

The
William Booth
Collection

LETTERS TO SALVATIONISTS

CHAPTER 1: Work

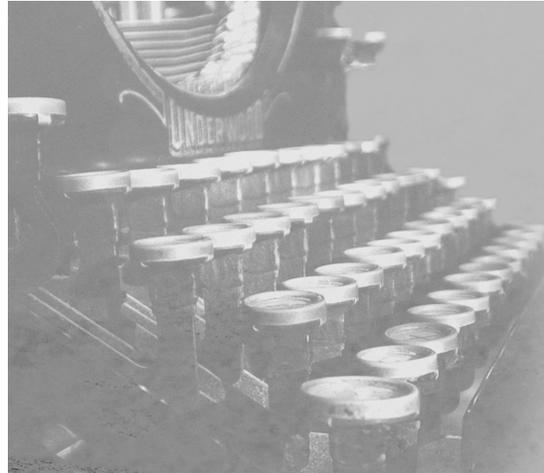
My DEAR COMRADES AND FRIENDS,

I propose to write you a few Letters on the subject of your Every Day life. By your Every Day life, I mean the duties you have to discharge to yourselves, your masters, your servants, the members of your own families, and the world in general.

I am always, talking to you about what we call religions duties, such as praying and, singing, making efforts to save your own soul and the souls of the people about you. In these Letters I propose speaking of the things that men call secular, and which many people reckon have nothing to do with Religion. But I want to show you, if I can, that the Salvationist's conduct ought, in, every particular, to be religious; every meal he partakes of should be a sacrament; and every thought and deed a service done to God. In doing this, you will see, that I shall have to deal with many quite common-place subjects; and, in talking about them, I shall try to be as simple and as practical as I possibly can.

The first topic to which I shall call your attention is your daily employment; and by that, I mean the method by which you earn your livelihood. Or, supposing that having some independent means of support; you are not compelled to labour for your daily bread; then I shall point out that special form of work, the doing of which Providence has plainly made to be your duty. Because it is difficult to conceive of any Salvationist who has not some regular employment, for which he holds himself responsible to God.

Work is a good thing, my Comrades. To be unemployed is generally counted an evil – anyway, it is so in the case of a poor man; but, it seems to me, that the obligation to be engaged in some honourable and useful kind of labour, is as truly devolved upon the rich as upon the poor, perhaps more so. Work is necessary to the well-being of men and women of every class, everywhere. To be voluntarily idle, in any rank or condition of life, is to be a curse to others and to be accursed yourself.



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Everything in God's creation works. The stars travel round and round in space, the ocean rises, falls and dashes itself about in storms and tempests, the winds career to and fro in the heavens, the clouds are ever receiving and pouring forth their life-giving waters. All the forces of nature are ever active, in order to fulfill the bountiful purposes of their Maker.

Everything that can be said to have life works.

The plants, and the trees struggle into being, pushing their way upwards through all sorts of opposition, and then fighting the very elements, in order to maintain their existence and bring forth their fruits.

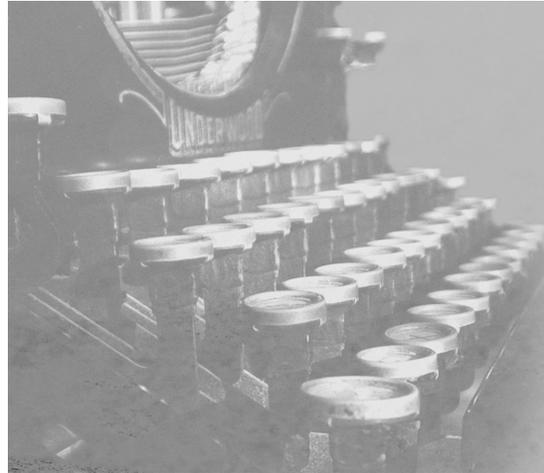
All the living creatures on the earth, or in the waters work. They have to hunt for their food; in many instances to construct their homes, and, in every case, to defend themselves against their enemies; and very hard work at times they find it, I can tell you.

God works. He is the greatest Worker in the universe. No being toils with the ceaseless activity, with the unerring wisdom, the gigantic energy, the beneficent purpose of Jehovah.

The inhabitants of Heaven work. To spend eternity in the monotony of an enforced idleness would be, neither more nor less, than a miserable existence. Indeed, we could not conceive of Angels or Saints or any other intelligent creatures being happy and contented without some form of employment.

All the best, greatest, and most useful men and women who have ever lived, in this world, have been untiring workers. They would not have been eminent in character, position, or achievement without unceasing toil. They have risen early, sat up late, redeemed the moments, begrudged the time necessary for sleep and food and the ordinary demands of life.

Work is a good thing, my Comrades. I have ever found it to be so in my own experience. And specially has it proved itself to be a blessing in these, the latter days



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of my life. It has been a means of grace to my soul, an unfailing recreation to my mind, and a perennial source of satisfaction and comfort to my heart. The more I do, the more I want to do; and the more I am able to do, the more I see needs to be done.

Now, I want every Salvationist to join with me in regarding some kind of honest Work as his bounden duty – a duty from which no circumstances of wealth, position or ability can relieve him. Nay, I want him to see that it is a privilege which he cannot forego without entailing loss and damage upon himself and those about him. If he would have health of body and mind and soul for himself, he must be an industrious worker. For I verily believe that idleness is the fruitful parent of disease, insanity, and sin. And the divinely-ordained plan by which he can benefit his family, his friends, and his neighbours is to work for them.

Whosoever, therefore, would prosper in every respect for this world and the next, must give themselves up to the doing of some kind of profitable work, and that with their might.

I should also like to say that, in my judgment, every Salvationist should not only accept his secular employment as of Divine appointment, and strive to do that heartily and well, but that in the condition life in which he finds himself placed, he is called upon to be a worker together with God for the Salvation of his fellow-men.