

QUARRELLING

I

Comrades and Friends, -- I want to say something this morning upon a very important and somewhat difficult subject; and that is, Quarrelling.

I need not stop to explain to you what I mean by quarrelling. Every child knows what it is, and most children have had some considerable practical experience of it.

1. -- Quarrelling supposes the existence and display of differences of opinion and feeling between individuals on questions of mutual interest.

This often leads to hatred, malice, and slander, and is only too commonly followed by hot words, bad language, hard blows, and other evil doings.

1. Quarrelling is a wretched business.

When strangers wrangle it is bad enough; when kindreds or friends fall out it is far worse; but when Salvationists quarrel it is worst of all.

2. Quarrelling is opposed to the health and happiness of those indulging in it.

Who can eat, sleep, work, or do anything else in comfort when the spirit of hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness is gnawing like a canker at his heart?

3. Quarrelling is opposed to the temporal prosperity of those carried away with it.

What numbers of people I have known who have lost their situations, bankrupted their families, been ruined in their business, and become estranged from their loved ones for the rest of their days by quarrelling.

4. Quarrelling destroys all true religion.



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It is impossible for a man who hates his brother to love God.

5. Quarrelling at once arrests, and too often terminates, the usefulness of Salvationists.

How can Comrades pray, sing, and fight for souls in anything like unity while they hate and despise one another? It is impossible!

There are some Corps in The Salvation Army today from whence the Holy Spirit has been grieved away, and where the Penitent-Form has been kept idle for weeks, and where Holiness Meetings have been unknown by reason of the quarrelling devil which haunts their ranks.

6. Quarrelling amongst Salvationists is a shameful thing, especially when, as is too often the case, it originates from some insignificant and contemptible action.

The Salvationist who commences a quarrel, and refuses to end it when the first opportunity serves, shows that the quarrelling devil has got possession of him. He must use every means to get rid of this,

And his Comrades ought to assist in the expulsion of the evil one with all their might; and the sooner the casting out of the fiend is accomplished, the better.

II. – But notwithstanding the hateful character of this sin, some people will quarrel.

They never differ in opinion from their Comrades without trying to lower them in the estimation of others, by showing up their faults. They are never happy but when they are miserable; they are never at peace but when they are at war. This kind of people always have quarreled, and always will until the Archangel blows his last trump, and proclaims that time shall be no more.

1. Cain quarreled with Abel, and the difference ended in blood.

2. Joseph's brethren quarreled with him, and it very nearly led to murder.

3. The Children of Israel quarreled, and separated immediately after the death of Solomon, and have never since been reconciled, and have consequently never been the great power for good which God intended them to be.

4. The world is full of quarrels today. Politicians, scientists, money-makers, religionists; nay, all sorts and conditions of men dwarf the value of their work, destroy their principles, and make themselves and everybody about them miserable by their quarrels.
5. There never has been a movement contemplating the benefit of the human race that has not been hindered by quarrelling amongst its leaders.
6. Look at the dreadful wars that every few years desolate the earth, and you will realize, my Comrades, what a curse quarrelling has become.

III. – The causes of quarrelling are almost numberless.

And yet they are often so trifling, not to say childish, as to be positively contemptible. It is a marvel how men and women possessed of an ordinary measure of common sense can allow themselves to be troubled with such paltry matters. Let me mention a few of these causes: —

1. The haughty, irritable state of heart in which some people live is a common source of disagreement.

This state of mind makes the people almost ready to fight their own shadows, if they cannot find some unfortunate saint or sinner with whom to contend.

2. Quarrels often spring out of misunderstandings.

Someone says, that he heard some one else declare, that he had heard some other person say, that this or that individual had not done. Hereupon bad feelings are generated, and unkind words spoken. Then the matter is repeated to others with additions. Sides are then taken, and two parties are created. Retaliation is decided upon, and finally a red-hot quarrel ensues.

Once begun, no one knows how, when, or where it will end. The consequences may be such as will make angels weep and devils rejoice. While all the time a little patient inquiry on the part of the individual who fancies himself injured, would have shown that no one had said or done the thing asserted; or, at any rate, that what was said or done had quite a different meaning from that which had been put on it.

3. Quarrels are often the outcome of petty selfishness.



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There are some people who would spoil their own peace, break the hearts of any number of Comrades, or stop a prosperous Corps on its onward march to victory, in order to gratify a paltry and selfish grudge.

4. Quarrels are always more or less the work of the Devil.

They are hellish in their origin, hellish in their character, and hellish in their consequences. My comrades, is there any of this wretched quarrelling spirit in your Corps? If this is not the case, if in your Corps the spirit of peace prevails, and all are fired alike, not only with the love of God and the love of sinners, but with a true spirit of loving comradeship, your General promises you victory, and gives you his blessing.

But if the devil of hatred and malice has found a dwelling-place within your ranks, I exhort you, in God's name, take measures to get him cast out.

As to how this may be done, I hope, God willing, to give some practical counsel next week.

Meanwhile, I call upon every Soldier here present to pray for a baptism of the spirit of true brotherhood; and I beseech you, one and all, to settle any differences which may exist among you; so that when you meet next Sunday, it may be as a happy family, under the presidency of the Prince of Peace.

Your affectionate General,
William Booth.