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CHAPTER VII

THE SPIRIT OF FAITH.

Section I.

*And now we come to the sixth of these wonderful Spirits — the Spirit of Faith.*

Each Spirit that has passed before us from the Throne of God, in this Congress, has brought us a message of unutterable importance, but none has a closer bearing upon our holiness, usefulness, and joy than the one whose message we now come to consider, viz., the Spirit of Faith.

It is important to us personally; to God's Kingdom; to the whole world; and to our work in the world.

Let us hear that message again: "O Officers, Officers, you cannot do without me. Listen to my words. If you treasure them in your hearts, and carry them out in your lives, you shall be conquerors. If you neglect them, you will be defeated, no matter how brave you are in other things. You must take the inscription on my banner as your life-long motto—You must believe. You must do it night and day, in sorrow and in joy, in defeat and in victory, living and dying. You must be men and women of faith."

Let us proceed to consider this counsel. And, first, I remark: —

- I. How desolate we should all be without faith, no matter what else we possessed, either of this world or any other.
  
1. It is only by means of faith that we can obtain any satisfactory assurance of the existence of God. To be without faith, then, is to be without God. That is, "without hope, and without God in the world." It is true that there are voices in nature and voices in Providence, and voices within us, and voices that come from the good and true around us that are ever saying, "There is a God;" but unless we believed their testimony all would be in vain. Anyway, they



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would do little more than land us in the desolate swamps of uncertainty on this all important question.

2. But, while accepting the fact of the Being of God, it is only by faith that we know that He has spoken to man. Therefore, to be without faith would be equivalent to being without a Bible. What that loss would be it is difficult to conceive. Suppose we woke up to-morrow morning, and found that every Bible at present in existence had been taken out of the world? Or suppose — which would amount to the same thing — that, all at once, we discovered that every page in our Bibles had become blank paper? What a mourning and lamentation there would be, and justly so. People who had never thought it worth the trouble to read their Bibles would wail. People who had read, and disbelieved would mourn. Even people who had read and disobeyed would feel they had lost what could never be replaced.

And yet, to have the Bible without a living faith in its revelations, and a positive obedience to its precepts, is really worse than having none at all. For he that reads his Maker's will, and believes it not, is not likely to obey; and to know and not do is to be visited with the greater condemnation.

3. It is only by faith that we can obtain any assurance of an existence beyond the grave. To be without faith is, therefore, equal to being without immortality. Men may make guesses, and indulge in aspirations in favour of a future life, but without faith there is no assurance on the subject. They are left to imagination. It is only by faith that we know that we are of any greater value than the beasts of the field — anyway, so far as existence after death is concerned.
4. It is only by means of faith that we can obtain any satisfying assurance of the favour of God.
5. Without faith there can be no real peace amidst the trials, conflicts, and agonies of life. All the attempts of philosophy to manufacture consolation in such circumstances have proved a dead failure. They have been tried. They are a mockery, a delusion, and a snare.



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6. To be without faith is to be without any true ground of hope for the future. It is only by faith that we have any reasonable ground for expecting any happier state of things in the new world than we have in the present.
  7. To be without faith is to have no Calvary, no Saviour, no forgiveness. We only know that Jesus died for our sins, and lives again to save us from them, through believing in God. Indeed, without faith in Him life must be a dismal wilderness, and the future a dark starless blank.
- II. Not only is faith the only medium by which we can come to know and realise spiritual things, but the measure of our faith will generally be the measure of that realisation.

In other words, the religious life of an Officer will be governed by his faith.

Salvation is commenced by means of faith, maintained by faith, and brought to a triumphant issue by faith.

1. Your conversion was by faith.
2. Your assurance of it has been received by faith.
3. Your peace and gladness have been according to your faith.
4. Your usefulness in honouring God and saving men has been, and will be, according to your faith.
5. Your triumph on your dying bed will be according to your faith.
6. Your crown, happiness, honour, and reward in Heaven will depend upon the extent to which the Spirit of Faith has led you, and enabled you to do all the holy will of God.
  - a) If you have a little faith, 'a half-starved, neither-hot nor-cold affair, you will only have a little salvation.
  - b) If you have a bigger, bolder, stronger faith, you will have a bigger, grander, more glorious salvation.
  - c) If you have a full measure of faith, that is, if like Stephen and Barnabas of old, you are full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost, you will have a full measure of salvation. That is, you will

have salvation up to the full limit of your capacity and need: "Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over." All this is in harmony with the law laid down by Jesus Christ when He said, "According to your faith be it unto you."

#### Section II.

The doctrine specially insisted on by the Spirit of Faith must be of great interest to Officers of The Salvation Army, because it may be truly said to govern their success.

Faith will have to do with the measure of your success; indeed, that success will be largely determined by the measure of your faith.

Other qualities and gifts will certainly be required. For instance, an Officer's success will be assisted by natural gifts and conditions; such as —

1. Good health.
2. Pleasant appearance. Beauty, comeliness, etc., will attract and impress; but here we are all at an advantage.
3. An agreeable voice.
4. Fluency in talking.
5. Intelligence.
6. Special gifts.

But all these put together will be of little service without faith. Indeed such gifts, without faith, are often a hindrance rather than a help. For, with a simple earnest faith, an Officer may do a thousand times more for God and souls without these advantages than he will do with them all, if he has no faith.

For, consider—

- I. An Officer's success will largely depend upon his faith in himself.



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1. This will apply to his personal realisation of the experience he urges on others. If he is uncertain as to whether he himself possesses the Salvation he pushes on his hearers, his trumpet cannot be expected to do any other than give an uncertain sound. To be doubting and fearing about himself while he is talking will mean weakness and failure in all he says. 2. His success will also depend upon his faith in the consistency of his life with the standard he holds up before others.

II. The faith of an Officer in The Army will have much to do with his success.

It is so with me. You all know how I feel about The Army. You all know that I believe in it, and that faith helps me to study, and write, and travel, and pray, and talk, and govern. I feel that it is worth all the effort I can make. That faith cheers me in success, and comforts me in disappointments and defeat. I say to myself of a particular effort or special meeting, " If this is not as effective as I desire, it cannot prevent the onward march." For instance: If you only know and believe in The Army's history, I am sure you will fight for it. Ditto, its principles. Ditto, its system and future.

If an Officer finds himself in doubt about a Leader, or an appointment, what shall he do? Run away? No. Even if he had a General whom he did not trust, what then? Should he give up, and run away? No! Hold on, have faith in The Army.

III. The measure of an Officers faith in the comrades around him will have much to do with his success.

If you believe in them, that faith will strengthen and comfort your heart. The thought that brave, true hearts and hands are fighting with you for the same blessed truths will be an undying stimulus. To believe that they will carry forward the work you are struggling over, when you are battling elsewhere, or when you are gone to your Heavenly Home, will be a strength to your heart. Even if there are some bad — one in so many — they were once good. But even where you have faults believe in the good in them. This is the principle that makes the Soldier's relations to his General so valuable. How many do your people count you for?



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IV. The success of an Officer will be largely influenced by his faith in the high value of what he fights for.

You cannot succeed without hard, self-denying, crossbearing work. And whether you do that work heartily or not will largely depend on the estimate you set on the value of the men and women for whom you fight. If you think they are of little more value than the animals around you, you won't be very willing to suffer or sacrifice very much to save them. Who would die to save an ox or a sheep?

A recent number of "V.C." has the following: —

"The Lass from The Army."

"She was a Salvation Army lass, and her lot was a hard one. Working from seven in the morning till six o'clock at night, weaving hair-cloth, was dull and poorly-paid work, but in addition she had to bear the constant and thoughtless gibes of her fellow-workers. One autumn morning a spark from a bonfire on some adjoining allotment gardens entered an open window, alighted on a heap of loose hair, and the next minute the place was ablaze. A rush for safety of the work-girls followed. 'Is everybody down?' asked the foreman. His question was answered by one of the weavers, who, holding up a key, shrieked, 'My God! I locked Lizzie Summers in the piece shed for a joke not a minute ago!' The piece shed was a room to be reached only through the burning building, through which it seemed impossible to make way. Girls and men were standing aghast and helpless, when two figures stumbled through the smoke which poured from the weavingroom. One was seen to be Lizzie Summers; the other was, for the time, unrecognisable. It was The Salvation Army lass. She had stayed behind, burnt, blistered, and half-suffocated, to batter down the door in order to liberate and save the life of her coarsest-tongued tormentor."

If you don't think that the people are of any great worth you won't be likely to face either fire or water to save them.

But if you believe—



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1. That they are immortal, that they will live for ever.
2. That their souls are of indescribable worth.
3. That God loves them, and wants to get them into Heaven.
4. That Christ thought them of sufficient value to lay down His life for them.
5. That they are every hour in peril of the wrath of God and the damnation of Hell.

If you believe all this, or a reasonable part of it, you will work, and weep, and pray, and fight to save them. Believe! Believe!

If you do not believe you will only go as far in the effort that brings success as you are forced, by custom, or orders, or salary, or the good opinion of the dying nobodies about you. If you believe a little, you will fight a little. If you believe much, you will fight much.

Richard Cecil, one of the great soul-winners of bygone days, in words which produced a great effect on my own heart, says: "Faith is the master-spring of the minister. Hell is before me and thousands of souls shut up there in everlasting agonies; Jesus Christ stands forth to save men from rushing into this bottomless abyss; He sends me to proclaim His ability and love. I want no fourth idea! Every fourth idea is contemptible! Every fourth idea is a grand impertinence!"

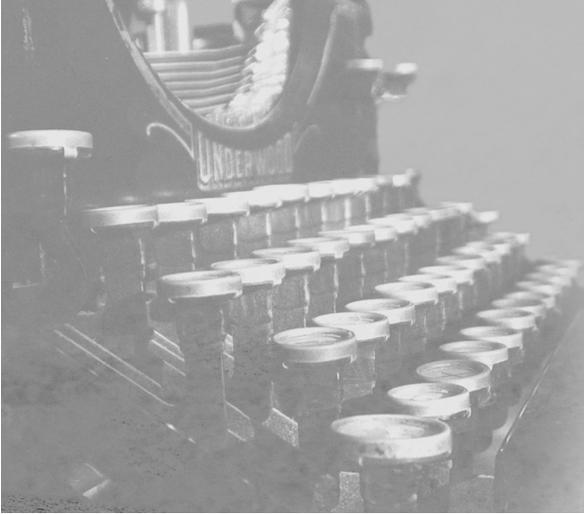
Faith will determine what you are and what you do.

- V. The success of an Officer will be largely influenced by his faith in the means he employs to secure that success.

For example:—

1. His faith in the doctrines he preaches will have to do with his success.

If he does not really believe in them, they will have little effect on his own heart, and consequently little effect on the heart of anyone else. But if he has received them into his own soul, if they are realities to him, they will move him, and, moved by them, he will move the people he talks to. Especially if his own faith is "mixed with faith in them that hear " his message.



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For instance: if he sincerely believes—

- (a) That there is a glorious Heaven.
- (b) That there is an awful Hell.
- (c) That there is going to be a Judgment Day.
- (d) That Jesus Christ came down and died for men.
- (e) That the miseries of the people before and around him can be cleared away by the power of God, his own soul will be so moved.

2. His faith that the truths he proclaims apply to the persons to whom he proclaims them.

If he believes that the truth of the doctrines he preaches will take hold of the very people present at that particular time he will be likely to pour out the truth. If he is quite sure that what he has to say about conscience, and death, and Judgment, and Hell will shake the souls of the sinners who sit before him there and then, whether they be few or many, he will be likely to talk effectually, whatever the nature or size of the meeting may be.

One great reason for the marvellous power my dear wife had over the audiences she addressed was her confidence in the truth she had to preach, and in her particular manner of presenting it. "Only get them to hear me," she would say. Right or wrong, that was her notion.

3. His faith in the methods he employs will also influence his success.

- a) To begin with his method of working the Open-air. The Officer who does not believe in the value of the Open-air will not be likely to get much out of it. If he only regards it as a call-bird for the indoor services he will probably be content with little more than a performance. Whereas the Officer who goes for converting the people on the spot, appealing to them as they stand there, and arousing and awakening their consciences, will be likely to make his Open-air a means of great blessing to Soldiers and sinners alike. I always believed in the Open-air — hence, perhaps, my success with it.
- b) The method of conducting his indoor meetings and of carrying on all the other departments of his work, whether his visitation, his singing, his talking, his fishing, his penitent-form, or anything else. Without faith they will all be heartless performances — a



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kind of play-acting. David believed in his sling and his stones, and Goliath was as good as dead before he got at him. No doubt David's method was good, and likely to succeed, but it would have been useless to David if he had not had faith in it.

- VI. An Officer's success will be largely influenced by his faith in the actual co-operation of God "with him.

For instance, consider the effect on all he is, and says, and does, if he earnestly believes among other things: —

1. That there is a Holy Ghost.

I think sometimes that the practical belief in the existence of the Holy Ghost distinguishes The Army Officer from other workers around him.

2. Again, consider the effect upon an Officer's feelings and work by a practical belief that the Spirit delights to help Officers who are striving to save and sanctify men.

If a son was striving in a far country to know and carry out the father's law, he could rely on the father's help.

3. Consider also that the Holy Spirit is with him while engaged in his efforts for God and souls, whatever those efforts may be.

We all know how strong and brave the company of those we love or reverence makes us in times of trial and conflict. With what courage must a firm belief in the presence and co-operation of God inspire an Officer in the fight.

- VII. It may sound strange, but there can be no question, I think, that a real faith in the actual presence and opposition of a personal Devil will help an Officer.

It is a real opposition. To believe that the Devil is present and actually engaged in opposing you, will account for many things that frequently transpire in connection with an Officer's work. How you feel if the Split Band is after a Bandsman! If the next Corps Treasurer is after a shopkeeper



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in your High Street for Self-Denial, though he did not give to you last year. Well, here is a roaring lion — a fiery serpent. For instance: —

1. Take the silly trifling of hearers that you see sometimes. That can be put down to the Devil. Not always.
2. Take the unreasonable going out of hearers. You can put that down to the Devil. Not always.
3. Take the bad-tempered and unreasonable opposition that often has to be encountered. You can put that down to the Devil. Not always.

VIII. An Officer's success will be very much influenced by the faith he has in results.

It is a Spirit. They say that nothing succeeds like success. Anyway, it is difficult to secure success without faith.

1. To believe in defeat is to bespeak defeat.
2. To be afraid that nothing will happen is to make it very likely that nothing will happen.
3. To believe that you will win is to make it very likely that you will win, and that because it will ensure the doing of your very best to secure it.

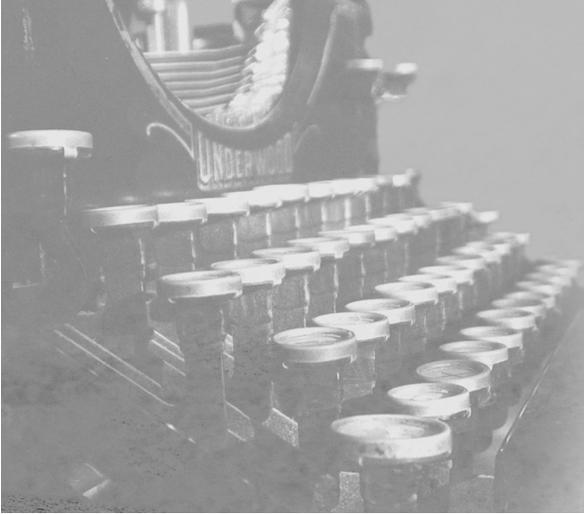
Your faith or your unbelief will influence the faith or unbelief of those about you. How eagerly the officers and soldiers watch the face of the General when a battle is going on. If they think he is confident, then they will be confident too, and fight accordingly. So that with a strong faith in victory, the battle is half-won before a blow is struck.

### Section III.

- I. I want to close this address by the mention of one aspect of the work of the Spirit of Faith which appears to me to be specially important to Salvation Army Officers.

In point of order it ought to have been mentioned earlier on, but in view of its peculiar interest, I have reserved it to the close of my observations on the subject.

The subject to which I refer is the influence that Faith is intended to exert on an Officer's peace of mind amidst the varied and frequent trials with which he usually has to contend.



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II. I need not say that an Officer's peace of mind is intimately connected with his holiness and usefulness.

That you all known full well, and on that ground you will know also how desirable it must be.

III. Officers have very many trials, some of which are at times very severe.

We all have — I am sure I have trials myself—my life has been a continued series of trials. And so it is with many of my dear Officers.

1. There are personal trials.

- a) Those that relate to the body.
- b) Those that relate to the mind.
- c) Those that relate to the spirit.

2. There are family trials — husband, wife, children, two sets of relatives, two mothers-in-law. If you don't want trials don't marry.

3. There are trials arising out of appointments that do not appear to fit in with our notions, and which are often very perplexing. Corps, Comrades, success and failure, and many other things.

IV. No one can claim exemption from trials.

V. Counsels without number of different kinds have been propounded for dealing with trials and sorrows.

1. The Stoical Spirit says Hide, endure.
2. The Spirit of the Coward says, When you can bear your sorrows no longer, run away, resign, despair, commit suicide.
3. The Rebellious Spirit says, Complain, murmur, turn infidel, kick against the pricks. This does not answer.
4. The Worldly Spirit says, Drown your sorrows, music, pleasure, intoxicants, opiates.
5. Then Reason says: —
  - a) These things may be working out your own benefit. Educating you for a higher sphere of honour, etc., on earth or in Heaven.



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"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

- b) Reason on the subject.  
Look around and you will always find someone worse off than yourself.
- c) The good of others — extend salvation.
- d) Faith says: — Trust in God.

These trials are all known to God; indeed they are all known to Him. By His direct appointment, or by His permission. Perhaps could not help Himself. "It comes from above." My own experience in my late trials. "Peace, doubting heart."