



Chapter IV

GOOD WORK

Comrades and Friends, - In the story of the Creation, as related in the book of Genesis, we read that after having made the world, god saw everything that He had made, and pronounced it 'very good.'

Now it seems to me that we ought, as far as possible, to imitate God in our labours; and, like Him, strive to produce good work. To begin with:

- I. — I need not to say that men of all classes and in all places ought to be engaged in some form of labour.

Men were made to work; therefore every man ought to have some task for which he is responsible; that is, he ought to do something to promote his own welfare, and the welfare of those about him. Neither wealth, nor position, nor power, will exempt him from it. It is a mistake to suppose that work is a disgrace to anyone; on the contrary, good work gives dignity and confers honour upon those engaged in it.

1. Work is necessary to health.

Man is so constituted that unless he employs his powers of body and mind and heart they deteriorate and perish.

2. Work is necessary to happiness.

Idleness means misery. Even in the weakness and anguish of disease, employment in some profitable task relieves the monotony of existence, and creates a measure of satisfaction, if not of enjoyment to the worker.

- II. — But not only ought we to work, we ought to strive to do good work.

In this, as in other respects, we are called to be imitators of God, and His work is always good.



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I should like to have seen the world on the glad morning of its creation. I have no doubt that it appeared to be a perfect exhibition of what the wisdom of God could produce: beautiful beyond the power of tongue to describe. That privilege was, however, denied me. Still, I am hoping to see the new heaven and the new earth, wherein righteousness shall dwell, and into which neither sin nor Satan will ever enter.

Now, my Comrades, you must ever strive to do work which on examination will be found to be good.

1. This applies to the nature of the employment by which you earn your livelihood.

Many of my Soldiers are not quite satisfied with the character of their earthly business. In some cases they had no hand in choosing it; it was selected for them by their parents. In other cases it was their own selection before they were converted; whilst in others, again it was decided by circumstances over which they had no control. Now although a change may seem desirable, it is not always possible to effect it. But, even in this respect, if they walk with God, and aim at His glory, a way may be opened for them to find some employment more in harmony with their present preferences, and presenting greater opportunities for usefulness.

2. Whatever your work may be, if you would imitate your Heavenly Father, you must seek to do it to the best of your ability.

Whether you work in the field or the factory, the shop or the office, at home or abroad, you must ever strive to produce the best work you can. Whether you tend the baby, wash the clothes, dig the garden, serve the customers, or discharge some other task which the providence of Go has assigned you, do it in the best manner possible.

3. This applies equally to your work in the Corps.

What I have said about doing good work for man applies specially to that work which more directly concerns the Kingdom of God, particularly when that work bears directly on the Salvation of souls.



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I am afraid there are some Salvationists who, although they are very particular about the character of the work they turn out for themselves or for their earthly employers, are not over careful in the discharge of the duties they owe to their Heavenly Father.

With respect to their earthly business they say: 'I must be sharp to time; I must keep my tools in order; I must work close to my pattern, I must carry out all my instructions; I must observe the rules, or I shall make those over me angry and so run the risk of losing my situation.' But when it comes to their work for Christ and immortal souls, they say in action, if not in words: 'Oh, anything will do here. God and The Army must be content with what I feel inclined to do or to give.'

For instance, sometimes those responsible for the care of a Salvation Army Hall will not trouble themselves to keep it clean and attractive. They seem to think that anything will do. In the matter of punctual attendance at the Meetings others will say: 'Well, here we are late again; but five or ten minutes do not matter. It's only an Open-Air or a week-night Meeting.' When they select a song or go to sing it, they say: 'Anything will do!' When they come to prayer, they say: 'It does not matter whether I kneel, or stand, or sit, or what sort of petition I offer. I will express whatever desire comes first to my mind. Anything will do!' When they have the opportunity of giving a testimony, they simply describe the old feelings, in the same words, and in the same tones as they have done for years gone by, on the supposition that anything will do. When it comes to speaking, there is no striving to use the most expressive and convincing arguments and illustrations. On the contrary, they act after the same fashion as with their prayers – anything will do!

But that is not the way for you, my Comrades. If you want to do work that will please God, be profitable to man, and save souls, you must do your best, after the best fashion within your power. If your work is that of visiting the public-houses or selling The Army papers, or begging for funds nothing but your best will do. If you fill the post of a Local Officer, or play in the Band, or work for the children, whether they are your own or other people's, nothing but your best will do. And, Oh! When you warn sinners in the Open-Air or direct the Penitents at the Mercy-Seat, you must bring up every faculty you possess to your assistance, for nothing but your best will do.



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When your work is done, test it, so far as you have the ability, and see whether it be good work or not. If you find it is not good, and there is the opportunity, do it over again, for nothing but your best will do.

My comrades, good work will be profitable to your earthly employers. Good work will be a credit to your earthly employers. Good work will be a credit to your Corps. Good work will advance your position and increase your reward on the Last Great Day. But while you strive to do your best, and rest not day or night, if conscious that you can do better, remember that you serve no hard taskmaster. The smallest service, if it represents your best, will win His 'Well done!'

Your affectionate General,

William Booth.