

The
William Booth
Collection

LETTERS TO SALVATIONISTS

CHAPTER 2: Good Work

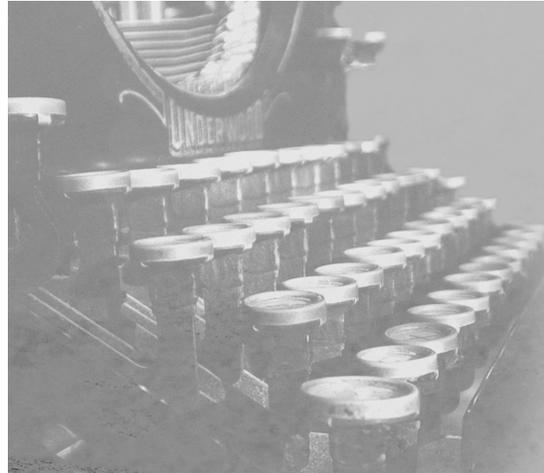
My DEAR COMRADES,

In my last Letter, I urged upon you the importance of being industriously engaged in some particular form of labour. In doing so, I dwelt upon the fact, that God had made Work to be the rule of life for every creature that His hands have created.

I now want to show you that it is not only important that you should work, but equally important that you should do good Work, – that is, Work that is right and useful, Work that is pleasing to your Lord, and profitable to your fellow-men. Your Heavenly Father has made it necessary for you to work in order to live. That is an important condition which cannot be overlooked, but He has gone beyond that. He has also designed that your Work should promote your highest interests, and be such as He can look down upon with satisfaction.

Now, I do not see that any arguments of mine can be necessary to justify this simple assertion. It will be plain to you all, A man who works ten hours a day, six days a week, for forty years, spends upwards of one hundred and twenty-four thousand hours of his life at his daily toil. It surely cannot be unimportant to him as to what kind of Work it is that occupies so large a portion of his life. Only think of the energies of body and mind put forth by him; during that long round of toil; and think also of the influence of the Work of all those years, for good or for evil, upon himself and upon those around him. That influence, you will see, I am sure, ought to be made to tell, as far as possible, in favour of the honour of God, the goodness and happiness of himself, and the well-being of his fellow-men; but that can only be the case when good and useful Work is done.

Now in urging that you, my Comrades, should be engaged in doing good Work, I find myself somewhat in a difficulty. It is very probable, that many who read this Letter will be already employed in some kind of labour that does not answer to this description. For instance, your Work may be far from being agreeable, either to your taste or your judgment. It is not what you like. It does not seem calculated, so far as you can judge,



The
William Booth
Collection

LETTERS TO SALVATIONISTS

to bring either glory to God or benefit to man.

But then you say, What am I to do? I had no choice in the matter of my trade or my calling. It was fixed up for me by my parents, or I selected it when my head was full of foolish notions, or I came into it by accident, and now, however much I may desire to do so, I cannot get away from it.

That is very much where, I found myself, my Comrades, when as a youth, I came to see life and its responsibilities in the right light. I was chained fast to an employment, from which I would gladly have given the world, had it been mine, to get away.

Do you ask me how I acted under the circumstances? Well, I acted then just as I recommend everyone similarly fixed to act now. I put myself and my destiny into God's hands. I told Him that I was just willing to be and do with my daily Work what He desired, and I waited to know His will. Meanwhile, I strove to do the Work in the station in which I found myself as well as ever I could, and seized upon, and made the very most I could of such opportunities for saving sinners as came within my reach. In due course God delivered me, and my way was opened to a sphere of usefulness beyond anything I had dreamed of before.

He has done even so with me since that time again and again. He is acting with me after the same fashion to-day.

This is very much the method He adopts with all His children. The Prophet says, "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." That is, it is not the Divine plan to make us the architects of our own fortune by leaving us to cut out a pathway for ourselves, regardless of God's controlling hand. But we can keep our eyes open, watch for opportunities, and courageously seize them when they arise. You must act after this fashion, and He will guide you into that work which shall be most for His glory and your good.

Still, it will be useful, I think, for me to give some counsels to help my Comrades to choose such Work as will give them satisfaction. Many of my readers will be young people with life before them, and a change will be possible to them, if seen to be



The
William Booth
Collection

LETTERS TO SALVATIONISTS

desirable. They can afford to risk something in order to reach a form of labour in which they can engage with pleasure and profit, and realise all their days that they are doing good Work. Perhaps I can help them.

Then there are the children. Perhaps I may be able to say something which, when the important question of settling their Life Work comes up, will help you to decide upon an employment that will prove a pleasure in their future lives, a profit to the world, and a satisfaction to your own soul when you meet them again in the world to come.