

CALLED TO PREACH
HEB. 5:4

In these days of strange philosophies and diverse opinions, a time far removed from the Apostolic days, the term, "Called to preach" is often followed by an interrogation point. In fact the expression is so rarely mentioned that it has a strange and unfamiliar sound. Its reality is so rarely emphasised that a great part of humanity has relegated it to superstition and to "Old Wives' Fables." So surely is this neglectful spirit true that when the pastor of most any congregation announces "Called to Preach" as his subject, spontaneously the question arises: "Why preach on that subject before this congregation?"

There was once a valuable pearl lost, and the big world passing by failed to see it. Days, months and years passed by, and one day while looking for a coin of small value, behold! the pearl was found. It had not lost its worth but was now valued at its original price plus the advance on such articles during the time it had been lost.

The above is just simply the story of the "Call to Preach!" To the big world in its mad rush for sensuality, the "Call to Preach" has been lost. The world seeking theories on social lines and philosophies and indulging in a kind of "watchful waiting" for certain results on human society is now beginning to get the rubbish rolled back and is catching a glimpse of the "Call" to preach. When the real "Call" looms up in the world's vision, on examination, it is found to have its Apostolic value plus the gain which has come by increased knowledge graciously imparted by the Holy Spirit during the centuries.

Preaching keeps down unrighteous principles. Humanity is not too blind to see this. To-day when the world is engaged in war, war brought

about by the practice of iniquity, it is seen that too few have been preaching, too few have responded to the vocation that keeps down unrighteous principles.

There is a "Call to preach" and in the mind of the human race there should not be any doubt as to that fact. In ancient times God appointed Aaron and the Prophets, in the time of Christ He appointed the Apostles, and now in the age of the Holy Spirit men are called by Him to preach just as surely as they were called by God or by Christ. Who would doubt the call of Martin Luther, who was so powerful in preaching that he put in motion the Reformation of the sixteenth century? Who could question the call of John Wesley after that his heart "was strangely warmed" hurled himself as a smooth stone against the walls of ritualism, bringing from them a stream of evangelism that flowed into all the world, sweeping into its current not hundreds but millions of souls? Or further, how could we doubt the call of Philips Brooks, when as he lay in state, a woman, once of the under world, but then a Christian, pressed her way through the crowded aisle that she might touch even the casket of the man whose preaching lifted her from shame to communion with her Lord and His Christ?

There is a "Call" to preach, a divine call. And the very fact that too few have answered this "Call" for the power of the gospel to be spread into all the earth does not take from the minister its divine stamp. But on the contrary, the walls of wickedness that have been torn down by the preaching of the few testify to its divinity, for no human institution could have done what preaching has accomplished. Yes, the "Call" is from God. "No man taketh the honor unto himself, but when he is called of God, even as was Aaron" (Text).

Ministers of the gospel have always been few in number compared with men of other professions. Especially is this true today. Why is this? Does God not call any more than respond? Let us answer the latter question first. God does not call every man to preach but He, no doubt, calls more than answer. In answer to the first question, we might

say that in the homes of our people the parents choose the occupation for the child before the talent of the child is known. Fathers do not pray any more for the Lord of the harvest to send preachers out of their homes, but rather hold up before the child other ideals which in times shut out the "Call!" The boy goes to school and in time he is educated for a certain thing because his parents desired that profession for him. The "Call" is still there but since he has equipped himself in the other line and since his parents desire that work in life for him, he goes on, and likely never succeeds.

Something on this order explains why so few boys respond to the "Call to preach!" Then too if the boy expresses himself as wanting to preach parents and others will try to show him that there are not many loaves and fishes in the ministry. Social pleasures must be given up, and so on. All of this tends to discourage the youth of our land concerning the highest calling that can come to man. REJOICE IF YOUR SON IS CALLED TO PREACH!"

I can not recommend to you the preaching of the gospel as a thing of ease, for if such were true why then this blessed calling would be shorn of its glory. It means hardships and perhaps privation. It means the giving up of the hopes you have had of houses and lands. It is to take up the cross with Christ and with Him to help others up to a better life. Jesus struck the key note to the ministry when He said, "I came not to be ministered unto but to minister!"

Although this looks hard to the man out side of the ministry, yet this spirit of serving others let us remember, will blossom, as will nothing else, into eternal happiness. When we come to lay our armor down, we will not be sorry that we have some souls to lay at His feet. We will not grieve over the hardships we had nor the hopes of earthly treasure we gave up, but will rejoice in the sentiment of the poet when he said,

"To serve the present age,
My calling to fulfill,
Oh may it all my powers engage,
To do my Master's will!"

Why is there a "Call to preach? This is a question holding a place in numberless minds and yet one that has an answer. When God set about to make man He had a two-fold purpose in view, namely: first, to create personalities that would live forever and in that living have divine happiness. In the second purpose God made the personalities for His glory. God desired to bring from the dust something with which He could commune. But man fell from his first estate and by this incident God saw that eternal happiness for man, and His own glory were about to be thwarted. So in order that such a debauch might be turned aside, God set out to reveal Himself to man as ETERNAL FATHER, holding in His hands every thing that would make for man's happiness.

But how was this revelation to be made? Why, he came and impressed men's hearts. These men in turn would tell others the impression--the idea they had gotten of God. That is, they would preach, for they would try to show God to man and the revelation they bore one to the other. This went on and on until these impressions were written and till the supreme revelation came in the person of Christ. Christ turned to the Father and sent back the Spirit whose office is still to impress and to give to the "Called to preach" and to others, as for that matter, a better interpretation of the Christ and his will concerning the race.

Under the question, "Why is there a call to preach?" we have endeavored to show that from man's fall God has been trying to reveal Himself to man. He has done this by impressing persons and these persons telling others their impressions of God. So then we see that God really reveals Himself to men through men. By His spirit working through men He shows up sin and its sad results. He in this way also shows its cure. Now is this all that the preaching of men shows? It reveals the fact of everlasting death for the wicked and everlasting LIFE for the righteous. In other words, preaching by "Called Preachers" is God's own method for saving the world from sin and for heaven. This we sincerely believe

answers the question, "Why is there a call to preach?"

This naturally leads up to another question of equal value, namely: "Who are called to preach and How do they know that they are called?"

This interrogation, though, has an answer. It is not too much to say in the answer that every man is called to preach who feels that he ought. When a person sees a need and feels that it is his duty to go to its relief, matters not what he feels his infirmities to be, he is called to that task and should hasten to the work. As we have said above, not every man is called to preach but many more are called than answer.

A person actually knows his call by the Inner Witness. Divinity is not yet dead but comes to the human soul with a marvellous enlightening power, MAKING man to see, "The field white unto harvest and the laborers few", and gives the soul power to recognize the voice crying: "Come over and help us."

Now if there is a "Call" and if God has chosen that as THE method to save the world, why then it is IMPERATIVE that we should answer when the CALL comes to us. WE cannot afford to defeat God's purpose in our lives. No man who tries to defeat God's purpose is likely to succeed or have any real satisfaction in life. FOR YOUR SAKE AND FOR MAN'S SAKE? AND FOR GOD'S SAKE RESPOND TO THE CALL IF YOU HEAR IT!!

In answering the Call to preach, we are accepting a God-given opportunity to help make new world and fit it for the skies. The person called to preach "is called whether he answers or not, the "Call" to him is a charge whether accepted as such by him or not. So then, our lives, whether we wish them to be such or not, if we are called to preach, run with the slightly changed verse of Mr. Charles Wesley:

A charge to keep I have,

A God to glorify,

And never dying SOULS to save,

And fit THEM for the sky.

D/B.G.W.

AMEN

