



The Order of the Golden Age



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Vegetarianism

By Bramwell Booth, Chief of the Staff of the Salvation Army.

I have been frequently asked to write something on this subject. In fact, on one occasion, I received from no less than forty Local Officers a request that I would explain to them all I meant by what I had called, when speaking in one of the Councils, The Gospel of Porridge. I do not think I shall be able to do all that, but I will try and briefly reply to one question which I often hear: "*Why do you recommend Vegetarianism?*"

Here are, at any rate, some of my reasons for doing so:

1. Because I have myself tried a vegetarian diet with the greatest benefit, having been for more than ten years at one time a strict vegetarian.

2. Because, according to the Bible, God originally intended the food of man to be vegetarian.

God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat." - Gen. i., 29.

3. Because a vegetarian diet is favourable to purity, to chastity, and to a perfect control of the appetites and passions, which are often a source of great temptation, especially to the young.

4. Because a vegetarian diet is favourable to robust health and strength. With very few exceptions, and those only confirmed invalids, I believe the people would be better in spirits, stronger in muscle, and more vigorous in energy if they abstained entirely from the use of animal food. The Spartans, who stand first among all the nations of history for power to endure hardship, were vegetarians, so also were the armies of Rome when Rome was conquering the world.

5. Because tens of thousands of our poor people, who have now the greatest difficulty to make ends meet after buying flesh food, would, by the substitution of fruit and vegetables and other economical food, be able to get along in comfort, and have more money to spare for the poor and for the work of God.

6. Because a vegetarian diet of wheat, oatmeal and other grains, lentils, peas, beans, nuts and similar food is more than ten times as economical as a flesh diet. Meat contains half its weight in water, which has to be paid for as though it were meat! A vegetable diet, even if we allow cheese, butter and milk, will only cost about a quarter as much as a mixed diet of flesh and vegetable.

7. Because a vegetarian diet would stop the enormous waste of all kinds of animal food which is now consumed with scarcely any advantage to those who take it.

8. Because a vegetarian diet is a great protection against our drinking, and because the growth of meat-eating among the people is one cause of the increase of drunkenness. One bad appetite creates another.

9. Because a vegetarian diet is favourable to industry and hard work, and because a flesh diet, on the other hand, favours indolence, sleepiness, growing fat, want of energy, indigestion, constipation, and other like miseries and degradations.

10. Because it is proved that life, health and happiness are all favoured by a vegetarian diet. I have known many examples of this myself. Most of the instances of great age are to be found among those who from their youth have lived principally, if not entirely, on vegetables and fruit. All this is worth thinking about.

11. I favour a Vegetarian Diet because the digestive organs of man are not well adapted for the use of flesh. Flesh meat contains a great deal of matter which, at the time the animal was killed, was being changed and prepared for being expelled from its system. This matter often passes through the human stomach undigested into the blood and causes various diseases, especially rheumatism, gout, indigestion and the like.

12. Because it is very difficult, especially in hot weather and in warm climates, to keep flesh-food sweet long enough to cook and eat it, and a great deal of meat is therefore eaten after it has begun to decay - that is, to *rot*. This decay often begins long before the meat gives any sign of its real condition. Neither its appearance nor its smell is a safe guide as to its being wholesome.

13. Because a great deal of the flesh meat which is supplied for human food is already diseased, and because it is nearly impossible to be sure that any flesh is quite free from the germs of disease. Much common meat, which is often that of old animals, is well known to be sold to the butchers because the animals are sick, or unhealthy. And the best meat is nearly always the flesh of young animals which are fattened and killed before the germs of many diseases have had time to develop so as to show themselves. So that many animals are killed, which, though believed to be healthy, are really diseased. This is especially the case with calves for veal, young bullocks for beef, and with lambs and young pigs.

14. Because I believe that the great increase in consumption and cancer during the last hundred years has been caused by the great increase in the use of animal food, and that a strict vegetarian diet would greatly help to ward off these most terrible and incurable diseases.

15. Because I believe that a flesh diet brings on many very painful diseases, which though not perhaps immediately dangerous to life, cause much suffering and loss. I mean such complaints as eczema, constipation, piles, worms, dysentery, severe headaches, and the like. A vegetarian diet would do much to relieve if not cure them.

16. Because of the awful cruelty and terror to which tens of thousands of animals killed for human food are subjected in travelling long distances by ship and rail and road to the slaughter-houses of the world. God disapproves of all cruelty - whether to man or beast.

17. Because of the terrible cruelties practised in killing animals in many slaughter-houses. The whole business of killing is cruel, even when it is done with care, and we know that in the case of millions of creatures it is done with very little care. Ten thousand pigs are killed for food every hour in Europe alone!

18. Because the occupation of slaughtering animals is brutalising to those who are required to do the work. "The highest sentiments of humane men," says a certain writer, and I agree with him, "revolt at the cruelty, the degrading sights, the distressing cries, the perpetual bloodshed, and all the attendant horrors which must surround the transit and slaughter of suffering creatures."

19. Because a flesh diet is not necessary to hard work. A great part of the work of the world is done by animals, and always by those animals which subsist entirely on vegetable food, namely, horses, mules, asses, camels, oxen, buffaloes and elephants.

I believe this matter is well worthy of the serious consideration of our Local Officers. It has an important bearing not only upon their own health and happiness, but upon their influence among the people, as men and women who are free from the bondage of that selfish gratification which too often afflicts the professed servants of Christ. Let us remember the Apostle's direction: "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

Think on these things.

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