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Chapter I

ROOT IDEAS

Thought is king. Ideas rule the world. Man does not live by bread alone, but by faith, by hope, by love. Every new birth, either of mind or heart, is daughter to some parent purpose. Every great birth was begotten of some greater thought. The Salvation Army is no exception. It is the incarnation of a lofty ideal; the passing — the continuous passing — of a noble, a beautiful, a divine theory into practice. We shall better understand that practice in the lives and labours of its Officers if we get something like a true conception of the theory. Here is a brief and plain account of it from the one man who was the best able to define it.

I Subdue

'When Jehovah finished the work of creation, He turned from the new earth to the new Adam, and gave him the commission to multiply and increase and subdue and govern it, so that it should become a happy home for him and his posterity, and should bring honour and glory to its Creator. Adam failed in his mission. Instead of subduing the earth the earth subdued him, and he and all his family went off into black and diabolical rebellion. But God still claimed His own, and a second time appeared, this time to redeem by sacrifice the world He had before created; and when He had finished the work, He turned to His disciple, the spiritual Adam, and gave him a commission similar to that given to the first Adam, bidding him go and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

'Again it is, as at the first, overcome, conquer, subdue, not merely teach, but persuade, compel all nations, that is, all men, to become the disciples of the Son of God.

'So, at least, it is understood by The Salvation Army. This is the idea which originated and developed and fashioned it in the past, and which dominates and propels it today. The world, this very world, including this very England, which never ceases boasting of her freedom, is sold



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under sin, held in slavery by Satan, who has largely usurped the place and power and revenues of Jehovah, and who is indeed its Lord and Master. To deliver it and fulfil to the very letter the Master's command, an army of deliverance, of redemption, of emancipation is wanted.

'In the name of the great Three in One the standard has been raised, and recruits are flowing in. Drilling, skirmishing, fighting, advancing and going on. Some territory has been won, some captives have been liberated, some songs of victory have been raised, and with these three have been plenty of misfortunes and losses and disasters and mistakes, and all of that which might naturally have been expected in such a war, unless men had suddenly mended of their depravity, and devils had miraculously ceased to be devils.

'If it be lawful, if it be wise, if it be desirable that men should be banded together and organized after the best possible methods to liberate an enslaved nation, to overcome its foes, to establish it in liberty and in the enjoyment of free institutions, then surely it must be lawful and wise and desirable for the servants of God to join themselves together after the fashion most effective and forcible to liberate a captive world, and to overcome the enemies of God and man.'

II

The Compulsion of Souls

To this let me add a word from one whose voice, alas! Is heard no longer in our midst. The late Mrs. General Booth, when writing of the foundation truths of The Army, said: —

'The Bishop of Durham, the late Dr. Lightfoot, said: "The Salvation Army has at least recalled us to the lost ideal of the work of the Church — the universal compulsion of the souls of men." Yes, we have been teaching our own people first, and through their influence others, that by the help and grace of God such a measure of influence and power may be brought to bear upon men as may lead them to Salvation. We teach them that we are to compel men to come in, that we are to seek by our own individual power and by the power of the Holy Ghost in us to persuade men that the Gospel idea of preaching is not merely laying the truth before men for the exercise of their intellectual faculties; but that a teacher and Saviour has something more to do than this —



The H. Mann willbrook Collection

that he ought to be possessed of sufficient Divine influence to thrust his message in upon the heart, to make the soul realize and feel its import. This is our great characteristic — pressing, urging, compelling the Gospel upon the attention of men.

'We have not only to a large extent resuscitated this idea, but by the power of God (we claim nothing of ourselves) we have also raised a force men and women who are now WORKING IT OUT, to an extent no other people, as I read the history of the Church, have ever conceived of — a people who have a larger idea of their responsibility for the Christianizing of the world, both as individuals and as an organization, than ever existed before. There have been exceptional men, many, thank God; but as an Organization there is no record since the days of the Apostles of a body that has so largely compassed the Divine idea, its members being taught to make the other objects and aims of life subservient to the one grand purpose of proclaiming the Gospel to every creature and striving to win every soul with whom they are brought into contact to the service of Christ.'

III

The Cross — the Attraction

'The universal compulsion of the souls of men' — 'to subdue a rebellious world to God,' this, then, is the idea underlying The Salvation Army. Great thoughts command great sacrifices, and in this thought has appeared the attraction which has won to lives of self-denial the great majority of the men and women who have become the Officers and leaders of this movement. 'The Cross is the attraction,' said one of our dying comrades, as he passed to his reward after only five years' service. So it seemed to him in the little Indian village hut, which presently became the gateway of the City of God. So it had seemed to him years before when he turned his back upon every earthly gain for Christ's sake and the Gospel's. So it has seemed to thousands of others since. To make that Cross a reality in the eyes of men, that will subdue them; to live over again before them in the spirit of the Sacrifice offered upon it, that is the universal compulsion.

Now in some ways, more or less perfectly according to circumstances, which vary in every case, the Officer begin the life-work of Officership while yet, perhaps, he has no thought of it, when



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he comes under the influence of that idea. Already assured of the favour of God by faith in the atoning work of His Son, already rejoicing that his name is written in Heaven, already made glad by opportunities of service in his own corps or town or family, he begins to see he is called to make a sacrifice for the Cross as real, as practical, up to the measure of his ability, as that which Jesus Christ offered. Christ gave Himself for the world. He asks that those who have given themselves to Him will do the same thing and fill up the measure of His sufferings.

That is the root idea of every true Salvation Army Officer's consecration. He may or may not apprehend its beauty; he may be quite innocent of any plan for carrying it into effect; he may be, nay, often is, quite unable to see whither it will lead him, but he begins there. The Cross, the sacrifice, the suffering, the surrender, the abnegation attract him. The example of the Dying Saviour, breaking His heart for a sinful world, stands out before everything else, and demands: 'I suffered this for thee, what hast thou done after this sort for Me?'

And from the other side — the inside — what is the dominating thought? Why, this, that a common, simple man or woman wholly devoted to the love and service of souls may be qualified successfully to win and train them for God. Little by little the conception of a Salvation Army Officer has grown till it has come to include very much. A servant of God, and a servant of the common people living amongst them, such a one must be a fisher of men, in touch with them, and yet above them, an example to them, a friend, an adviser, confessing their sins, pleading for them at the Throne of Mercy, sharing their sorrows, rebuking and warning them in truth, albeit, with tears, a faithful messenger of the Cross, a shepherd of the sheep, caring for the household of faith, patient, kind, a leader of the Lord's host, the servant of all.

At the present time sixteen thousand men and women in various parts of the world are working as our Officers. Released from their secular callings, they have been set apart to live after this pattern. Do I affirm that they all attain to the standard I have briefly indicated? No, I cannot say that all attain; but after abundant observation, I can say of my own knowledge that at any rate an immense proportion of them are ever reaching forth with holy zeal and by no less holy labour to this perfection of their high vocation. Is not this very striving an attainment? Is it not a very great attainment? Endeavour is sometimes more even than success. And here is endeavour of



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the highest order, earnest, self-denying, enduring, prayerful endeavour after the noblest things, after holy living, after high ideals of devotion, after true union with the Son of Man in the service of men.