

The  
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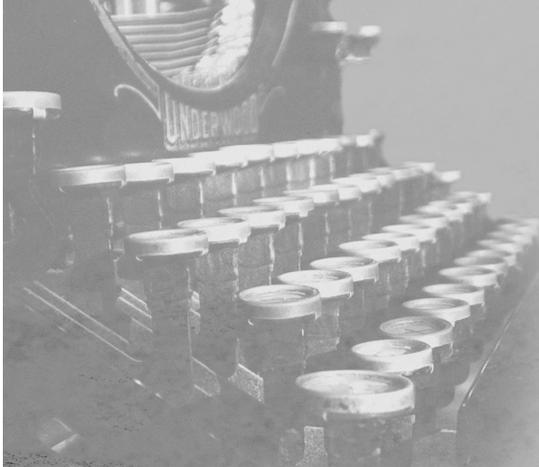
# SALVATION SOLDIERY

## CHAPTER 4: NATHAN STRAIGHT TRUTH!

ALL right, Nathan, you have done your duty, and done it thoroughly. You have succeeded in your errand, but your responsibility would have been at an end all the same, had it been otherwise. There is something here for The Salvation Army to learn. This straight hitting is not common in these degenerate, maudlin days. God Almighty's ambassadors, unfortunately, are not renowned for this outspoken, unmistakable method of message bearing. And yet they ought to be. Who, like them, ought to have brows like brass, and wills like iron, and nerves like steel, and eyes like coals of fire, and words that should be verily, verily, a sharp, two-edged sword, piercing and dividing, and bringing to His feet the enemies of their Royal King. Oh, surely, we are the people that can afford to hold up our heads and. speak the truth, and speak it out, and, God helping us, we will do it. Comrades, listen! Mark the bearing of this Captain Nathan, and note his method of dealing with this Royal backslider, and you shall learn something that shall be of use to you. And from him you may learn to:

Go STRAIGHT TO YOUR POST. Nathan did. God said, Go and speak; and he went straight away, and spoke as he was commanded. Even so, let there be no excusing yourself about your inability and want of voice, or courage, or time, or something else, which too often means that you are too proud or worldly, or are altogether too ashamed of Jesus Christ and His cause, to be known to be on His side. No running away in some other direction, Jonah-like, and only squaring yourself up to duty after some kind of three days' solitary confinement in the belly of some whale or other. No! No! No! Go off at once. Nathan was evidently a prompt, fearless man, and when the message came, he went up and delivered it then and there. Oh, how God must nauseate the people who, always confessing to divine drawings and callings to duty, have to be coddled, and coaxed, and courted into discharging it. We don't believe in a verse that used to bother us many years ago:

"How willing is the man to go,  
Whom God hath never sent;



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How feeble, impotent, and slow,  
The chosen instrument,"

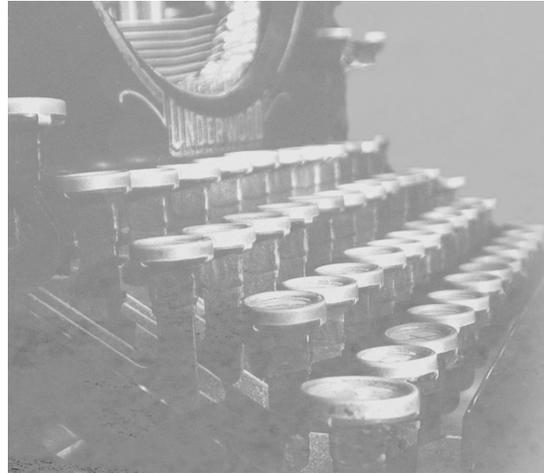
We could not receive this sentiment in those days, although quoted by a great authority. We utterly reject it now. One volunteer is worth half-a-dozen brought in by a press-gang. Commend us to your willing, ready enthusiast before any number of weak-kneed, hesitating people, who have to be dragged into the ranks by force of arguments and persuadings and threatenings. If you have to fill a post, save a town, warn a monarch, or offer salvation to a crossing-sweeper, copy Nathan, and go to your duty straight away.

GIVE YOUR MESSAGE IN THE STRAIGHTEST POSSIBLE MANNER.

Listen to Nathan. Could anything be more appropriate to the circumstances, or more plainly put, or more directly aimed at David's heart than was that message? Read it again, and go and do likewise. Give it as God would have it given. Let there be no mixing up, nor diluting the strength. Give the precious souls to whom you are sent the precious truth which will either save their souls or send them to a lower hell than would have been the case had they never heard the sound of your voice.

MAKE THEM HEAR YOU; COMPEL THEM TO LISTEN. – Men, all men, from the monarch to the beggar, are preoccupied, taken up with business, or pleasures, or glory, or joy of one kind or other. They will stare at you while you talk, and have you believe they are drinking in all you say, when all the while their thoughts are as far away as possible, and they are neither listening; nor comprehending, nor caring for a single word.

Shake them up. Startle them with apparitions of death, and judgment, and devils, and hell. What matters taste and propriety to you? the man, the crowd you speak to are GOING TO HELL – they are almost there already. You will hear they are dead and damned in a few days, unless something happens. So do, for their souls' sake, wake them out of sleep, and then you will have a chance:



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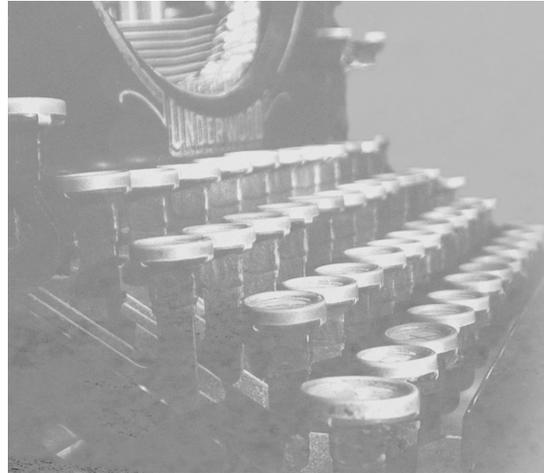
OF MAKING THEM UNDERSTAND YOU. Hear Nathan again.

How deftly he gained David's attention, and how admirably he made his message understood. He could not have done it better. So, my comrades, make the people understand you. On this their destiny hangs. As carefully as the barrister, convinced of the innocence of the prisoner, puts his case before the jury, whose verdict is to be life or death, so carefully must you plead. The verdict you want is not from the jury, but from the criminal. You want David to cry guilty, and then you can throw your hat up. When David said, "I am the man," by far the greater part of Nathan's work was done.

Now mind here, do you understand me, you are to make the men to whom God sends you understand that they are rebels at that moment against the Almighty Jehovah, condemned to die; in danger every moment, all the Christmas time, while they eat and drink and sit at the pantomime, and shout, and dance, and play, and at all other times, in danger of being damned, and that God wants them to submit, so that He may save them there and then. Oh, make them understand. Oh, write, in big, unerasable characters, guilt and heaven, and judgment and damnation, and Calvary, upon their memories. Be sure you are plain, Go it over and over and over again, till you can see in their eyes, and tears, and hear in their cries that they understand. Feather your arrows, as Nathan did, with illustrations, and facts, and then send them home, straight home, and as far home as you possibly can.

DON'T BE HELD BACK FROM STRAIGHT DEALING BY ANY CONSIDERATION FOR THEIR FEELINGS. To break them in pieces before the Lord, and bring them humbled in the dust at His footstool, is just what you want. Pricking them in the skin is worse than useless; you want them pricked in the heart. Never mind how they wince and cry out. Go over and over again with the truth that pierces and moves.

A hue and cry will be made about excitement, and emotional religion, and fanaticism, and forcing religion down people's throats, and there may be hysterics, and fits, and swoons, and prostrations, and persecutions, and hatreds, and all manner of opposition, and imitations, and counterfeits; but these things must not turn you aside. You hold on giving the truth of God out in the straightest manner, and the real Davids will lay their royal robes on one side, and come down from the thrones of their high-



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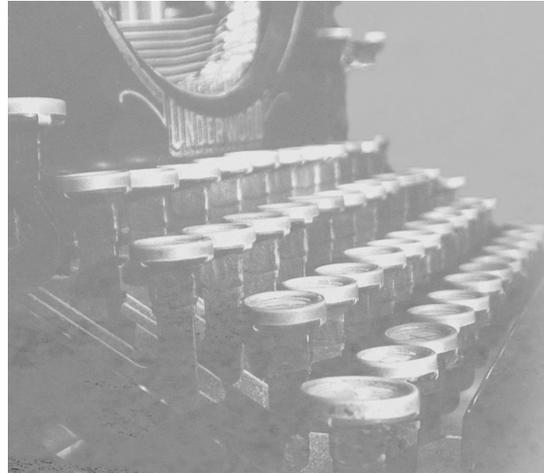
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mightiness, and get saved at the feet of the King of kings, and rise up to love you for ever for straightforward, honest dealing.

DON'T BE LED OFF OR HINDERED BY ANY NOTION OF THE RESPECTABILITY OF THE PEOPLE GOD SENDS YOU TO WARN. If it had been David's butler instead of the king himself that had gone astray, Nathan could not have dealt straighter or more faithfully with him. Nathan did not preach to his ermine or his royalty, or his throne, he preached to the king himself. David had sinned after the manner of common sinners, and he must have the common truth and do the common repentance, and have the common mercy or be damned in the common hell. So, my comrades, don't prostitute and disgrace the faith of our Lord Jesus by having respect to the clothes, or gold chains, or position, or money of anybody. For, if there comes into your Hall a prosperous shopkeeper, with a gold ring and a black coat and a white waistcoat, and a soul all unsaved, don't put him, on account of his respectability, in a respectable seat and soften your speech, and modify your message to please him; but bring him up to the front, close to the penitent form, where your soldiers are praying and believing all the time; then turn on him your heaviest guns, and do your best to get him saved.

Oh! you must not do as the Gentiles do, and be troubling yourself about a man whom God has sent you to save from hell being better educated than other people, or having money, or being offended or coming no more. Oh, no! pleased or displeased, give his money or keep it, come again or stay away, your work is not to please but to profit, not to comfort but to convict, not to salve but to save! So think about their poor souls, and give them the truth, which only can profit, and convict, and convert, and save, and give it them in the straightest manner possible.

Oh, my comrades of The Salvation Army, if ever there was a time, this is the time, for straight dealing. God has set before you an open door. You have the ear of the million. The people are in multitudes of instances prepared to receive the word at your lips. Surely you are the candle set in a candlestick, you are the city set on a hill – the eyes and ears of the multitude, who are as sheep without a shepherd, turn to you, – they hunger, they famish of hunger; they are dying, and being damned of hunger; will you give them pretty polished stones, flowers, flourishes, amusements, pacifications, or will you give them BREAD – plenty of bread, sufficient bread, the



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Bread of Heaven? There is bread in your Father's house, and to spare. Hand it out, officers, hand it out, privates, men and women, hand it out seven days a-week – Sundays and week days. Hand it out, that the people He has bought with His blood perish not.

IF YOU HAVE ANY CARE FOR YOURSELF, YOU MUST DEAL STRAIGHT WITH THE PEOPLE; if you do not they will perish, and then you will hear of it again. An account of your stewardship will have to be rendered. Those eyes you look into now will confront you again, and those lips that now are silent while you speak will have an opportunity of speaking to you then. Oh, shall they reproach you with the bitter, never-to-be-forgotten reproach of not having dealt faithfully with them, not having told them the truth, all the truth, and told it them in such an earnest, plain, straight manner that they were made to hear and understand and feel the peril in which they stood, and the open way of escape provided for them?