

## CHAPTER 5: Why to Work Well

My DEAR COMRADES,

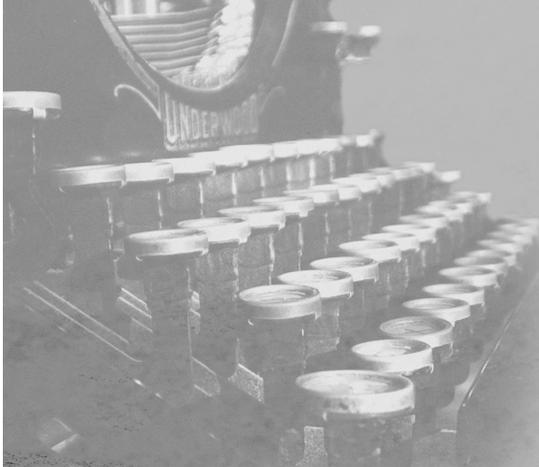
I have been urging you; in my previous Letters, to arrange that the Work by which you earn your livelihood should be good Work; that is, Work that is pleasing to God, profitable to the worker, and useful to your fellow-men. I have also advised that if you find yourselves engaged in any kind of labour or trade that is other than this, you should abandon it as soon as possible. I have urged, further, that in selecting the kind of Work by which your children shall support themselves in after life, the same rule should be followed. Do not embark the youngsters on a sea of inconsistency and difficulty, on which it will be all but impossible for them to serve God, keep a good conscience, and voyage with truth, honour, and safety, to the Heavenly Shore.

I now approach another equally important aspect of your Duty. Having good Work to do, I want you to make it a rule to do it as well as you possibly can, so that you shall come to be known by those around you as a good Workman; or as the Apostle puts it – "A Workman that needeth not to be ashamed."

My first argument for this recommendation is:

1. Do good Work for its own sake. Do not allow yourself to be influenced to any contrary course, by any considerations of personal ease or worldly gain; by the example of your fellow-workmen, or indeed by anything else. Make up your mind to turn out good Work whether you are sufficiently paid for it or not, and that, on the principle that whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well. Whether it be the building of a wall, the cooking of a meal, the writing of a letter, the offering of a prayer, the singing of a song, or any other duty that falls to your daily lot, put forth such strength of muscle, or mind, or heart, or of all together, as the task deserves, and make a good job of it.

I have myself made this principle a rule of action for many years; but my dear Wife was the most notable example of it I was ever privileged to meet. Whatever she



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undertook, from the preaching of a sermon to the darning of a stocking, or the fastening on of a button, she did it as well as it could be done – anyway, as well as she could do it. Many a time, I have besought her to be content, with half the number stitches, when doing the last-named little service for me, and I have been in haste to get away. But she would answer my entreaty by saying "You want it to stay on, do you not?" steadily proceeding with her task till the button was properly secured.

Now, I want you, to adopt this principle as the rule your lives. However unimportant or insignificant your Work may appear to yourself, or to those around you at the time, if it is your Work, do it well.

2. Do good Work for the sake of those for whom it is done. One of the rules to which your life has to be conformed, reads, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them"; so that if you would like your neighbour to do good Work for you, you must do good Work for your neighbour. You would not like him to do deceptive, scamping Work for you, and therefore you must not do deceptive, scamping work for him.

In the doing of your Work you have to keep in mind both the pleasure and the profit of those for whom you do it. If you make a pair of boots for a man, whether he be a friend or a stranger, they should, as far as possible, be such as will give the wearer pleasure in looking at them, and, what is more important still, pleasure in wearing them. If, as the poet says,

"A thing of beauty is a joy forever,"

why should not you, in making boots, be a manufacturer of joy as well? A pair of boots may be pleasant to the eye for a time, if not for ever, and profitable into the bargain.

This is the Divine plan. In His wonderful labour in making this world and all that is in it, God must have been actuated by a desire to give both pleasure and benefit to those who would either look upon it or use it. Some pleasure He, doubtless, anticipated for Himself in beholding, from time to time, all the precious and beautiful things His hands had made; but still, His main delight in their creation, must have been the



pleasure and profit He foresaw they would yield to others. Imitate your Maker.

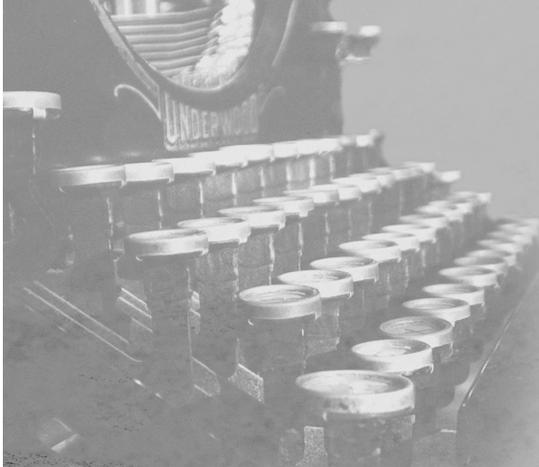
3. Do good Work because it will be to your own advantage. To begin with, good Work will give you personal gratification. It will be a pleasure to you whatever it may be to others. You will be glad that you have been able to produce a good piece of Work.

It may be that in the past you have got into scamping habits, or even acquired a scamping conscience. If so, you must get both conscience and habits rectified, and that to such a degree, that to turn out other than good Work will become absolutely painful— indeed, when it is preventable, it will be impossible. Altogether, apart from the pleasure or profit it may yield to others, or the personal gain it may bring to yourself, you ought to find real pleasure in the doing of good, substantial Work.

Again, good Work is Educational. Practice – that is, doing a thing over and over again – makes perfect. But the doing of a thing over and over again yields no benefit, unless there is the constant striving after improvement on the part of the doer. It is only by trying to do a thing well that improvement can be assured. If every time you paint a wall, or plane a board, or plough a field, or write a letter, or do anything else, you are trying to do that Work as well as you possibly can, you are thereby acquiring the ability to perform the same task better the next time. On the other hand, the more Work you scamp the worse Workman you will become, and the more you will be avoided by those who want Work done well.

Again, good Work is financially profitable to the doer of it. Everyone knows that a good Workman is more sought after, and better paid, than an inferior one, and is, or ought to be, more highly esteemed, into the bargain. I know that some people think that all Workmen ought to be brought down to the same level, as regards remuneration and other advantages, without reference to the difference existing in the, value of their Work. But no regulations can prevent the best Workman coming to the top, having the earliest promotion, being the most liberally paid, and the last to be discharged when hard times come along.

4. But, as a Salvationist, you have higher motives and nobler reasons for doing good work. You must acquit yourself in your vocation, whatever it may be, so as to please



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your Heavenly Master; I am sure you cannot do that except your Work be worthy of His esteem. He observes the manner in which every one of your duties is discharged, and you cannot possibly deserve, or reasonably expect, His approval unless the Work is done up to the level of your fullest ability.