

**THE CALL, QUALIFICATIONS AND
PREPARATION OF CANDIDATES FOR
FOREIGN MISSIONARY SERVICE:
PAPERS BY MISSIONARIES AND
OTHER AUTHORITIES**

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by Missionaries and Other Authorities by Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions

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STUDENT VOLUNTEER MOVEMENT FOR FOR-
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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THIS is not a systematic treatise on the call, qualifications and preparation of candidates for foreign missionary service. It is simply a collection of papers prepared, with one exception, for *The Student Volunteer*, New York, *The Student Volunteer*, London, *The Intercollegian*, New York, and the Conventions of the Student Volunteer Movement in Great Britain and in the United States and Canada. Each one is by an expert who is fitted to give helpful advice to those preparing for work in the foreign mission field. For the convenience of student volunteers these papers are published in this form, as the original sources are accessible to very few. The reader will discover repetitions. This is to be expected in a collection of miscellaneous papers on the call, qualifications and preparation of missionary candidates prepared by different writers independently of each other. Each paper, however, treats the subject under consideration in an original way, and merits being given some permanent form.

These articles will be of value to students who are endeavoring to decide what their life work shall be. The various phases of missionary work and the qualifications necessary for successful missionary service are clearly presented. Any student, whether thinking of giving his life to foreign missions or not, will be profited by a careful reading of these papers.

It is believed that the volume will furnish a basis for a series of studies on the call and preparation of missionary candidates in the regular meetings of the Volunteer Band. Such a course will not duplicate the work of the mission study classes or the subjects presented in the regular missionary meetings of the Association. To aid Bands in such studies a brief outline has been prepared. It will be sent on application to the General Secretary of the Student Volunteer Movement, 3 West 29th street, New York.

FENNELL P. TURNER.

WHAT ESSENTIALLY CONSTITUTES A MISSION-ARY CALL?¹

ROBERT E. SPEER, M.A., NEW YORK

THERE is an assumption underlying this question, which almost justifies the reply that that which essentially constitutes a call to the foreign field is the absence of a call to stay at home. And although that answer would be altogether too summary, yet, from one point of view, it would be fair to give it. The man who assumes that some special kind of call is required to send him out to the mission field might properly be answered by the inquiry as to what special call other men ought to have to justify them in staying at home. The fact that a man is born in a certain condition does not carry the assumption that he is bound to continue forever in that condition, for he may be born a kleptomaniac. Being born here or there only lays upon us the responsibility of ascertaining whether that is the place wherein we are intended to spend all our lives. However, the answer suggested would not be a fair one. Life is a very complex business, and the Holy Spirit does not work in mechanical grooves. We cannot draw up any brief formula which shall infallibly direct the life. This matter of the missionary call is a complex thing. It involves, for one thing, God's will; and, for another, man's discovery of that will. Possi-

¹Report Student Volunteer Convention, London, 1900.

bly, God may have a will for a man which that man is not willing to discover; or the man may desire to do a certain thing and pursue a given course which is not God's will for him.

There are two points which may help to answer the question in a negative way. First, we cannot assume that the absence of a desire to go to the mission field is an indication that we are not to go. Many proceed on the assumption that, unless they want to go, they are not called to go; but that does not follow. One of the best of our old missionaries in China told me, during his fourth visit to the United States, that he never came to America without meeting dozens of ministers who told him that they had made the great mistake of their lives in not answering God's call to the foreign field; yet they did not discover that they had made the mistake until it was apparently too late for remedy. God will not coerce men. He works along the channels of personal desire and inclination. If we refuse to have sympathy with His Son and with His world, He will not drive us into the mission field. I do not believe that a man has any right to ask for a call to missions which shall be of a character or quantity different from the call to practice medicine or law, or to lay bricks, in his own country. A man has a right to take up any kind of work, only so far as God assigns it to him. We have no right to ask, for missionary work, any leading of a kind different from that which we receive as we look toward this or that occupation at home.

Having said these things by way of clearing the ground, I may now say that there are three elements which enter into the determination of a call to the mission field. The first is the need. We know that,