

# 50 Articles of War

GEORGE SCOTT RAILTON

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## RIOTS

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Fourteen wounded! How dreadful it sounds! We have been hearing of many thousands of wounded men. But then it was in war. It was far away. They were strangers. Today it is Englishmen in an English town firing upon their own townsmen—wounding, killing, destroying, rioting in broad daylight. Mills burning, houses wrecked, soldiers marching up and down, cavalry charging upon the crowd, stones flying, terror spreading far and near, terror intense enough to kill the weak and timid—all this in England, amidst one of our most thickly populated, and once most prosperous, industrious, and peaceful districts. What are we coming to? one instinctively asks. Are we going back to the days of violence we have been looking upon as so far left behind? Is this the way in which trade disputes are going to be settled henceforth? Must we expect to see populations today peaceful rush tomorrow in infuriated murderous mobs from place to place to injure and even destroy property and life?

### RIOTING SOULS.

Oh that the thin veil between the seen and the unseen, between the world of bodies and the world of souls, could just be drawn aside for a moment from everybody's eyes, that they might see where lies the secret of all these horrors and dangers, and the far more appalling horrors and dangers which are so common in spiritual things!

Listen! Next Sunday evening from eight to ten there will be riots against God throughout the length and breadth of the country, in which the most respectable of the community will take part with the great mass of the rioters. The fruits of that riot God alone will be able fully to see, and yet even in this world they will be bad enough and numerous enough.

The moment preaching is over, with one untied movement, crowds will rush from every place of worship into the streets, to swell the multitudes already rioting



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there. Ministers too tired for prayer meetings, praying men who “really cannot stop tonight,” all manner of people who are “glad to hear of the good work,”—these will in many cases lead the way, and in a few moments the pathways will be thronged with well-dressed folk who have been for hours in what they call “the house of God;” but who, casting His fear off from them for another week, will show themselves instantly untied with all the rest in open hostility to Him whose service they had just been to all appearance engaged in.

Good impressions and resolutions and vows will be shivered like the broken glass of the Lancashire mills by thousands in a moment. Weakly ones who had already all but denied their Lord, will throw off His yoke, and spend the first wretched backslider’s Sunday evening. Thousands who have just seen the light of God’s truth, will stumble out with aching hearts into the darkness, and never see light again. Violence will be done to the Spirit of grace, and the blood of Christ will be everywhere trampled under the feet of multitudes who have treated it as an unholy thing. The fiends of hell will shout to see the dead that were almost brought to life sink into deeper death and corruption, and the lost that were well nigh found wander father away than ever.

And where will the authorities be? Here and there you may find a minister with a company of his people on special duty in some well chosen spot, surrounded by some hundreds of rioters, and endeavoring to persuade them to give up their rebellion. Where ever they are in strong enough force The Christian Mission dragoons will be patrolling the streets, heedless whether their coming is looked upon with wondering pleasure or saluted with jeers and stones. But all these put together will be but handfuls amongst the millions who have no fear of God before their eyes.

The newspaper will never mention it at all. They will call it a beautiful, calm Sunday evening, and if any remark is made it will probably be by way of objection to the few loyal subjects of the King of kings who attempt to stay the fearful conflict against His authority. “You should not disturb us,” say they, “Do not obstruct our thoroughfares.” “Do not make a noise.” “Let us alone.”

On Monday the ranks of the rioters will be swelled by the arrival of those who the day before had determined to hold aloof from them, and to serve the Lord, but who will give way beneath the pressure of the rest, and trample His



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commandments under foot. Many who were profuse on the Sunday in professions of loyalty, will be found displaying the basest ingratitude to Him to whom they owe their all, and acting like the rest. Some even of those who were standing as the servants of the Lord on the Sunday, will be seen running to and fro with the reckless mob, regardless of truth and righteousness, and greedy only of their own advantage.

Matters will go on thus, getting worse and worse all through the week, as day after day there will be found fewer and fewer people disposed "to put themselves out of their way" to show any special allegiance to God until Sunday comes again, bringing a momentary lull in the awful tempest only to be followed by more rioting and destruction and misery. Instead of broken windows and furniture, broken laws and pledges and hearts. Instead of bruised and wounded bodies, souls dragged down into the mire of sin and trampled in the dust. Instead of buying property, souls burning in the eternal flames of hell!

Is there any fancy in all this, or is it the sober recital of everyday life such as it is all around us constantly? Our brothers and sisters torn to pieces, slaughtered, destroyed by thousands before our eyes, in our own streets, seized and dragged away to the eternal prison house one by one into the bargain! It is all only too horribly true. And it is more horrible still to realize how few there are who see and feel all this! Oh what a burden rests on us who do see and feel!

## WHAT MUST WE DO?

Thank God, we must not despair. If it were a human question merely we should say, "Ah, there is no hope—it is all over." But there is a power that can quell the tumult of the people how great soever it may be.

"We have a shield can quell their rage,  
And drive the alien armies back;  
Pourtrayed, it bears a bleeding Lamb.  
We dare believe in Jesus' name."

True, that when we look at the things that are seen the sight is awful beyond all expression. But that is not the place to look. We look at the things unseen. And then we see Jesus, whom they swarmed around the scourged and spit upon



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and crucified and buried; but who is by the right hand of God, exalted to give repentance and remission of sins to the most hardened and abandoned wretches, and to give strength and power to us His people, that we may stand firm amidst the surging billows, and triumph always everywhere. No, we will not despair.

Come and join the army, the army of the Lord,  
Jesus is our Captain, we rally at His word,  
Fierce will be the conflict with the powers of sin;  
But with such a Captain, we are sure to win.

*We must devote ourselves to death.*

It seems almost an absurdity for us to talk of devotion, when we read of the Apostles, who really had to face death every day, and the prophets who were "slain all the day long" for the witness they bore to the Master. And yet, so far as we are called upon to lay down life and health and strength upon the altar of service, we must deliberately and persistently surrender them. It is no joke to be a soldier or a policeman, when to be on duty is to be in momentary peril of sudden death. Surely, we can at least be faithful whilst no such danger lies in our path. Surely we will not be found wanting when all that is required of us is that we should give-up our all to serve Him whom we love, and that in the outwardly peaceful circumstances in which we are placed, we shall spare no exertion and no sacrifice that we can possibly make to help and glorify Him. And if that comes to death, very well, so much the better for us, as well as for Him. To die is gain.

*We must read the riot act distinctly.*

The people have no idea of the awful consequences they are bringing on themselves. Even when warned they turn aside half doubting, hoping they will come to no serious harm. We cannot too often repeat the truth in their ears. We cannot fire too many volleys in the air, if it be only done so as to carry home to the hearts of the riotous the sense of danger and coming doom. Whatever weaker folks may do, let us at least be plain and outspoken. There is a Judgment Day. There is a Hell. There is a worm that dieth not. There is an unquenchable fire. And all the unbelieving as well as all the violently wicked are going to be cast into the lake of fire for ever. Thunder it out again and again! If



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people will be damned, make them see it all beforehand. Flash upon their inner eyes the glitter of the great white throne, and let the smoke of the pit and the scorching beat of its quenchless flames and the distant sound of its wailings raise at least a momentary quiver in their hearts ere they go down to be swallowed up with all its terrors through eternity.

*We must be pitiful.*

The tender voice that comes from out the darkness and the blood of the riot of Calvary, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do," must ever express the all pervading feeling of our hearts. And besides that, we must ever be full of the memory of our own rebellion. "We were by nature the children of wrath even as others." While denouncing with all our might the sin that is committed, and ever speaking out in words of warning that cannot be forgotten, we must prove by all our words and ways that our hearts yearn over them as His does who bought them with His blood, and that we are willing to suffer and to do anything that may help and bless them. The people, even in their wildest moments of frenzy against those whom they look upon as enemies or oppressors, cannot help listening to anyone who seems really to love and care for them.

"Love shall be the conqueror, to bring the glory in."

*We must be violent.*

What can a few do against so many? Nothing at all, unless they act together with energy sufficient to give them the balance of force. People who do not exactly know what to do, who want time to consider, and whose actions are slow and hesitating, are nowhere in a riot. It is the firm, steady, forward tramp of well-drilled feet; it is the instantaneous, perfect fulfillment of a clear decided order given; it is the bold rush and the fearless blow all at once and all together that fill the mob with panic and make thousands flee at the approach of tens. There are, it is true, a terribly small number of people now-a-days who are positive about religion. But so much the greater the opportunity for those who are.



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We know in whom we have believed. We know that He heareth us, and that we shall assure our hearts before Him. We know that we are going to reign for ever. Then let us go forward with boldness, far surpassing even the uttermost boldness of the past. Let us attack high and low alike with the sword of the Spirit, and fight with a fury we have never shown before, until we see, as believing in Him we surely shall see, disorder turned into salvation, and the glory of the Lord our God shall be upon us, and His throne shall be established in righteousness for ever.

