

CHAPTER VIII.

A PRACTICAL CONCLUSION.

Throughout this book I have more constantly used the first personal pronoun than ever before in anything I have written. I have done this deliberately, not from egotism, but in order to make it more clearly manifest that here is a definite proposal made by an individual who is prepared, if the means are furnished him, to carry it out. At the same time I want it to be clearly understood that it is not in my own strength, nor at my own charge, that I purpose to embark upon this great undertaking. Unless God wills that I should work out the idea of which I believe He has given me the conception, nothing can come of any attempt at its execution but confusion, disaster, and disappointment. But if it be His will—and whether it is or not, visible and manifest tokens will soon be forthcoming—who is there that can stand against it? Trusting in Him for guidance, encouragement, and support, I propose at once to enter upon this formidable campaign.

I do not run without being called. I do not press forward to fill this breach without being urgently pushed from behind. Whether or not, I am called of God, as well as by the agonising cries of suffering men and women and children, He will make plain to me, and to us all; for as Gideon looked for a sign before he, at the bidding of the heavenly messenger, undertook the leading of the chosen people against the hosts of Midian, even so do I look for a sign. Gideon's sign was arbitrary. He selected it. He dictated his own terms; and out of compassion for his halting faith, a sign was given to him, and that twice over. First, his fleece was dry when all the country round was drenched with dew; and, secondly, his fleece was drenched with dew when all the country round was dry.

The sign for which I ask to embolden me to go forwards is single, not double. It is necessary and not arbitrary, and it is one which the veriest sceptic or the most cynical materialist will recognise as sufficient. If I am to work out the Scheme I have outlined in this book, I must have ample means for doing so. How much would be required to establish this Plan of Campaign in all its fulness, overshadowing all the land with its branches laden with all manner of pleasant fruit, I cannot even venture to form a conception. But I have a definite idea as to how much would be required to set it fairly in operation.

Why do I talk about commencing? We have already begun, and that with considerable effect. Our hand has been forced by circumstances. The mere rumour of our undertaking reaching the Antipodes, as before described, called forth such a demonstration of approval that my Officers there were compelled to begin action without waiting orders from home. In this country we have been working on the verge of the deadly morass for some years gone by, and not without marvellous effect. We have our Shelters, our Labour Bureau, our Factory, our Inquiry Officers, our Rescue Homes, our Slum Sisters, and other kindred agencies, all in good going order. The sphere of these operations may be a limited one; still, what we have done already is ample proof that when I propose to do much more I am not speaking without my book; and though the sign I ask for may not be given, I shall go struggling forward on the same lines; still, to seriously take in hand the work which I have sketched out—to establish this triple Colony, with all its affiliated agencies, I must have, at least, a hundred thousand pounds.

A hundred thousand pounds! That is the dew on my fleece. It is not much considering the money that is raised by my poor people for the work of the Salvation Army. The proceeds of the Self-Denial Week alone last year brought us in £20,000. This year it will not fall short of £25,000. If our poor people can do so much out of their poverty, I do not think I am making an extravagant demand when I ask that out of the millions of the wealth of the world I raise, as a first instalment, a hundred thousand pounds, and say that I cannot consider myself effectually called to undertake this work unless it is forthcoming.

It is in no spirit of dictation or arrogance that I ask the sign. It is a necessity. Even Moses could not have taken the Children of Israel dry-shod through the Red Sea unless the waves had divided.

That was the sign which marked out his duty, aided his faith, and determined his action. The sign which I seek is somewhat similar. Money is not everything. It is not by any means the main thing. Midas, with all his millions, could no more do the work than he could win the battle of Waterloo, or hold the Pass of Thermopylae. But the millions of Midas are capable of accomplishing great and mighty things, if they be sent about doing good under the direction of Divine wisdom and Christ-like love.

How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of Heaven! It is easier to make a hundred poor men sacrifice their lives than it is to induce one rich man to sacrifice his fortune, or even a portion of it, to a cause in which, in his half-hearted fashion, he seems to believe. When I look over the roll of men and women who have given up friends, parents, home prospects, and everything they possess in order to walk bare-footed beneath a burning sun in distant India, to live on a handful of rice, and die in the midst of the dark heathen for God and the Salvation Army, I sometimes marvel how it is that they should be so eager to give up all, even life itself, in a cause which has not power enough in it to induce any reasonable number of wealthy men to give to it the mere superfluities and luxuries of their existence. From those to whom much is given much is expected; but, alas, alas, how little is realised! It is still the widow who casts her all into the Lord's treasury—the wealthy deem it a preposterous suggestion when we allude to the Lord's tithe, and count it boredom when we ask only for the crumbs that fall from their tables.

Those who have followed me thus far will decide for themselves to what extent they ought to help me to carry out this Project, or whether they ought to help me at all. I do not think that any sectarian differences or religious feelings whatever ought to be imported into this question. Supposing you do not like my Salvationism, surely it is better for these miserable, wretched crowds to have food to eat, clothes to wear, and a home in which to lay their weary bones after their day's toil is done, even though the change is accompanied by some peculiar religious notions and practices, than it would be for them to be hungry, and naked, and homeless, and possess no religion at all. It must be infinitely preferable that they should speak the truth, and be virtuous, industrious, and contented, even if they do pray to God, sing Psalms, and go about with red jerseys, fanatically, as you call it, "seeking for the millennium"—than that they should remain thieves or harlots, with

no belief in God at all, a burden to the Municipality, a curse to Society, and a danger to the State.

That you do not like the Salvation Army, I venture to say, is no justification for withholding your sympathy and practical co-operation in carrying out a Scheme which promises so much blessedness to your fellow-men. You may not like our government, our methods, our faith. Your feeling towards us might perhaps be duly described by an observation that slipped unwittingly from the tongue of a somewhat celebrated leader in the evangelistic world sometime ago, who, when asked what he thought of the Salvation Army, replied that "He did not like it at all, but he believed that God Almighty did." Perhaps, as an agency, we may not be exactly of your way of thinking, but that is hardly the question. Look at that dark ocean, full of human wrecks, writhing in anguish and despair. How to rescue those unfortunates is the question. The particular character of the methods employed, the peculiar uniforms worn by the life-boat crew, the noises made by the rocket apparatus, and the mingled shoutings of the rescued and the rescuers, may all be contrary to your taste and traditions. But all these objections and antipathies, I submit, are as nothing compared with the delivering of the people out of that dark sea.

If among my readers there be any who have the least conception that this scheme is put forward by me from any interested motives by all means let them refuse to contribute even by a single penny to what would be, at least, one of the most shameless of shams. There may be those who are able to imagine that men who have been literally martyred in this cause have faced their death for the sake of the paltry coppers they collected to keep body and soul together. Such may possibly find no difficulty in persuading themselves that this is but another attempt to raise money to augment that mythical fortune which I, who never yet drew a penny beyond mere out-of-pocket expenses from the Salvation Army funds, am supposed to be accumulating. From all such I ask only the tribute of their abuse, assured that the worst they say of me is too mild to describe the infamy of my conduct if they are correct in this interpretation of my motives.

There appears to me to be only two reasons that will justify any man, with a heart in his bosom, in refusing to co-operate with me in this Scheme :—

1. *That he should have an honest and intelligent conviction that it cannot be carried out with any reasonable measure of success; or,*

2. *That he (the objector) is prepared with some other plan which will as effectually accomplish the end it contemplates.*

Let me consider the second reason first. If it be that you have some plan that promises more directly to accomplish the deliverance of these multitudes than mine, I implore you at once to bring it out. Let it see the light of day. Let us not only hear your theory, but see the evidences which prove its practical character and assure its success. If your plan will bear investigation, I shall then consider you to be relieved from the obligation to assist me—nay, if after full consideration of your plan I find it better than mine, I will give up mine, turn to, and help you with all my might. But if you have nothing to offer, I demand your help in the name of those whose cause I plead.

Now, then, for your first objection, which I suppose can be expressed in one word—“impossible.” This, if well founded, is equally fatal to my proposals. But, in reply, I may say—How do you know? Have you inquired? I will assume that you have read the book, and duly considered it. Surely you would not dismiss so important a theme without some thought. And though my arguments may not have sufficient weight to carry conviction, you must admit them to be of sufficient importance to warrant investigation. Will you therefore come and see for yourself what has been done already, or, rather, what we are doing to-day. Failing this, will you send someone capable of judging on your behalf. I do not care very much whom you send. It is true the things of the Spirit are spiritually discerned, but the things of humanity any man can judge, whether saint or sinner, if he only possess average intelligence and ordinary bowels of compassion.

I should, however, if I had a choice, prefer an investigator who has some practical knowledge of social economics, and much more should I be pleased if he had spent some of his own time and a little of his own money in trying to do the work himself. After such investigation I am confident there could be only one result.

There is one more plea I have to offer to those who might seek to excuse themselves from rendering any financial assistance to the Scheme. *Is it not worthy at least of being tried as an experiment?* Tens of thousands of pounds are yearly spent in “trying” for minerals, boring for coals, sinking for water, and I believe there are those who think it worth while, at an expenditure of hundreds of thousands of pounds, to experiment in order to test the possibility of making a tunnel under the sea between this country and

France. Should these adventurers fail in their varied operations, they have, at least, the satisfaction of knowing, though hundreds of thousands of pounds have been expended, that they have not been wasted, and they will not complain; because they have at least attempted the accomplishment of that which they felt ought to be done; and it must be better to attempt a duty, though we fail, than never to attempt it at all. In this book we do think we have presented a sufficient reason to justify the expenditure of the money and effort involved in the making of this experiment. And though the effort should not terminate in the grand success which I so confidently predict, and which we all must so ardently desire, still there is bound to be, not only the satisfaction of having attempted some sort of deliverance for these wretched people, but certain results which will amply repay every farthing expended in the experiment.

I am now sixty-one years of age. The last eighteen months, during which the continual partner of all my activities for now nearly forty years has laid in the arms of unspeakable suffering, has added more than many many former ones, to the exhaustion of my term of service. I feel already something of the pressure which led the dying Emperor of Germany to say, "I have no time to be weary." If I am to see the accomplishment in any considerable degree of these life-long hopes, I must be enabled to embark up on the enterprise without delay, and with the world-wide burden constantly upon me in connection with the universal mission of our Army I cannot be expected to struggle in this matter alone.

But I trust that the upper and middle classes are at last being awakened out of their long slumber with regard to the permanent improvement of the lot of those who have hitherto been regarded as being for ever abandoned and hopeless. Shame indeed upon England if, with the example presented to us nowadays by the Emperor and Government of Germany, we simply shrug our shoulders, and pass on again to our business or our pleasure leaving these wretched multitudes in the gutters where they have lain so long. No, no, no; time is short. Let us arise in the name of God and humanity, and wipe away the sad stigma from the British banner that our horses are better treated than our labourers.

It will be seen that this Scheme contains many branches. It is probable that some of my readers may not be able to endorse the plan as a whole, while heartily approving of some of its features:

and to the support of what they do not heartily approve they may not be willing to subscribe. Where this is so, we shall be glad for them to assist us in carrying out those portions of the undertaking which more especially command their sympathy and commend themselves to their judgment. For instance, one man may believe in the Over-Sea Colony, but feel no interest in the Inebriates' Home; another, who may not care for emigration, may desire to furnish a Factory or Rescue Home; a third may wish to give us an estate, assist in the Food and Shelter work, or the extension of the Slum Brigade. Now, although I regard the Scheme as one and indivisible—from which you cannot take away any portion without impairing the prospect of the whole—it is quite practicable to administer the money subscribed so that the wishes of each donor may be carried out. Subscriptions may, therefore, be sent in for the general fund of the Social Scheme, or they can be devoted to any of the following distinct funds :—

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| 1. The City Colony. | 6. Deliverance for the
Drunkard. |
| 2. The Farm Colony. | 7. The Prison Gate Brigade. |
| 3. The Colony Over-sea. | 8. The Poor Man's Bank. |
| 4. The Household Salvage
Brigade. | 9. The Poor Man's Lawyer. |
| 5. The Rescue Homes for
Fallen Women. | 10. Whitechapel-by-the-Sea. |

Or any other department suggested by the foregoing.

In making this appeal I have, so far, addressed myself chiefly to those who have money; but money, indispensable as it is, has never been the thing most needful. Money is the sinews of war; and, as society is at present constituted, neither carnal nor spiritual wars can be carried on without money. But there is something more necessary still. War cannot be waged without soldiers. A Wellington can do far more in a campaign than a Rothschild. More than money—a long, long way—I want men; and when I say men, I mean women also—men of experience, men of brains, men of heart, and men of God.

In this great expedition, though I am starting for territory which is familiar enough, I am, in a certain sense, entering an unknown land. My people will be new at it. We have trained our soldiers to the saving of souls, we have taught them Knee-drill, we have instructed them in the art and mystery of dealing with the consciences and hearts of men; and that will ever continue the main business of their lives.

To save the soul, to regenerate the life, and to inspire the spirit with the undying love of Christ is the work to which all other duties must ever be strictly subordinate in the Soldiers of the Salvation Army. But the new sphere on which we are entering will call for faculties other than those which have hitherto been cultivated, and for knowledge of a different character; and those who have these gifts, and who are possessed of this practical information, will be sorely needed.

Already our world-wide Salvation work engrosses the energies of every Officer whom we command. With its extension we have the greatest difficulty to keep pace; and, when this Scheme has to be practically grappled with, we shall be in greater straits than ever. True, it will find employment for a multitude of energies and talents which are now lying dormant, but, nevertheless, this extension will tax our resources to the very utmost. In view of this, reinforcements will be indispensable. We shall need the best brains, the largest experience, and the most undaunted energy of the community.

I want Recruits, but I cannot soften the conditions in order to attract men to the Colours. I want no comrades on these terms, but those who know our rules and are prepared to submit to our discipline: who are one with us on the great principles which determine our action, and whose hearts are in this great work for the amelioration of the hard lot of the lapsed and lost. These I will welcome to the service.

It may be that you cannot deliver an open-air address, or conduct an indoor meeting. Public labour for souls has hitherto been outside your practice. In the Lord's vineyard, however, are many labourers, and all are not needed to do the same thing. If you have a practical acquaintance with any of the varied operations of which I have spoken in this book; if you are familiar with agriculture, understand the building trade, or have a practical knowledge of almost any form of manufacture, there is a place for you.

We cannot offer you great pay, social position, or any glitter and tinsel of man's glory; in fact, we can promise little more than rations, plenty of hard work, and probably no little of worldly scorn; but if on the whole you believe you can in no other way help your Lord so well and bless humanity so much, you will brave the opposition of friends, abandon earthly prospects, trample pride under foot, and come out and follow Him *in this New Crusade*.

To you who believe in the remedy here proposed, and the soundness of these plans, and have the ability to assist me, I now confidently appeal for practical evidence of the faith that is in you. The responsibility is no longer mine alone. It is yours as much as mine. It is yours even more than mine if you withhold the means by which I may carry out the Scheme. I give what I have. If you give what you have the work will be done. If it is not done, and the dark river of wretchedness rolls on, as wide and deep as ever, the consequences will lie at the door of him who holds back.

I am only one man among my fellows, the same as you. The obligation to care for these lost and perishing multitudes does not rest on me any more than it does on you. To me has been given the idea, but to you the means by which it may be realised. The Plan has now been published to the world; it is for you to say whether it is to remain barren, or whether it is to bear fruit in unnumbered blessings to all the children of men.
