



CHAPTER 10: HOW TO COMMAND A CORPS OF THE SALVATION ARMY

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF AN ADDRESS TO OFFICERS AT A COUNCIL OF WAR

IN introducing the subject selected for consideration this evening, the first inquiry which naturally suggests itself is –

"WHAT IS A SALVATION ARMY CORPS?"

To this I reply, that it is a Band of people united together to attack and Christianize an entire town or neighbourhood. When an officer receives an appointment from headquarters, it is not contemplated that he shall deal merely with those who are already 'gathered' within the walls of certain buildings, or with those who are already enrolled in our ranks, or with those who may be induced to come inside them; but it is intended that he shall be an Apostle of the Gospel to all those who live around. When you reach the Station assigned you, if it has not been done already, you should take your stand in that Hall, or Theatre, or Tent, and draw a line around the breadth of population you can hope to reach, and make that your Parish, and aim, with tears and prayers, and the trumpet-blast of truth and the power of the Holy Ghost, to convert and sanctify and enlist and discipline every soul within it,

Before you manage a Corps you must

GET ONE.

What a high and holy privilege it is to be a soul-winner! "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars or ever and ever." Who believes this? Earnest, determined, sympathetic men, baptized with the Holy Ghost, may go forth and save multitudes from going down to the pit. Common men – men of quite ordinary ability – can do this. But where are they? How is it we are not besieged with men crying – Here am I, send me? We want a holy ambition for this work – men who see the privilege and desire the honour of bearing the tidings of life and liberty to the ignorant, dying, uncared-for masses going



down to hell from our very doors in this boasted Christian land.

Anyone can go into training for this work. There are plenty of street-corners available in any part of this great city and throughout the land, where any Salvationist may find an audience and get a band together, and in this amateur war speedily gather all the education and qualifications necessary. The best qualification for managing a corps must lie to help to make one, and to help to work one. If this qualification be there, this sort of work will soon develop and perfect it.

Now I am not going to give a list of the qualifications for efficiently managing a corps, but simply to state how it can be done. The man who accomplishes it proves thereby – and he can prove satisfactorily in no other way – that he has the necessary ability for the work. You have doubtless heard of the two men who met in prison; one of whom said to the other, "What have they sent you here for?" "Oh, for so and so," was the reply. "But," said the other, "they can't lock you up for that." "Oh, yes, they can." "But I tell you they can't." "Well, but here I am:" Just so; I care not what the preaching abilities or other qualifications of a man or woman may be, if he does not succeed – if he does not get the people saved, and keep them saved – he proves incontestably that he has missed his vocation, and he ought at once to turn over a new leaf and alter his plans, or, inquire for some other walk in life in which he can succeed. But, on the other hand, however inferior and unlikely, humanly considered, the officer's qualifications may appear, he proves incontestably that he has the gifts and the graces which qualify him to manage a corps in the King's army if he can report crowds and converts and increases in spiritual or soldierly activities.

How to Command a Corps.

Our first counsel is –

(I) Magnify your Office.

Get to know definitely what it is you have to do. Think what it is to be an ambassador of Christ – to stand between the living and the dead, and to be the savour of life unto life, or of death unto death. Consider what will be the outcome of the faithful



discharge of your duty on the one hand, and what will follow the neglect of it on the other. Read the 33rd chapter of Ezekiel, and the Acts of the Apostles, over and over again. Call up the memories of the holy, successful soul-winners who have gone through oceans of difficulties and led thousands to the Cross. Lay aside every weight in the shape of worldly idolatry and self-indulgence, and then lay on the altar every power of body and of soul, consecrating all you have, or ever hope to have, to the successful accomplishment of the greatest undertaking to which God could possibly have called you here.

To successfully command you must

(2) Love your Corps

with a love that never falters, never swerves, never dies. You must have the same burning, unquenchable flame that Jesus had, or you cannot – will not – succeed; and your success will be just according to the measure of your affection for your people and for the perishing around you. This love – this passion for souls – is the mainspring of true religious activity and the principle which governs all real and lasting work for God. Love, rightly directed, makes a good parent, a good husband, a good workman; and nothing short of love, and a great deal of it, will make a good officer. The secret of success is often inquired for; here it is: It is not in natural gifts, or human bearing, or exceptional opportunities, or earthly advantages, but in a heart consumed with the flame of ardent, holy, heavenly love.

Love will make a man think. He wants to save his people; his aim is to bless them, not to amuse them. He wants to lead them on to know God, to imitate Christ, to be meet for heaven. This he sees is to be done through the truth. He has now one absorbing anxiety to persuade them to hear, to think, to feel, to yield, to be saved, to be holy. Here is work for him. He must have arguments that will convince, facts that will confirm, illustrations that will explain, and truths that will both awaken, and interest, and convert. He must range through earth, and heaven, and hell, for matter to make men fly to Christ, save their souls, and bathe in the ocean of redeeming love. He wants to know the mind of God concerning men, and must open his soul to receive inspiration through any medium or direct from the THRONE itself.



Love will make you pray. Love wants all the help it can command; and as it realizes that the great God is in sympathy, and willing to be a co-worker with any and every heart set on this mission of mercy, it will ever be knocking at the door of heaven for countenance and co-operation. The love of souls will lead you into the spirit of ceaseless intercession with Him whose love for them was stronger than death.

Love will make you feel. A stony-hearted preacher makes a stony-hearted people. Perhaps there is no such monstrosity in the universe as a professed representative and resemblance of Jesus Christ, who goes about his business in a cold, emotionless spirit. There is a great cry in some directions for more intellect in the pulpit; it seems to me that there is a far greater necessity for more heart.

If there be one character which above another God must abominate, angels weep over, and devils despise, it must be the automatical preachers who can discourse by the hour about the love of Christ, the worth of souls, the terrors of judgment, and the sorrows of the lost, with a flinty indifference or a ranting fervour which hardly lasts the service over, and which all can see is put on for the occasion. Oh, these ministerial machines! these mechanical preachers! who are quite content if their salaries are paid and a round of meetings gone through, are the curse of Christendom and the wholesale manufacturers of backsliders and infidels. May God deliver us from them! Comrades, whatever other gifts you have, if you are to succeed, you must have hearts, AND HEARTS THAT CAN FEEL.

Love will make you preach. A man cannot help but be an interesting talker on any theme on which his nature is powerfully stirred, and on which he has any measure of information. It is the stolid, indifferent, professional spouters of sermons that can neither get hearers nor souls. Again and again, in his autobiography, Finney, the great Evangelist, says, "I let out my heart on the people;" and they wept and fell under the power of God. Of how many preachers can this be said? How often, alas! is it not just a got-up, got-off piece of intellectual stuff – and not much intellect either – that is let out. The last thing the preacher thinks of or desires is the letting out of his heart, and consequently the heartless performance is met with a heartless response from those who listen; and who, after a few minutes' wonderment, or, as it may be, admiration, forget the whole affair. Oh, if you love, you will pour out your souls before the people,



and they will pour out their souls to God in repentance and submission in return.

Love will make you beloved. If you love your people they cannot help but love you. There are exceptions to all rules. There is a November time, perhaps, in every man's history, when everything is gloomy, and nothing seems to bring sunshine to the people's hearts, so twisted and perverted may they have become. Cross-currents will sometimes run so strongly that, try as you will, you cannot reach the desired haven of the people's affections. But as a rule, love will prove an invincible conqueror, and will bring the people to your feet. You can love your way through every difficulty. Hold on, then, even though the more you love the less you are beloved.

To command efficiently,

(3) You must know your Corps.

At the outset you should ascertain what meetings can be held, and as nearly as possible what the capacities of your people are, and lay your plans accordingly. I sometimes hear people say, "After six months' stay our Officer is going away just as he is beginning to know the place." Now it seems to me that it must be a very large place in which you cannot get to know the bulk of the people in a fortnight, both inside and out. If you cannot get known any other way, put your hat in your pocket, and, with a banner in your hand, go through the streets preaching Christ, like Brother R. A man who stands on the stage of a theatre and does the open-air work thoroughly, will not be long getting known by the outside world, and by the inside world too.

One of the first things you should ask on going to a station is, "Where is the register of members' names and addresses?" If there is not one, get one made at once. Get to know where the people live; and who among them can be visited, and at what hour of the day. Find out the by-streets where the poorest and the most afflicted live; arrange so that you can take those living nearest each other, so as to save time; and those you cannot get at personally, reach through brethren and sisters sent by and from you. That is the way to wrap the hearts of the people round you, and to make them love and pray for you. I cannot tell exactly how it is, but I know that no men are so beloved as those who visit; and a call, with a few loving words and an earnest prayer, will be



remembered for some time to come.

And then, if your heart is full of sympathy, people will come and introduce themselves to you. They will come and say, "Oh, Captain, I thought our last officer was the only man that loved me, and, when he went away, I thought I should never look up any more; but I see you love me too." Love the people, and let them see that you are interested in all that concerns them, and you will soon make their acquaintance and win their confidence.

There is no difficulty then in the people getting to know you, and there seems to me a way not so very difficult by which you can pretty soon get to know the people. Now you cannot know a man by talking to him: you must have him talk to you. And you will not hear people talk out their hearts anywhere so truthfully and fully as in their own homes, and in the assembly, gathering, and other meetings where there is full liberty for all to speak. Visit, then, your people, and let them have full opportunity to talk freely as soon as you go to a station, and you will make the acquaintance and have a tolerably accurate idea of the measure and weight of the people who constitute the backbone of the Corps.

(4) Teach your Corps.

Teach your people. Teach them sound doctrine; if you do not give them the truth, somebody else will give them falsehood. The best method of keeping the weeds out of your garden is to stock it well with good, useful plants, and I know no better plan to prevent the devil and ignorant, mistaken teachers sowing the seeds of error in the minds of your people than to anticipate them with sound scriptural doctrine. There are three old-fashioned practical truths which you must frequently and emphatically insist upon. They may be regarded as three pillars which mainly carry the entire building of experimental godliness; and if your people are thoroughly grounded in these, they will not easily be moved. They are REPENTANCE, FAITH, AND HOLINESS.

By Repentance, I mean the renunciation of all sin, and the unreserved surrender of the soul to God, which is not only a condition of pardon in the first instance, but of continued salvation all the way through.



By Faith, I mean, in its general sense, the belief of what God has said, and by saving faith, I mean the trust of the soul to and in Christ as the only and all-sufficient Saviour for time and for eternity.

By Holiness I mean the necessity and possibility of believers being not only saved from the guilt and power of sin, but from its very indwelling; sanctified body, soul, and spirit, and preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Instruct your people in these cardinal truths. Illustrate, and enforce, and explain, and support them from the Word of God, until the most ignorant in your congregation understand and grasp them.

But be sure in all your teaching to show what true religion is.

Teach your people what constitutes the very elements of Christianity. Show them that the very essence of religion is love; the love that shows itself in benevolent effort for the salvation of others. I was talking one day to one of the partners in a leading firm in the city, and I said to him, "I understand religion to mean this, that if you have reason to think you can convert more souls in Australia than by stopping at home, and refuse to go, you are a hypocrite;" and he replied, "That is true."

And this statement is endorsed by the Bible, which declares that "God is love," and that if any man have not the Spirit of Him who left heaven, and came to suffer and die on earth to save souls, he is none of His. Now you must teach your people – young converts and old ones, the poor and the rich, if any of the latter should come in amongst you – that they are in all reality and truth to lay themselves and their possessions on the altar without reserve, in order that God may use them to the uttermost for His work; that this is the religion God wants, and the only religion that He will approve and accept; and that those sentiments, and beliefs, and feelings, and opinions, are all in vain that do not tend to this.

To effectually command, you must

(5) Work your Corps.



To do this, you must work yourself. If you do not, there are everywhere some who will very soon begin to look up and say, "That man is paid for this work, and has nothing else to do; yet he takes it very easy. It's awfully cold out to-night: I have been working hard for ten hours to-day, and as he does not see it of sufficient importance to go to the open-air, I think I'll stay at home and rest." But if they see you working, what can they do? They will say, "I'll go. I can't let him go there all by himself. I was feeling very tired, but never mind, get me a good cup of tea, wife, and I'll have a wash and be off." That is the way the thing works. We must lead, and then the people are bound to follow. I have found it so during thirty-five years of this kind of work. Whenever I have gone to lead, I have found somebody, and a good big somebody generally, ready cheerfully to follow me anywhere, and to any kind of work.

Set your people to work. An officer should spend a good deal of time in looking at his people, considering what they can do, setting them to work, and seeing that they keep at it. People say to me sometimes, "They won't give me anything to do. I can work, and am willing, but I go and come from the meetings, and am never asked to do anything." Now such a complaint should be impossible. I am not referring here to the brethren who, having the conceit they can preach, or do some great thing, refuse to do anything else because their gifts are not recognised, like spoilt children who won't play because they can't take what part they like in the game; but to simple, sincere souls, who are willing to undertake any kind of service for Christ, for which their comrades may think they possess the required capacity. Now such ought to be set to work whether they offer their services or not. Indeed, you must not wait for soldiers to find out what they can do, and to offer themselves: you must make the discovery, and hunt them out of their retirement, and bring them to the front, and use them to help you in the great conflict, for which YOU will require every agency on which you can possibly lay your hands.

Get fixed in your mind the ungainsayable truth that every soldier can do something. Find out what that something is, and get him at it as quickly as possible. Don't wait to see if he is "sound," or to ascertain if he "will stand." You cannot afford to wait.

Take them at once with their warm, tender hearts, gushing with sympathy and burning with zeal, and send them with all possible directness against the enemy. I know



something can be said against setting new converts to work thus early, and I have carefully weighed that something over, but, all things considered, I am satisfied that this plan is calculated the most effectually to prevent backsliding, to save the greatest number of souls, and to make the best and most pliable kind of soldiers.

They can only learn how to fight by directly engaging in it.

There is no other way. Can a man learn how to be a carpenter by looking on in the workshop? No; he must handle the saw and the plane himself; and just so in every branch of Salvation work. "Drop them in the water," was the old-fashioned direction for teaching children to swim. True, they would in the first instance plunge and splash, and come out trembling and gasping, but on a second trial they would improve, and soon become skilful and daring swimmers. Just so make your people understand that everybody, whether young or old, can and must do something, and send them at once into the eddying ocean in which souls are hourly sinking to rise no more: they will soon learn how not only to save themselves, but those that hear them.

You will find that people have "likings" for different kinds of labour, as well as different capacities. Try as far as you can to meet these different tastes. You will get ever so much more work out of a man if it be in the line for which he feels himself specially adapted, and you have any amount of work that will suit anybody and everybody.

There is that everlasting open-air work that we are always talking about, but which we have never yet half appreciated. Everybody can do something at that. Others can visit from house to house, and so bring some to the indoor meetings that no open-air services will reach. There are some born doorkeepers; others are peculiarly at home visiting the sick; others seem to have a special vocation for showing the people into seats; many are not only willing but quite happy when engaged in getting money, and I fancy that in every society the Officer might get most valuable help in what must necessarily be specially his own work – the visitation of backsliders, and the hunting up of new converts.

Classify your people after this fashion, and to do it effectually make some one sergeant of each department, and put the responsibility of that department on his



shoulders. By laying the burden of details upon others, you will be able to get an immense amount of work done without killing yourselves, as many have done by striving to do everything themselves.

To command effectively, you must

(6) Care for your Soldiers.

I don't mean that you should cozen, and comfort, and encourage the do-nothing people, if there are any, who come with their mouths open three times every Sabbath and now and then besides to be fed in idleness. No! TIP UP THEIR CRADLE. Make them question the ground of their religious hopes. Make them understand that true godliness is practical benevolence, and that they must at once become followers of Jesus, and go in for a life of self-sacrifice in order to do good and save souls, or else give up all hope and title to being Christians. Make the people see this, and keep on at it until they do, They will rub their eyes, and wake up, depend upon it, when they do see it; and though some may go off to other places where they can be edified without being constantly faced with their neglected responsibilities, others will go to work with a will, and you will soon see things move. But I was saying that you must care for your soldiers, and there are two classes that seem to me to specially want anxious care.

There are the stragglers. England is full of backsliders.

These should be hunted up, and brought back. It would be well, as I have already hinted, if some people would make it their special business to seek after the restoration of those who have grown cold, or who are growing cold. You must not let people stop away long enough to grow hardened in it. Hunt them up at once if they begin to slacken their pace.

Care for the converts. When I see the large number of anxious inquirers reported, and then observe how small a number of these are accounted for, I must say that I feel like saying, "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon." True, there is undoubtedly a large number of those who answer to the cases mentioned in the parable of the sower. We cannot always sow on good ground, still we very often do



so, and we ought to be able to gather and retain a large return for our labour. And we shall do so, if we use the proper means. My experience has taught me that the use of appropriate means is as indispensable to preserve the converts as it is to secure them. Everybody agrees now that if you want to have a revival, and to see sinners converted, you must use methods and employ agencies calculated to secure this result; and it is just as important to employ suitable measures to keep the converts when you have them.

I leave the theology of this question to the doctors of divinity. I simply state the fact. If you fathers and mothers want to rear your children up to strong man and womanhood, you feed and watch over them with all tender, loving care; and if you officers and brethren, and sisters, in charge of God's great family, want to rear up for Him and for humanity the babes with whom you are entrusted, to perfect men and women in Christ Jesus, you must care for them, you must nurse them. If you keep them, and if your returns from time to time show increases, you will prove in the most incontestable manner that you do wisely and lovingly watch over them; but if, on the contrary, you do not – if you bring statements of large numbers of converts, and small increases in membership, you will leave it open for people to infer either that the conversions are not real, or that, being real, they are not properly looked after.

And lastly, to properly command you must

(7) Govern your Corps.

By governing it, I do not mean that you should master it, but manage it. You are not called to be the master, but the servant of all men, and just in proportion as you are so will men be your servants.

Govern your corps. Sit upon the box and hold the reins, grasp them lovingly but firmly. It is never safe to let high-spirited horses feel that you are driving with a slack rein. If they do, they will take liberties with you and your vehicle that may be inconvenient, and, as a rule, it will be best for you to drive with a tight rein. It is safest and best for society, in all its grades and relations, to feel that there is a real authority which must be respected, and real law and discipline which must be obeyed. And I



am sure it is the best for our people, and, for the time being, you are, in your station, responsible for the maintenance of this necessary discipline. As some one has aptly said, you may make a very beautiful garden, and stock it with valuable plants and flowers; but if you do not keep the walls thereof strong and entire, the wild boar of the forest will speedily waste and destroy the fruit of all your hard toil. Just so, you may preach, and pray, and labour, and get sinners converted, and form a Corps; but unless you put away those who are immoral, and who refuse to conform to our rules and usages, Satan will soon undo all you have done. Keep our rules yourself, and, as far as in you lies, make others do the same.

Refuse to do or allow anything to be done which is not in accordance with the spirit and which does not square with the aim of the Army. Beware of unscriptural schemes. Resolutely keep out all worldly stratagems for attracting attention or obtaining money. Stick to the old ways of the Army. Keep the principles and object for which it was first originated ever before your eyes, and strive continually to make your branch of it a living exemplification thereof.

Do all in the power and spirit of your Master. Your motives and spirit will soon be read and known by your soldiers. They will quickly discern whether it be with you a mere question of getting a living, a mere professionalism which is satisfied by seeing your Corps well represented in the War Cry, or whether you do the work because your heart is in the right place – that is, for God and for eternity.

If you go in this spirit, in the spirit and power of God, nothing can stand before you. All must yield to the love of Christ, burning in your heart, and poured out through your life. And eternity only will reveal how great a work God will condescend to accomplish through your instrumentality. May He bless you all!

FIVE YEARS' RESULTS OF THESE COUNSELS.

The above address was delivered in 1876, when the organisation now known as The Salvation Army, then a Christian Mission, had but 29 stations, most of them small, and only 546 public speakers. It is interesting to note, on the one hand, that the faithful working out of the ideas here set forth has produced The Salvation Army of to-day;



and on the other hand, that the operations of the Army are not wild outbursts of thoughtless zeal, but are the mere development of truths deeply and prayerfully studied out. How common it has been to reproach us with not teaching our people! as if they had been left to the mere temporary excitement of good meetings, and no deep foundation-work done. Why do not our critics open their eyes to the results of our teaching, and judge of it accordingly? Who thinks of testing a school or college by noting the details of its daily programme? The simple question asked is, "How does it show at the examinations?" and that system of teaching is considered best which produces the largest number of distinguished scholars. If the teachings of the Army have been such as to raise the number of its officers in five years from 27 to 540, and of its speakers from 546 to 13,400, and of its services from 380 to 4,300 weekly, the same teaching may be relied upon to produce far greater results still in days to come.