the most consecrated and efficient of our native preachers, who is supported by one of the churches in Brooklyn, N. Y. When not absent in the country, he opens the chapel every day and talks with any who come in about the way of salvation. When first built the chapel was on a main thoroughfare, and was a good place to get a good congregation. But recently a bund has been built along the river front, which makes this street little more than a back alley-way. However, one of the vacant lots extends to the bund, where crowds of people are passing all day. Concerning this lot the meeting was held. Some time ago this brother was quite sick, and for

a time was not expected to live. As a thank-offering for recovery, he desires to have built a chapel on this vacant lot, fronting on the highway. At the meeting held in this chapel, remarks were made by Doctor Graves, the pastor of the Canton church, and by Bro. Chau Kam Shing, and then subscriptions were taken for this chapel. In a little while the sum of \$330 was raised, more than half enough to build the chapel, and a committee was appointed to have charge of the work. Many of the subscriptions were quite liberal, men with salaries of less than one hundred dollars giving for this object five dollars, in addition to what they give for the support of their own churches. Bro. Chau Kam Shing, out of a salary of about one hundred and twenty dollars a year, gives twenty dollars. He has just finished building a large chapel at Sam Kong, far up the river, and to that he gave one hundred and seven dollars. The church at that place is composed of forty-four members, and they have had a hard struggle to finish their house of worship. One of the delegates briefly told of some of their struggles, a story which I have often heard when a collection was going on, and I wondered if he would close his speech, as they usually do, by saying they could not give anything, or by promising seventy-five cents. But he broke the record and said Sam Kong would give thirty dollars.

The statistics in the letters of the churches are almost the same as those in the Annual Report of the Mission. This report closed with the end of the year 1892, while the letters to the Association closed with the Chinese year, Feb. 16th. The Annual Report is in the hands of the printer, and I read the final proof of it yesterday. I hope soon to send the RECORDER a copy.

G. W. GREENE.

From Baltimore.

Dear Recorder:—As church letters often say to Associations, "Another year has rolled around." They who patronize several newspapers are apt to be vividly impressed by the rapid flight of time, so soon do renewed subscriptions seem to come due. To the publisher, perhaps, it seems quite otherwise. I cannot now well afford to do without the RECORDER. Please find enclosed payment for another year.

As to Baptist church news in this city, it gives me pleasure to report general progress. It is doubtful if the work of the churches was ever before so well and successfully done, or the Baptist outlook was ever before so hopeful and cheering. And my conviction is, that we are largely indebted to the young people's associations of various names in our churches for the better work and ever improving prospect. This scribe has been a member of the household of faith fifty-five years, and he cannot avoid contrasting things as they were a half century ago and are now. Well, he is not disposed to say, "The former days were better than these." In that time great changes have been wrought both in the world and in the churches, but I am not old foggy enough to say these changes have not been mainly for the better. Fifty years ago but few young people were members of the churches, and they were expected to keep in the background and to be quiet. Now the young people in the churches are a mighty host, and they are in the front rank of the Lord's army. An old Christian said the other day, "When I was a young man, young men were of small account; now when I am old, old men are of small account." There is a good deal of truth in that statement.

But the indications are that the cause of Christ is continually gaining a better drilled and a more efficient army, and for that we should all be glad and give thanks.

Last night Dr. H. M. Wharton gave his annual church reception. This he gives year by year to promote a better social acquaintance among his church members. It was my pleasure to be there last night as an invited guest and to take some notes. The membership of the Brantly church is now about 600. The deacons say there are not a half dozen of the members that they cannot locate and put their hand on any day.

In a city like this where so many people are ever on the move, coming and going, a church of so large membership does well indeed to keep nearly all in sight. And Brantly church does even better than that, for she keeps them nearly all at work. In the large company present last night there were very few gray heads. Young men and women, middle-aged men and women, make the rank and file of this enterprising and prosperous church. I saw nothing in the reception and entertainment of last night to find fault with, and see how great good may result.

Dr. Wharton has just received a flattering call to the pastorate of a New York church, and is all the time receiving calls to work here and there, but none of these things move him. He loves the Brantly church as they love him.

I should say, before closing this letter, that the Perkins Square Baptist church, colored, dedicated on last Sunday an excellent and beautiful meeting house, costing from \$18,000 to \$20,000. They took down their old house, which had become too small, and at a good deal of self-sacrifice erected the new one. A few years ago this church and her pastor came bodily over from the M. E. denomination to the Baptist faith and order. The Lord has done great things for them.

Yours for Christ, A. J. HINES.
Baltimore, Md., April 13, 1893.
1,003 Lafayette Ave.

A Pastor who Sings.

It is something to his credit if the pastor sings. Among the duties required of him is that of director of public worship. Praise, prayer, and preaching are placed under his control. On Sunday the prayers and preaching are personal as well as representative acts, those of the man as well as of the minister. Is it not important that praise should be also? To make this the case the pastor should be a singer and a leader of singing. Knowledge of music as a science is valuable to him, ability to read notes at sight quite desirable, but surely some familiarity with the simple art of singing is almost indispensable to the highest success as director, under the Holy Spirit, of public worship.

Extremes meet in more senses than one when the pastor passes from the pulpit platform, at one end of the church, to the choir loft in the other. Choirs are not always consecrated Christians who make melody in the heart. All admit that they should be. The best way to bring them to a proper frame of mind is for the pastor to be ex officio one of their number, just as he is in the Sunday-school. He should not usurp the place of chorister or organist, nor make himself otherwise officious, but he should wisely control both by being in fullest sympathy with them. It is hardly well for him to think himself a gifted singer or to allow other singers to imagine he thinks so. Solos by the pastor are seldom in good taste. A singer he may be, but he is always something more. It is his duty to magnify, popularize, and spiritualize the service of song in the house of the Lord. This can be accomplished by keeping close touch with his chosen musical leaders, and by constantly reminding them that they and he are intimately associated in promoting proper expressions of praise to God.

Prayer meetings are turned into praise meetings by a singing pastor. Such meetings will be generally well-attended. Young people will like them; women will enjoy them, as singing is the only act of public worship permitted them. Hymns, wisely selected and well sung, take the place of applause for the enthusiastic. They are the "Amen," "the responsive service," which so stimulates the preacher. Prayer meetings, where singing is made prominent, and if necessary, led by the pastor, will not only be enjoyable, but effective. Hymns of fervency will drown petitions that are dull, wandering, or cold, and make more sweet to the listening worshippers those inspired by the Holy Spirit. Singing may promote revivals; revivals indirectly thrive upon singing. Many a conversion is due to a song baptized in the grace of Christ.

Pastoral visiting is more delightful to the preacher who sings. Elias Dodson, of blessed memory, divided the household attentions of a minister into three classes. If you stop five minutes it is a "vis"; if you remain fifteen or twenty minutes a "visit," but if you prolong your stay for an hour and a half it is a "visitation." How to visit satisfactorily to himself and to others is a problem few ministers out of heaven can solve. Some of us find it practicable to make singing do good in our twenty minutes interview. You can always become friends with the children by singing if it is proper. Once or twice a shy or skeptical girl has been brought to seriousness by a song the preacher manages to have her "play and sing" with him. And that dear old saint in the bed over there, whom you visit often, and to whom you have read the Bible time and time again, and with whom you have prayed frequently, she would like to hear you sing perhaps. Ask if she likes "Children of the Heavenly King," or "How Firm a Foundation." Sing a few stanzas in a sweet low voice and see the face light up or the tears flow, and hear her tell you of how those words were blessed to her heart when it was young and fresh long years ago. Yes, some of us have sung with the dying till they crossed the river and caught up the notes of the ransomed in glory.

Then the home funeral, a funeral among simple-hearted folk, especially country people or those reared in the country is much more sweet and consoling if the pastor can sing what is tender and appropriate. There will be less need of lengthy remarks. Scripture reading, prayer, and singing, often cover all the conditions of a modest and Christian tribute to the Christian dead. Yes, and at the grave, sometimes, sing a hymn and many a heart will grow lighter of its insupportable burden.

In all great religious assemblies—"associations," "conventions," and the like—singing is a very essential part of the exercises as every one knows. The more singing preachers present, as a rule, the more enthusiastic the proceedings. Heaven itself is all the more charming to some of us, as we contemplate it, because it is a place of jubilant song, where there is sounded forth an oratorio of one hundred and forty-four thousand and thousands of thousands around the throne of God. Better prepare for heaven by learning to sing here and now. Sing here and now and you will find heaven on earth.—W. W. Landrum, D. D., in *Seminary Magazine*.

Though the trifler does not chronicle his own vain words and wasted hours, they chronicle themselves. They find their indelible place in that book of remembrance with which human hand cannot tamper, and from which no being save One can blot them. They are noted in the memory of God.—Rev. G. Hamilton.