

and it seems reasonable that they should be put upon a level with vacant congregations, and be allowed like them to give a public formal call to any minister or preacher whose services they might be anxious to secure. At present they can only advertise, invite, and deal privately with eligible candidates for mission labour. In the case of general or mixed societies who have no ecclesiastical constitution, this is perhaps the only course to be pursued; but when a mission is conducted by a church the case is different,—there ought, I think, to be no such restriction. However, because general societies can only advertise, and deal privately with young men, it seems to be generally expected that all who are able or willing to become missionaries, should always offer their services, and that all who do not come forward and offer themselves have no heart for this work. At all times there will be a few ardent minds, such as Milne, Carey, and Judson, who are so deeply imbued with a missionary spirit that no home attractions can allure them, and no foreign difficulties can deter them from following the inborn aspirations of their glowing hearts, or keep them from offering their services to go forth and plant the standard of the cross on the high places of heathenism; and in times of great excitement, when missions happen to be popular, many, with more vanity than missionary spirit, will be forward to offer themselves for the work. In the second voyage of the “Duff,” it is to be feared there were some of this character on board. As the great work of evangelising the heathen, however, must be carried on by ordinary men, these men must be obtained by ordinary means. Modest young men require to be drawn out, yea, sometimes, forced out. This seems almost implied in our Saviour’s exhortation, “Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send (or rather *thrust*) forth labourers into his harvest” (Luke x. 2). This thrusting forth implies not merely that they should be impelled by the strong and efficacious influences of the Holy Ghost, as our Saviour was when it is said (Mark 1. 12), “And immediately the Spirit *driveth* (or *hurrieth*) him into the wilderness,” the word in both places being the same in the original; but evidently also that they should be influenced by all lawful and suitable motives. The Holy Spirit usually worketh through the medium of ordinary means.

When a young man offers his services, there is always a chance of his being refused; and a refusal is more or less injurious to his reputation; but if a committee give a call, and fail in obtaining the person called, they suffer nothing in public estimation. Besides nothing tends so much to silence fears of supposed incompetency, or apparent difficulties and dangers, and, to give courage to meet the opposition of kind-hearted but perhaps injudicious friends, as a clear call in divine providence to engage in this work. And although *vox populi* is not always *vox Dei*, and no human call can be regarded as infallibly a divine call; still a public formal call from the missionary committee, sustained by the Presbytery of the Synod, would present the subject before the minds of most men in a much more impressive and solemn light than the mere private expostulations of some friend or member of committee; and it would not supersede these. I am strongly persuaded that there are many men who would cheerfully accept of such a call, and feel their way thus made clear to become missionaries, who would not think of offering their services.

Some two or three years ago, the United Presbyterian Synod passed some excellent resolutions on the subject of missions, declaring, if I recollect aright, that the Church ought to be regarded as a great missionary institute for the evangelisation of the world; and authorising and instructing their professors to give prominence to this subject in their prelections, and to bring it formally and authoritatively before the minds of the students; and giving full liberty to their missionary committee not only to advertise for missionaries, but to make direct application to students or preachers whose services they wished to obtain. Our American brethren of the General Synod have a mode of recommending by the committee, and of nominating by the Synod, which they consider as equivalent to a call. I should like our Synod to go a step farther, and authorise the missionary committee always, when necessary, to bring out a call for the missionary, on the same principle that a vacant congregation brings out a call for a minister. Unless this power is given them, the committee will always be carrying on their operations under great disadvantages. As a general rule, our most promising young men will be picked up by our vacancies, and our mis-