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Collection

Chapter I

Introductory

Section I.

- I. *A great opportunity lies before The Army, and before you as representatives of The Army.*

You have looked at that opportunity; you have wondered about it, and, if you are men and women of God, which I believe you are, your souls are stirred with gratitude at the thought that God has honoured you by any association with a movement that has been the means of so greatly glorifying Him, and so largely blessing the world.

- II. *The use that is made of this mighty opportunity for promoting the happiness of mankind, and the glory of the God of Heaven, very largely depends upon the Field Officers of the Salvation Army.*

Officers make the character of the armies they lead.

This is true of military armies — Napoleon not only led his army, but made it.

This is true of commercial armies. The great fanciers and traders mould the business world. The same may be said of political armies.

This is equally true, if not more so of Salvation Armies. On you, then this responsibility rests.

The Field Officer especially fashions the force he controls, chiefly in three ways: by his mind, character, and methods. In short, he constitutes the mould in which those whom he commands will be cast.

The shape you give the men and women under your command to-day will go down to the third, fourth, and the fifth generations. You are making the kind of Salvationists who will be walking about here five hundred years hence, if the world lasts so long.



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If the Officer is a coward, those whom he commands will be cowards. If he is holy, they will be holy. If he is a man of resistless courage and daring, they will be like him.

Our responsibility for success or failure is therefore enormous. Where we are successful we are not only gaining victories today, but making conquerors of the future.

Let us remember — we shall have to give an account of our stewardship; we are passing over, one by one, to that great Tribunal. My dear wife, Commissioner Dowdle, the Consul, have all gone to give their account. We too shall have to go. The words, “behold I come quickly,” are ever sounding in my ears.

III. *What kind of Officers are required to meet this opportunity?*

I think I possess some ability for pointing out the qualities needed for satisfactorily answering this question.

1. I have read my Bible and pondered over the great responsibilities which lie at the very foundation of an Officer's duties. I hope I have not read that Book in vain.

2. I have listened to the voice of the Spirit of God within me. He has shown me something of what an Officer should be and do, in order that he may efficiently fulfil the mission to which he has been called.

3. I have studied the hearts and circumstances of the men you are sent to save. Human nature is, as we very often say, much the same in all ages and in all places.

What I have seen of the failings, the prejudices, and the sins of men with regard to religion during my life should be of service in helping and guiding you in your warfare.

4. I have profited by the experience of other warriors on the field: from those of the prophets down to the last Army Captain who has any reputation for bringing men to God.



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In the days of old, men walked over land, and sailed over water, thousands of miles, penetrating the depths of barren wildernesses and tractless forests, in order to gaze upon some skeleton hermit who had acquired a special reputation for holiness, or who had gained a more intimate knowledge than his fellows of the dealings of God with men.

Something like this has been my custom ever since I was a youth, fifteen years of age. To hear of anyone possessing any extra skill in soul-saving has been enough to excite my curiosity, lead me to seek a knowledge of their doings, and carry me to their feet.

Surely, I must have learned something from these worthies. What I have learned I want to tell you.

5. I have studied the needs of the world around me. A large part of my life has been spent in considering and mourning over the sins and sorrows of men, and in making plans for their deliverance.

6. I have had some personal experience in this warfare. It is nearly sixty years now since I made my first attempt to influence men in favour of salvation.

Could I tell the number of individuals whom during that time I have seen kneeling at the mercy-seat it would sound like a fiction.

Perhaps I have been as highly privileged in this respect as any man that ever lived. God has indeed endorsed my work with His blessing.

I think I know you, my comrades, and have some idea of what you are able to do, and the circumstances in which you are called to labour, and I am sure my heart will not allow me to ask from you what is beyond your ability to give. Nothing can be gained by seeking impossibilities.

Section II.



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- I. *I propose to tell you frankly what I think is the kind of Officer called for at this juncture of our history; and, among other things, I think he should answer to the following description: —*
 1. He should be possessed of the Spirit of Divine Life. Dead things will be of no use here.
 2. He should be possessed of the Spirit of Holiness. Sanctified men are the world's great need.
 3. He should be possessed of the Spirit of Supreme Devotion to the Object of The Army. Given up without any secret reservations.
 4. He should be possessed of the Spirit of Light. Making men know themselves, and know the things of God.
 5. He should be possessed of the Spirit of War. With fighting Officers The Army can conquer the world.
 6. He should be possessed of the Spirit of Faith. "All things are possible to him that believeth."
 7. He should be possessed of the Spirit of Burning Love. Love never faileth. Love shall be the conqueror.
- II. *You may take the possession of these qualifications as being the will of God concerning every one of you.*
You may take them as commandments coming directly from God Himself.

In the book of Revelation John speaks of the Seven Spirits of God which are before His Throne, and which go out into all the earth to make men know what is the mind of God respecting them.



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These Seven Spirits are still travelling to and fro on their heavenly mission. These Seven Spirits have voices, and speak to the consciences of men. They wait to speak to us. They proclaim what is their Master's will concerning the Officers of The Salvation Army. They will come to dwell with us, and help us to carry out the object for which we exist.

Shall we hear them? Shall we receive them? What do you say? I know your mind. I answer for you. Yes, certainly we will. Let us welcome them as the messengers of God. This they most certainly are.

Section III.

- I. *Here they come. The first Spirit enters. Look at him. Oh, vision of beauty! How can I paint him?*

More beautiful in appearance, but in appearance only, than those who follow him. Lovely roses on his cheeks; quick, vigorous, and active his every movement, while his eyes flash every moment with lustrous light and living fire. In his hand he holds a banner. On one side it bears a representation of the morning sun, and on the other a white-robed spirit rising from the tomb. This is the Spirit of Life.

He speaks. Listen! He says: "O Officers, Officers, I am one of the Seven Spirits whom John saw. I travel up and down the earth on special errands of mercy. I am come from Him that sitteth on the Throne, and reigneth for ever and ever, to tell you that if you are to succeed in your life-and-death struggle for God and man, the first thing you must possess, in all its full and rich maturity, is the Spirit of Divine Life."

- II. *And now here is the second Spirit.*

Beautiful again, beautiful beyond human conception or description; benign of countenance, and calm and restful in manner, with gentle and heart-moving speech; clothed in white and spotless raiment; holy and undefiled. This is the Spirit of Purity.

But see, he spreads forth his wings and looks down upon us and speaks. Hear him: "O Officers, Officers, the Great Father has sent me to tell you that if you would be successful



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in your campaign against wickedness, selfishness, and fiends, you must yourselves be holy."

III. *Now enters the third Spirit.*

Look at him. He is of an even more imposing appearance than those who have preceded him. Upon his shoulders is inscribed a crimson cross; round his loins is a girdle of blood-stained raiment. His bosom heaves with anguish on account of the oppressions, sins, and miseries of a suffering world. This is the Spirit of Devotion.

Hear him. He speaks: "O Officers, Officers, you must be supremely given up to the saving of men."

IV. *And now here comes the fourth Spirit.*

Look at him. He has a strong, determined countenance, and there is a fiery Cross upon his breast. In his right hand he holds a flaming sword, and in his left a summons to the Judgment Bar. This is the Spirit of War.

Now he speaks. Hear him: "O Officers, Officers, you must fight devils, lies, fleshly indulgences, hardships, disappointments, and everything that sets itself up against God, or that is opposed to the living of a holy life, or which threatens the damnation of men. O Officers, at all risks and consequences you must fight for God and the salvation of souls."

V. *Now enters the fifth Spirit.*

Here he comes, bright as the sun at noonday, with eyes before and behind, while shafts of living light go forth from his brow at every turn. See, he holds the Word of God in one hand, and the Morning Star in the other. This is the Spirit of Truth.

Hear him. He speaks: "O Officers, Officers, your work is to make men know the unchanging and the unchangeable truth about the Love of God, the efficacy of the Blood



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of the Lamb, the accursedness of evil, the cruelty of the devil, the terrors of the Great White Throne, the joys of Heaven, and the horrors of the damnation of Hell. To do this you must be filled with the Light yourselves."

VI. *Now for the sixth Spirit.*

Behold him — with eyes lifted up to Heaven and steadfastly fixed on the Throne of God; with bold, unshrinking confidence stamped on every feature. In his hand he holds a crimson banner, on which there is inscribed in letters of gold: "I believe." This is the Spirit of Faith.

He speaks. Hear him: "O Officers, Officers, you cannot do without me. Listen to my words. If you treasure them up in your hearts, and carry them out in your lives, you shall be conquerors. If you neglect them, you will be defeated, no matter how brave you are in other things. You must take the inscription on my banner as your life-long motto. You must believe. You must do it night and day, in sorrow and joy, in defeat and in victory, living and dying. You must be men and women of Faith."

VII. *But here comes the most beautiful and entrancing Spirit of all.*

Who can describe her? No one, for she is divine. Her countenance beams with holy affection, and speaks of inward rapture, and yet her eyes are full of compassionate tears. She is enveloped in a celestial flame, the emblem of the fire that is burning in her breast, while her arms are extended as though they would enfold the whole sinning, sorrowing world in their embrace. Oh, loveliest of all God's creations, who art thou? This is the Spirit of Burning Love.

Hear her. She speaks: "O Officers, Officers; commissioned by the great 'I Am,' I come to tell you that in all you think, or speak, or do love must be the ruling passion of your lives. You must love each other. You must love your Soldiers. You must love poor sinners. You must love God; and that not after a fickle, cold, half-hearted fashion, but with a changeless, quenchless, burning love."



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What shall we say to these Spirits? What reply shall they carry back to the Throne? What answer shall we give to the appeals they make to us in our own hearts? Let us say, "O ye Seven Spirits, we believe; nay, we feel that you have brought us the words of God Himself; and those words we will, more than ever, set ourselves to obey."

And in order that we may do so, my comrades, let us consider them in the order in which their messages have been given to us.