

away.” They have ceased. Who has miraculous knowledge? Who can speak in languages he has not learned? “For we know in part and we prophesy in part.” How did they know in part and prophesy in part? The message was not delivered by one man at one time, but it was delivered at different times and under different circumstances, by different ones of those who preached under the special commission. The revelation came in littles and parts, as Isaiah said: “Precept must be upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little.” The volume of God’s revelation to man has been completed. That which was spoken in little parts, being put together, makes a perfect record. It is sufficient to furnish the man of God unto all good works. The putting together of littles and parts has made the whole, and it is a perfect law of liberty. It is the law of the Lord that is “perfect converting the soul.” But listen, “When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away,” verse 19 (sic). The Bible is “that which is perfect;” it comes to us by the great commission. It was spoken in little parts, “here a little and there a little.” “That which is in part” the commission to receive and deliver God’s message to man is complete, and “That which is in part” has passed away. If I could speak in languages I had not learned; if I could handle poisonous serpents; if I could drink deadly poison and feel no harm; if I could cast out demons; if I could lay hands on the sick and they would recover; and if I could perform other miraculous things, I might have some right to clam that I am preaching under that commission. Since I can not, I am sure that I am not preaching under the commission given to the apostles. But lest some should misunderstand me, I want to say that the record delivered by these men, under this commission, is yet in force. We must preach it today, but not under their commission. This record must stand until the end of the world.

By this time someone is ready to ask: If you are not preaching under John’s commission, not preaching under the commission given to Christ, not preaching under the commission given to the apostles, where do you get your authority to preach?”

Now, since the days of miracles are passed and men can not depend on direct revelation, all preachers must be in a class with Timothy, Titus and others who studied their message before delivering it. Timothy was not inspired. He was told to “study to show thysself approved of God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” II Tim. 2:15. If Timothy had been un-

der the commission given to the apostles, he would not have been told to study. He would have taken no thought as to what would be said.

Did Paul intimate, in writing to Timothy, that he should help to finish the record? “All scriptures given by inspiration of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” II Tim. 3:16.

Then we must conclude that Timothy’s right to preach came through Paul. God gave Christ a commission, Christ gave the apostles a commission, the apostles gave Timothy a commission. But when do we, in this age of the world, get our commission? Listen, here it is: “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also” II Tim. 2:2. Since that time all true Christians, “faithful men who are able to teach others also,” are called to the ministry. God does not require men to preach who are not talented. I am not in a class with the apostles, but I am in a class with Timothy and Titus as far as preaching the gospel is concerned.

Paul wrote his last message, a (sic) far as we know, to Timothy. He realized that the end of his earthly pilgrimage was near. He had spent a few years of faithful service to God. He gave this young man a picture of the trials that were before him as a minister of the gospel. “Endure hardness as a good soldier” tells the story of the minister’s life. He warns the ministers against youthful lusts. He tells them to avoid useless wrangling. In preaching the word, he was to be “instant in season and out of season.” “The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.” That time has come, but a change will come.

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Barnes church of Christ

6001 Gardner Dr.
Oklahoma City, OK 73150
Office Phone: 405-736-101

Lessons From Pioneer Preachers

MY CALL TO PREACH

*By: E. M. BORDEN
Oklahoma City, OK*

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Possibly I could not have selected a better subject than the question that will bring before you my right to preach. Have I a right to preach? Whence came my call? If I convince you that I have a right to preach, possibly you will hear me with greater confidence.

If impressions on the mind could be taken as a call to preach, I was called to preach before I became a Christian. From my childhood and before I understood the gospel, I had a desire to preach. I could not at that time have told why.

No man has a divine right to preach unless he has been called, and every true gospel preacher has been called. We are often accused of not believing in the call to the ministry, just because we do not accept the evidence that some people give of the call to the ministry. Dreams, feelings, imaginations, etc. are not to be taken as an evidence of a call to the ministry. We do not believe in a direct call. The apostles were called by the Lord, directly, for the Lord was there, but men are not called that way today. Every man who was directly called was qualified for the work, and could speak in the languages of the various nations who were on earth at that time. Men of this age who mistake a June-bug's noise in the tree top, and the braying of a Spanish jack or who, as Bryan said: "Take chronic laziness" for a call to preach, can hardly preach in their own language correctly; much less the language of others, and shame the God of heaven by claiming that their message is directly from God; thus making Jehovah responsible for their terrible blunders.

Most all preachers who take feelings as evidence of pardon, take the same evidence of a call to preach. Feeling is not an evidence of pardon; neither is it an evidence of the call to preach. We can not believe that such men are called. No man is divinely called who is preaching a false doctrine. Does God call one man to preach one doctrine and another to preach a different doctrine?

Occasionally a man will present himself as having been called, but his brethren refuse to accept him. Was he mistaken in his call? Did the Lord make a mistake? If one man could be mistaken in his call, could not others be mistaken? The man who has scriptural evidence of a call to the ministry never has a doubt in his mind as to whether he was really called or answered when some other man was called. Our call is from God, but not directly. Men are called by the word of God or they are not called at all.

If the Bible tells us to expect a direct call, we will wait until it comes; and if it does not come we will take it for granted

that we are not called. The man who waits today for a direct call will wait in vain.

When a Christian is convinced that he is able and talented, and by experience finds that he can do the work of an evangelist, he is called to the ministry. When the Christians find a man of this kind they are willing to send him and support him.

My right, or my call to preach, is either in the Bible or I am not called to preach at all. If my call is in the Bible, where shall I find it?

John the Baptist was commissioned, called and sent. The apostles were commissioned, called and sent. Evangelists went forth to a direct call; but how do I get my call? John was in a class to himself. His work was limited. When he did all that the commission demanded, his commission ended. No man can preach under his commission. Jesus did not preach under John's commission, for John prepared the way for Christ. The commission that Christ had was different from the commission of any other man. He complied with his commission and no man can labor under the commission that God gave him. The apostles and evangelists had a certain work to do. Their commission was to them. I am frank to say that I am not preaching under the commission given to the apostles. I preach the same doctrine, but under a different commission.

In the first commission Jesus gave to his apostles, he told them to go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. They were only sent to one nation. It is easy to see that I am not preaching under that commission, for I seldom preach to a Jew. After his death, burial and resurrection, he gave the apostles another commission. This time he told them to "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:16) "Go ye therefore and teach all nations."

Men today are not preaching under this commission for several reasons (sic). First, it was given to them and to them alone. Second, we are not qualified as they were. Third, it has been fulfilled. That commission was given to certain men, who were qualified to carry out the demands of the commission. The commission ended. They could do no more than the commission demanded. They were required in the commission to preach to all nations. Could they do this without being qualified? Did they preach to every creature? Yes, their sound went to all the earth and their words to the end of the world. "So faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. But I say, have they not all heard? Yes, verily their sound went into all the earth and their words unto the ends of the world" Romans 10:17-18. Now let us read Col. 1:23 "Which ye have heard and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven." These two passages prove they carried out the demands of the

commission while they were alive on the earth. That commission has been fulfilled.

This commission was given to certain individuals who were miraculously qualified to carry out the demands of the commission. When that was done the commission ended. When these men did all the commission required, the commission ended. These men had no successors in their office. These men were required to "preach to all nations" "preach to every creature." Did they do this? Hear Paul: "So faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. But I say, have they not heard? Yes, verily their sound went into all the earth and their words unto the ends of the world" Romans 10:17-18. "Which ye have heard and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven" Col. 1:23. These two passages prove that the commission was completed during the lives of these inspired men. They completed the work. They were qualified to fill the place. They finished the work, and the commission ended.

Again when Jesus gave the commission he said, "And these signs shall follow them that believe, in my name shall they cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them."

Every man who preached under this commission could do these things. They could cast out devils, they could speak with new tongues, and Paul handled a poison serpent. We can not do these things. These miracles were connected with the commission. They could not carry out the demands of the commission without these signs, especially the speaking with new tongues. If these miracles are still in force, then it might be possible for the inspired men to have successors in their office but the miraculous days have passed.

Paul settles this matter in the twelfth and thirteenth chapters of I Cor. "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondary phophets (sic), thirdly teachers, after that helps, governments and diversities of tongues." These helps of a miraculous nature, diversities of tongues, etc. were necessary at the beginning of the church. In I Cor. 13:8 Paul says: "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophesies they shall fail; whether there be tongues they shall cease; whether there be knowledge it shall vanish