

50 Articles of War

GEORGE SCOTT RAILTON

CHEERS!

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“There’s great power in a hearty cheer,” is a remark obvious enough to any one. We hear of men walking 120 miles in a day, and of firemen rushing repeatedly into the midst of smoke and flame—the flagging energy of exhausted bodies and spirits being kept up to the needful strain at least largely, no doubt, by the enthusiastic applause of thousands of spectators.

Then it is worth while for us who, of all others, have the most desperate work in hand to get and to give to one another all the encouragement we can. We little think, accustomed as we are to it day by day, how glorious is the sight of a young convert pressing through a surging crowd to stand with the little group of sacred warriors who are there to preach Jesus. Still less do we know and think of the heroism of thousands who go forth nightly from religious meetings to encounter for 20 hours, opposition, scorn, and abuse of every sort from all by whom they are surrounded, till the time comes again for them to spend an hour or two with their brethren at the Master’s feet. Each day’s life is miraculous. “That which is born of God overcometh the world,” is the only proper explanation of this great sight. But although it is by Divine power and living bread that this wondrous life is kept up, human nature cries out for helpful sympathy, and, as we value the lives of our brethren and the salvation of the people which is so largely dependent upon them, we must cheer ourselves and one another by all possible means.

WE MUST BE CHEERED.

God wants to cheer all His people daily and hourly. No wonder they should faint and fail if they get too far from Him to catch His smile and hear His voice.

His written comforts delight our souls as we read them all through His book; but they all seem only to point us to Him. “Look!” “Hearken!” are the constantly



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recurring exhortations, and only those who wait upon the Lord continually get their hearts strengthened as fully as He desires to strengthen all His children.

“Cheer up!” God writes in splendid illumination across the sky, as poor old Noah, all but drowned, comes forth from the ark to face the world again.

“Be of good cheer!” says Jesus to His sad disciples, almost with His parting breath, as He mounts up to plead their cause on high, while they go down to fight it out below.

God is always doing His very best to cheer us on our way. Let us, who are His, take home to our hearts all the comfort He can give us.

And those who have know God best have done their utmost to cheer us.

“Cheer up!” is the burden of Moses’ cry all through Deuteronomy. “The Lord is set upon doing you good, and He will do it to you though you’ve got me shut out of it. You shall have plenty of everything if you only keep on.” “Cheer up!” gasps poor Job from the dunghill, “though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him. Even if the worms eat up my body, I shall see Him by-and-by, and it will be all right.”

“Cheer up!” shouts Daniel from amongst the lions, “there are angels as well as devils about. I can do very well down here.”

“Cheer up!” cries even tearful Jeremiah, “though I’ve been deep in the mud, I’m out again, and singing too, thank God!”

“Cheer up!” says Paul, “they have done almost everything they can to me, and I’m ready for the worst if they like, for these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

“Cheer up!” says Peter, “even at the worst you are no worse off than others, and the end is near.”

If we are walking in union with these happy men, let us take home all their joyous words and be glad.

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And let us take all the encouragement we can get from our brethren of today. "Precious little that to be got," some one may say. Well, then, the more need to get all we can. God has so made us that we really long for sympathy from our fellows, and let us take the trouble to get it, and condescend to enjoy it. How many miss encouragement either by being too big to let any one know they need it, or by treating with careless hardness the kind expressions of others, thus not only robbing themselves of a worthy enjoyment, but preventing many from exercising their power to cheer as they might.

"None of your clap-trap." No; the miserable attempt to gain empty applause for an empty performance is, no doubt, disgusting and injurious, but that is a different thing altogether from the deliberate drawing of water out of the wells of salvation in the hearts of lovers of God, which may refresh and help us in our journey homewards. It is worth our while to be cheered by *men* who cheer what is God only. Therefore, let us stop to listen to their kind words when we can.

WE MUST CHEER OTHERS.

If we feel that there is very little of mutual encouragement to be had, that is just why we should strive to increase the stock.

That poor creature who has just dropped his head behind another man in the crowd fully believes what we are saying about God and eternity. He wishes he was a Christian; but when he thinks of what he must give up, and what he has to face to get to heaven, his heart fails, and he is just going to turn away with a sigh to be lost. Oh! for a kind hand to take hold of him, and a tender voice to say, "I was as bad as you, and as awkwardly fixed, but God has saved me and kept me; and He'll help you too if you ask Him. Do try!"

That young convert just leaving the hall doesn't look so bright as I should like. "Ah! I'm afraid it's a doubtful case," says somebody. Then why on earth don't you get hold of him, and try to turn the scale right down? As he walks away, devils are hissing into both his ears all that everybody is going to say and do to him all the rest of his days if he attempts to follow Jesus. And they, holding up before both his eyes the picture of himself down in the mire of sin again. Do somebody go and get to know all about his difficulties and fears, and tell him how the Lord has led you.



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"I haven't seen anything of Mrs.—lately. I'm afraid she's not getting on much." And, poor thing, how should she, with an ungodly husband, and five little children, and two unconverted lodgers, and all her "friends" calling her "a silly" for bothering about religion, and nobody to say, "Never mind, God loves you, I believe, and He will carry you through"! Why not go and help her to get on faster—spend time with her, sister; keep the house some evening to let her get out to meeting if you can, but, anyway, look in now and then, and say, "Hallelujah! stick to it!"

"I don't care to call upon him to speak, for fear he should lose the crowd, or spoil the meeting." Poor fellow! and so he must go home feeling disheartened and passed by, and concluding nobody thinks he is any use. Can't you say something that will lighten up his dull mind, and encourage him to do better than he ever did before? Or if there really is no fit opportunity for him, even for a minute or two this time, can't you give him a specially warm word and shake the hand before he goes home to bring him up better next time.

"Oh! I don't believe in people that want so much carrying about!" Don't you now! What a pity you haven't power to drown all such people in their infancy, for the world contains a vast number of them, and without cheering they have a miserable time of it. What does this mean? "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak."

And there's that hearty brother that always seems so very strong and so buoyant. "He can't want any cheering, surely." Oh, but doesn't he? He is always trying to cheer others, and that is sometimes the most trying of all work. You little know how high the waves run round him sometimes. God keeps him afloat, and he rejoices in God always, and always will in spite of everything. But depend upon it, as sure as he's living, he has trouble plenty, though nobody may see it. Give him a warm shake of the hand, and say, "God bless you," as if you meant it, even if he does "seem all right." You have no idea how much the gleam of a friendly look, and the touch of a loving hand, and the echo of a kind word, can strengthen and help him. Try it!

We had need cheer one another. We are sent into the world as sheep amongst wolves, and if we go as we are sent, they treat us as though we were the

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wolves, and if we go as we are sent, they treat us as though we were the wolves all the time.

We are sent to bless and light the world, and they hate us for it. We try to exalt our Savior, and when they hear of Him they laugh and turn away. We try to pull them out of the fire, and they try to pull even those we have got away into it again, and, alas! succeed. It is hard work, and only God could sustain us in it; but let us always be reminding one another that He will do so, and let us cheer each other until we become a thousand times more in number, and a thousand times more courageous than ever we have been. God help us!