

WOMAN  
III

Comrades and Friends, — In my last Message you will remember that I tried to explain what The Army meant when it asserted the equality of woman with man.

From what I said on that occasion, and from what you have heard me say elsewhere, I think you will be justified in concluding that in public and private I have always sought to act in harmony with that principle.

I believe that many of my dear people entertain the same view, and consistently act up to it after the same fashion.

Still, notwithstanding this lofty standard, the high position in which we place woman, and the marvelous work she has accomplished in our ranks all over the world, there is room for improvement in the treatment she receives from us.

Among other things —

- I. — We want a higher estimate of her value as a daughter.

There can be no question, I think, as to the fact that a girl is usually regarded as being less important than a boy. No doubt she often receives a less hearty welcome, on her entrance into the world, than she would have done had she been of the opposite sex; and this feeling is frequently made to follow her throughout the journey of life. This is without and just foundation.

It is true that some of the more remunerative forms of employment are only open to men, simply because in the order of Providence it was intended that the burden of the support of the family should fall largely on the shoulders of man.

But this difficulty has been considerably modified of late, for which beneficial change The Salvation Army deserves to be largely credited; and now remunerative forms of employment,

within the range of her physical ability, are coming to be rapidly engrossed by women; while positions of trust, opportunities for usefulness, and the promotion of the highest interests of the race, are coming to be more accessible day by day.

With these fields of labour, and the opportunities of the Social and Spiritual Work before her, no girl in the ranks of The Salvation Army need fear about earning a livelihood, or of securing a future of comfort and happiness.

The preparation needed by our women for this future includes:

1. The elements of a plain education.
2. The ability to do the housework of a modest home.
3. A heart right with God, and governed first by the Salvation spirit.

Other qualifications will be welcome, for they will be keys by which she will be able to open doors to additional comfort and wider spheres of usefulness. Possessing these qualifications she will not need to rush into an unsuitable marriage, or some ungodly alliance that may make her wretched for life, in order to ensure her maintenance.

II. We want a higher estimate and a more generous treatment of woman as a wife.

In seeking a partner in life I am afraid the requirements of many men are often of a very low and selfish order. Some, I fear, have no intelligent idea as to what qualities are needed in a wife. Perhaps no relationship in life is entered upon in a more haphazard manner.

I have often said that I owe much of the happiness of my married life to the fact that, before entering upon it, I had formed, in my own mind, a picture of the sort of woman I needed to best promote my happiness, usefulness, and spiritual development, and to make a happy home for me.

This picture, it is quite possible, prevented my being led away by one of those unwise fancies that so often lead to unions hastily entered into and repented of ever afterwards.

So I recommend every man and every woman to form a rational plan in their minds as to what is required in this relationship to make them happy in heart and home, and what sort of an

individual they need to meet this requirement. This, I am sure, would prevent many serious mistakes.

Having found a wife, every Salvationist husband should place her in the position to which she is entitled, and give her such a treatment as that position calls for.

1. He should begin by making her feel that he regards her as being of equal value and importance to himself.

She is so, as we have seen, and again and again reiterated, whether he admits it or not. The self-sacrificing work he expects her to perform for him must in importance be equal to anything he can do for her.

Is not her work in the holding up of her husband in the paths of righteousness; in the conducting of his home; in the bearing, nursing, and training of his children, as important as any toil of his in the field, the factory, the store, or elsewhere can possibly be? Certainly, it is. Let the husband, then, recognize this fact, and treat his wife with the respect and consideration she deserves.

2. He should exert every reasonable means within his power for her support and well-being.

The meanness some niggardly husbands display, by the stinted allowance they make to the wives for the support of themselves and their families, is beyond contempt, only too often driving them to deception and falsehood. Surely, Salvationists will not in any shape or form follow in this track!

3. He should exercise all reasonable care for her health.

He should watch over it with an eye quick to perceive, a heart prepared to sympathize, and a hand ready to help at the first approach of sickness.

How many men mourn their dullness in this respect when it is too late for loving labour or sacrifice to undo the results of past neglect!

4. He should exert all reasonable effort to promote her happiness.

Unless it be in exceptional circumstances he will not take his recreation, or even attend the Meetings of his Corps, leaving her toiling and lonely at home. He will not forget that she requires assistance and inspiration no less than himself, if her spiritual wellbeing is to be maintained; and, as far as possible, he will see that these needs are met.

5. He should furnish her with all reasonable opportunities for usefulness.

He must give her a chance of helping her Lord by employing her gifts in His service.

6. He should thoughtfully and honestly care for her soul's welfare.

How can it be otherwise? And yet, I am afraid, this neglect or indifference is not altogether unknown. Truly, angels and men may well cry shame in such cases.

7. Every husband should love his wife.

Without love for her he ought not to have married her; and if love be there, let him cultivate it.

III. – We want a higher estimate of the value of woman as a mother.

No wonder at all that the race is today so increasingly feeble in body and mind and soul. No wonder that drunkenness, indolence, and lust, have so powerful a sway over multitudes.

No wonder the world is going astray with lying and cheating, when so little regard is paid to woman in this respect.

The development of a race depends on the way in which it is mothered. Nothing can compensate when the qualities of true motherhood are wanting.

On being asked the question, 'What is the religion of the child?' Napoleon is said to have answered, 'The religion of the child is the religion of the mother.'

Oh, you mothers, how serious and important is your task, for on you rests largely the responsibility for making healthy, useful, and godly men and women.

IV. – To perform this task successfully



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1. The Salvationist mother must herself be holy in heart and life.
2. She must be assisted by the sympathy of her husband.

Without that, how can she hope to succeed.

3. She must possess authority in the home.

The children must feel in this respect the father and mother are one. Anything like divided or conflicting authority will make success most difficult, if not actually impossible.

4. Above all, she must be endued with the Spirit of God.

She should have all the help that Salvation Army means and methods can supply.

Your affectionate General,

William Booth.