

St. John.

Student Volunteer Series, No. 5.

Student Volunteer Book

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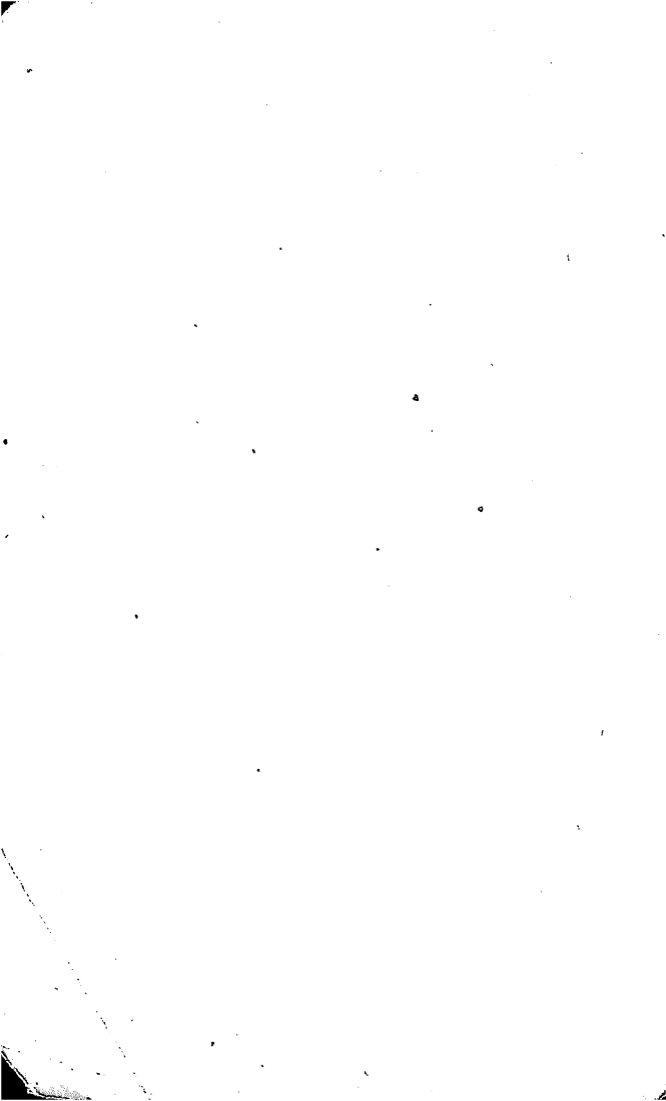
SELF-PERPETUATION

OF

THE VOLUNTEER BAND

BY

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THE SELF-PERPETUATION

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The self-perpetuation of the Volunteer Band : Is it necessary ? Is it possible ? Why is it desirable ? How can it be realized ? These questions it is the purpose of this pamphlet to answer.

I. *Self-perpetuation is necessary.*—The traveling secretaries of the Movement cannot visit institutions often enough to insure permanency of interest. Of the four hundred and fifty institutions in which there have been volunteers, they have never been able to reach more than one hundred and seventy in any one year. Even if they were able to visit each institution once every year, the problem would not be solved ; for continuous effort is essential to abiding interest. Is it not then clear that if the Bands are perpetuated, they must be self-perpetuating ?

II. *Self-perpetuation is possible.* — If the traveling secretary can secure volunteers in a single visit, the students themselves can do far more when they have unlimited time. Their opportunities for educating their fellow-students on the subject of missions are constant and abundant. Moreover, all experience proves that students are best reached by students. The experience of the past proves the power of the Bands to perpetuate themselves. Testimony might be given from many colleges showing that without any help from the outside, but merely by their own efforts, the Bands have been steadily growing from year to year. Of the fourteen hundred new volunteers of 1890-91, one hundred more were enrolled by the Bands than by the secretaries. Of twelve hundred in 1891-92, twice as many were enrolled by the Bands as by the secretaries. This tendency is most hopeful.

III. *Why is the Self-perpetuation of the Band desirable?*—Numerous advantages come to the Band itself, to the new volunteer, and to the Volunteer Movement

where the principle of self-perpetuation is operative.

1. Advantages to the Band.—Two things are involved in self-perpetuation : the permanency of interest in the individual volunteers and their securing of others to take their places when they leave. It is easier to study missions for the sake of interesting others than to deepen one's own interest. This incentive should be kept constantly before the minds of the volunteers. One important result of such study however will be the greatly increased interest of those who engage in it. And all of this study of missions, let it be remembered, is of great value in preparing for a life-work on the field. Nor is there anything which will drive a man to God in prayer and promote his spiritual life more than this definite, personal effort to lead his fellow-students into close, active sympathy with Christ in His mission to the world.

2. Advantages to the new volunteer.—Maturer consideration, deeper conviction and firmer decision are possible in

the volunteer who reaches his decision as the result of the patient work of his fellow-students, than is often the case when he decides, without much previous consideration, under what might be called the special pressure of a visit from an outsider. Moreover, when one does reach a decision, it is of the utmost importance that he come at once into a warm, working, missionary atmosphere. His interest will then steadily increase. And if secured by a fellow-student, the new volunteer will be more inclined to try the same plan in winning others.

3. Advantages to the Volunteer Movement.—If each Band will thus perpetuate itself, it will allow the traveling secretaries to enter many new institutions; it will make their visits of immeasurably greater value when they do occur; it will allow more time for speaking to churches and enlisting their hearty co-operation; it will be multiplication instead of addition.

IV. *How can the Band perpetuate itself?*

1. By organization.—This need not be elaborate, and should not be too rigid. No constitution is necessary. It is well to have a leader and a correspondent. These officers correspond to the chairman and the secretary of committees in charge of other forms of Christian effort. They should be chosen by the Band before the close of each school year, to serve for one year. In colleges, the leader of the Band should be a member of the Missionary Committee of the Christian Association, and the Band itself should be an integral part of the Association. Experience proves beyond all question that the Band is under the most favorable circumstances for self-perpetuation and multiplication, when allied to this permanent organization as an organic department. That some of the volunteers may not have all of the work to do, and all of them may have something to do, and each may have the

particular thing to do for which he is best fitted, a careful subdivision of the work should be made.

The following are the most important lines of work for the Bands to undertake, and where there are enough volunteers, a committee should be appointed by the leader to take charge of each of them.

(1) The Band Meeting. The best thought of a strong committee should be given to making this meeting the most efficient possible. The committee might also give special attention to promoting missionary Bible Study, to securing the best missionary music, and to securing or preparing a missionary Calendar of Prayer to be used by the Band.

(2) Securing and Circulating of Missionary Literature. To the committee in charge of this department may also be assigned the duty of obtaining or making missionary maps and charts.

(3) Organized Personal Effort. The committee appointed to this work should contain some of the most efficient workers in the Band. They should delegate personal work to other volunteers, follow

up difficult cases, and above all set the example themselves of habitual personal work for new volunteers. In order to have this committee one of peculiarly strong workers, it may be necessary to appoint on it some persons who also serve on one of the other committees.

(4) Correspondence with missionaries and absent volunteers and the collection of a missionary museum.

(5) Work among young people's organizations and churches.

If the Band is a large one, the work may be still further subdivided and the committees enlarged. Choice should be given to each one if possible as to the particular line of work he shall do.

2. By Preparation.—By this is meant the personal preparation of each volunteer for aggressive work. If the Band perpetuate itself, it is not enough that the volunteers be willing to work. They should also acquire special fitness for work. How can each volunteer obtain such preparation? Study, actual work and prayer are the best means to this end. The study should be of the Bible,

with special reference to missions and of missionary literature, including the best books, current literature and tracts. The study of the lives of leading missionaries will be found of special value in this connection. There should also be a careful study of the common excuses made for lack of active interest in missions with reference to meeting and answering them when met in personal work. The results of all such study should be recorded in a systematic way. A suitable plan for this is suggested in the pamphlet on The Band Meeting. The meetings of the Band should be so arranged as to promote systematic and continuous study on the part of every volunteer. Skill also comes by doing. No amount of theory will suffice. Actual work in connection with study is the best preparation for future work. Of all the elements, however, in preparation, the most essential is secret prayer. "Fall upon your knees *and grow there.*"

3. By Education.—We have now, presumably, the necessary Band organization, and personal preparation. What

next? In a word, *educate*. It is no more true that people "do not know because they do not care," than that "they do not care because they do not know." "Facts are the fuel with which missionary fervor is fired and fed." It has been true in your case. It will be true also with those for whom you work. The possible methods of education in most of our colleges are multiform. The monthly missionary meeting of the Association furnishes one splendid opportunity for impressing on all students the great facts of missions, and the greater truths of the Bible concerning missions. Let this meeting be made a mighty power in every institution. Too often it is monopolized by the volunteers. This is a great mistake. They doubtless have an important part to perform, but others are frequently interested in the subject for the first time by their study in preparation for taking some part in this meeting. The Missionary Committee should not fail to give those who are to take important part in the meeting, adequate time for thorough preparation. In addition

to this, they should always give them full and specific directions as to where to find materials on the topics suggested. This will save those taking part much time, and will also secure wider reading, and hence more thorough preparation. This is not the meeting for extemporizing. If it is uninteresting, it is in nearly every case due to the lack of sufficient preparation.

The Band meeting also should be used as an educating factor. Not that it should be a large public meeting, but it should not be limited ordinarily to volunteers. Others may find here just what they need to deepen their missionary convictions. A general public invitation to this meeting seldom accomplishes the desired result. The best plan is for volunteers to bring individuals with them to the meeting, or at least to give them a personal invitation to be present.

A third and most important method of education is through missionary literature. In most institutions, this feature is practically ignored. The problem is

rapidly changing from how secure, to how circulate this literature. The following plans have been used effectively in different places. Call attention to books through the College paper. Recommend in the monthly Association meeting a *few* striking chapters in books and interesting articles in the missionary periodicals of that month. Put such a list on a public bulletin board every month. Loan your own books and periodicals to be read, calling attention to the strong features. Each volunteer should keep a supply of selected tracts to use in personal work and to enclose in letters. A social may be given by the Band, at which choice books are displayed and brief comments made on each. Keep the missionary books in a very accessible and prominent place. Refer students appointed to prepare on certain topics to the most interesting available material. In short, get definite persons to read definite things which will be of real interest and profit to them. When once they have become somewhat interested, let not your interest

in them lessen, but rather increase. Of course all of this implies that you are reading missionary literature yourself. This is essential if you would stimulate study in others.

The educating value of maps and charts is beginning to be realized. The eye should be appealed to as well as the ear. This will add greatly to one's power to interest and influence others. A competent committee can, at very small cost, have some new chart or map in connection with the subject presented in nearly every meeting. It would be well for each volunteer to make a map of the field to which he expects to go, and hang it up in his room. Among other advantages, he may use it as a text for many a missionary sermon to his visitors. If not a map, something else of a missionary character may be hung up and used in this way.

It is written of Christ, in Mat. 9:36, that "when He saw the multitudes" in their condition of distress "He was moved with compassion for them." If it could but see as He sees, the

multitudes to-day who are in distress and spiritual famine, can there be any doubt that the Church would be so "moved with compassion" that the present missionary force would be at least doubled within the next twelve months? Our great privilege is to help Christians *to see*. In every way then, let us educate.

4. By Personal Work. — In his wonderful little book, "The Life of Christ," Stalker says: "Christ's plan was to establish the Kingdom of God *in the hearts of individuals* and rely not on the weapons of political and material strength, but only on the power of love and the force of truth." If the work of the volunteers in securing others is largely successful, it must be intensely practical and personal. Some of the volunteers have been used to lead one or two or ten or twenty, and in some cases more of their fellow students to the point of decision and thus have multiplied their lives many fold. But, in almost every case, this was done by quiet, *individual* appeals. Even at the Summer Schools, where so many men have volunteered,

while the very strongest public addresses on missions have been given, it has been a noticeable and notable fact that the number of new volunteers has been in proportion to the amount of personal work done on the grounds. When once the volunteers reach the foreign field, their opportunities for such work are cut off. But some of them are doing as much now for the evangelization of the world by interesting others and leading them to go, as they may ever be able to do by direct work on the field.

Mr. Moody's oft-quoted principle applies with peculiar force in this connection: "Better set ten men at work than do ten men's work." Every volunteer should be an earnest enlister of others. Where the Bands have been growing steadily stronger, this kind of work has been the most prominent factor in causing the increase. Where they have been growing weaker and smaller, personal work has been uniformly neglected. Results are often slow to appear, but the reaping always follows the sowing. In many cases the harvest

has appeared after many days. This is a work requiring patience, persistence and unwavering faith, but it is sure to be abundantly rewarded.

5. By Supplication. — Prayer prepares the worker for his work, opens the way of approach, enforces the facts presented, convinces the will as argument alone never can, *thrusts men forth*. The evangelization of the world in this generation hinges on this single essential condition, the prayers of Christians for the sending out of laborers. "How little Christians really feel and mourn the need of laborers in the fields of the world so white to the harvest, and how little they believe that our labor-supply depends on prayer, that prayer will really provide 'as many as He needeth.' So wonderful is the surrender of His work into the hands of His Church, so dependent has the Lord made Himself on them as His body, through whom alone His work can be done, so real is the power which the Lord gives His people to exercise in heaven and earth, that the number of the laborers and the

measure of the harvest does actually depend on their prayer." "Ask and ye shall receive." "According to your faith be it unto you." "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will and it shall be done unto you." "The harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few; *pray ye therefore* the Lord of the harvest, that He send forth laborers into His harvest."

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Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions

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