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Collection

Chapter XXVII

QUARRELLING
II

Comrades and Friends, — Last week I strove to show you what a terrible evil quarreling is, especially when it exists among Salvationists; and I then went on to describe some of its causes and consequences.

This week I want to inquire how we can obtain exemption from the terrible evil; that is to say, how we can prevent the commencement of quarrels, or how we can kill them after they have started.

My task is anything but an easy one; but I will do my best, and God will guide me.

I. — You must strive to clearly apprehend the hellish character of the quarreling spirit.

The Apostle describes it as one of those 'fleshly lusts which war against the soul.' 'The works of the flesh,' he says, 'are . . . hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, . . . and . . . they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.' (Galatians v. 19-21.)

II. — Let one and all pray against this evil.

David prayed, 'Give us peace in our time, O Lord.' You must cry to God in your time to send peace in your hearts, and homes, and Corps.

III. — You should strive to keep your souls up to a high standard of spiritual life, love, and power.

Most quarrels grow and thrive when those concerned are living in a low state of grace; although I have known mighty soul-saving movements brought to an end right off by quarreling between the leaders.



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So long as the Soldiers of your Corps are full of love to God, and united in plans for saving sinners, they will have neither time nor heart for wrangling.

IV. – When a quarrel is threatened, use every possible means to prevent its coming about.

So this for the sake of your own peace, as well as for the sake of the War.

How much better it is to endure almost any injustice than to quarrel with your neighbor, with the members of your family, or the Soldiers of your Corps!

Again and again through my long life I have acted upon the principle 'It is better to suffer than to contend,' and I have generally found the practice attended with happy consequences; and even when it may have failed, I do not know that I have regretted it.

V. – To those who have the misfortune to be already engaged in a quarrel, let me give the following advice:

1. Seek at once for an explanation of the conduct you object to, if you have not done so already. Consider well whether you may not have put a wrong construction upon the action that has grieved you.

Do not be too sure of the soundness of your view of your own case. The best and wisest of men have sometimes been mistaken in their contention. So do not let this confidence in your own judgement hinder you from making every reasonable effort for peace. It is astonishing how easily people's views change when their hearts get into the right place.

2. Consider whether it may not be most to your own advantage, the advantage of your Corps, and most in harmony with the spirit of Jesus Christ, to forgive and forget the transaction altogether.

3. Be careful to make those who are at variance with you, on account of some real or imagined injury they think you have done them, understand the true character of the offence complained of.



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4. Seek out some individual whose judgement you value, and whose arbitration would be likely to be accepted by the party with whom you are in dispute, with a request that he will endeavor to bring the thing to a peaceful conclusion.

VI. – To those who may be anxious to reconcile Comrades involved in any quarrel, I give the following counsel:

1. Show them wherein you think them wrong.
2. Describe what you believe to be the wisest, best, and most feasible course of action for each party, and then urge it upon their acceptance.
3. Set forth the obligation under which each party to the quarrel is laid to obey Jesus Christ's command: 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you;' and then urge obedience to the spirit of this injunction upon them.
4. Pray with the contentious people, if you can make the opportunity.
5. Show them that, if reconciliation on reasonable and Scriptural terms is possible, they have no alternative but to accept it; that is, if they are to enjoy the favour of God, and keep a good conscience.
6. Get them to confess, in the presence of their Comrades if possible, the wrong things they may have said or done, no matter how trifling these things may appear.

When you have secured this confession from one party, you can rely upon it that if those on the other side are sincere, they will do the same. And then the desired reconciliation will not be very far away.

By this plan I have succeeded again and again in bringing hearts together that in some cases appeared to be sundered forever.

7. If your Commanding Officer cannot help you in trouble, and if it be of sufficient importance, appeal through him to the Divisional Commander. You must have peace in your Corps, if it can be attained at any lawful price.



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8. Seek for a baptism of the Spirit of Love on the parties concerned; that alone will probably be found sufficient to bring all concerned to reason and religion.

9. In every effort you make for peace, whether those efforts concern your own personal agreement with Comrades, or whether they be put forth to make peace between others, remember the example of your Saviour. Consider how He, the Lord of Life and Glory, humbled Himself, even to the shameful death of the cross, in order to make peace between God and rebellious man.

Think how He still beseeches men and women who have quarreled with His Father to be reconciled to Him, and to each other. Go and do likewise.

For old time's sake,
Don't let your enmity live;
For old time's sake,
You'd better forget and forgive.
Life's too short for quarrels,
Hearts are too precious to break;
So give us your hand and your heart,
For old time's sake.

Life's moments are too few to waste in quarrelling. Better far to spend them in fighting the Devil, and rescuing souls from the road that leads to hell.

Your affectionate General,
William Booth.