

## BURIED FORCES

Comrades and Friends, — How often we complain about the little progress Salvation seems to make in the world. We see commerce, wealth, pleasure, recreation, science, and other earthly pursuits growing and extending at a rapid rate, while the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ advances comparatively slowly.

But, after all, is it any wonder that the interests of the Kingdom of Heaven should make such slow progress, in view of the small amount of energy, time, ability, wealth, and other forces expended upon them, compared with the enormous attention that is given to earthly enterprises?

On my recent voyage to Japan, as I watched so many of the passengers, some of them professed followers of Jesus Christ, spending their time in childish games, cards, fiction, and gossip, I could not help remarking what a mighty force lay buried in those people – a force which, if consecrated and sanctified, might be employed for the regeneration of the world!

But are there not forces that might be employed effectively for the extension of the Kingdom of Heaven to be found nearer at home than on ships sailing over the distant seas? Are not these idle powers to be found in Churches and Missions, and, alas! If only in a limited measure, are they not to be found in The Salvation Army?

I wonder what your experience is, my Comrades, in your Corps, in this respect. Are all the capacities possessed by Officers, Local Officers, Soldiers, Juniors, and the people who come and go from your Hall as fully and intelligently employed as they might be for the extension of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ and the Salvation of men?

I have no doubt, my Comrades, that you often remark how much more you could do for the Kingdom of Heaven if you had more money, better Soldiers, more capable Officers, a more suitable Hall, and other advantages.



The  
William Booth  
Collection

But wait a moment, and let me ask whether the forces already possessed are being used as fully as they might be? To begin with:

I. — Is the thinking force among you as much in active service as it might be?

Is there not a certain amount of brain power lying unemployed within your borders? Might not some fresh plans be invented for more successfully attracting the people to your building, getting at them in their own homes, or button-holing them in the streets or their pleasure haunts, and so compelling them to remember God and eternity?

Might not something new be done to stir up your Soldiers to such desires, resolutions, and faith as would draw the Holy Ghost down from Heaven in richer baptisms than ever enjoyed before, so setting their hearts on fire with overcoming love?

Might not a little extra thought make your Meetings more interesting, more spiritual, and therefore more useful?

When I was in the United States I heard that a prosperous firm had a letter-box fixed in their premises in which any employee could deposit a suggestion for doing any part of the business of the establishment in a more rapid or economical manner, a reward being offered for valuable suggestions.

Could there not be something of that sort in your Corps, my Comrades? Anyhow, wake up your sleeping brains, and think, and study how you can roll the old chariot along faster.

II. — Again, let me ask, is there not a large amount of talent lying buried in your Corps?

Supposing you have only forty or fifty Soldiers, may there not be some valuable slumbering gift that has not yet been brought into active service? It is quite probable that the Commanding Officer has no knowledge of the treasure; that the Sergeant-Major has not seen anything of it, and that even the possessors themselves have no idea of its existence. For example:

1. Is it not quite possible that you have some Soldier on your Roll who could effectively sing a solo, but who as yet has never had the chance of doing so? What do you say, my Comrades?



The  
William Booth  
Collection

---

2. Is it not quite probable that there is some Soldier in your ranks who could pray in public with unction and power, but who has never poured forth his soul before the people? What do you say, my Comrades?

3. Is it not possible that there is some Soldier amongst you who could testify to his own Salvation, and exhort the people to seek the mercy he has found, whose mouth has not as yet been opened to do anything in that direction? What do you say, my Comrades?

4. Then, is it not possible that there may be some Comrade, young or old, who in the days gone by has made some public effort and failed in its discharge, and who in his despair resolved never to try again? Ought not such a one to be encouraged to make another effort? What do you say, my Comrades?

Here then, in your Corps, we have buried forces, whose success, if they can only be aroused and set to work, will be a wonder to themselves, and a blessing to the world.

III. — Is there not a large amount of affection buried among you?

I am not sure whether I have ever visited your Corps, or whether I have ever spoken in your neighborhood; but there is one thing of which I am quite sure, and that is, that a baptism of love to God, to one another, and to the poor sinners around you would help you forward immensely. Love is a precious commodity; and an active force for good. Love works miracles, and every Soldier on your Roll has a heart that can love. Oh, stir yourselves up, my Comrades, stir yourselves up to the exercise of this power, and let it no longer be buried, and therefore a useless force.

Perhaps there are graves about here in which the first love of some of those to whom I am speaking lies buried. Do you not remember the days when some of you could hardly work by day, or sleep by night, for the hot, burning love in your hearts for Jesus and your Comrades and for the men and women dying around you?

Oh, go in for a resurrection! Fetch out the precious affection from its hiding-place. It is just the thing your Corps requires. Love will meet your every need. Love will prove the conqueror.



The  
William Booth  
Collection

---

IV. — Then, if I mistake not, there is a little money hidden somewhere about here; it may be a considerable amount.

If this treasure, much or little, could be set moving it would prove very useful to our Lord in the dark places of earth, or even in your own neighborhood.

V. — One question more, let me ask whether there is not a large amount of energy buried in your Corps?

This is a most valuable force, of which I thank God The Salvation Army is not destitute; although she needs a great deal more.

What is the experience of your Corps in this respect? Are you all at work with all your might? What do you say?

Oh, what a contrast is afforded by many Salvationists in the manner they go about their own earthly business and the way they conduct the business they count their Lord's! Alas! As I have said, they slumber. They go to the Meetings, and sing, and pray, and testify – half asleep. I remember once being in a city of which it was said that half the inhabitants were asleep all the time, and the other half went about on tip-toe for fear of awakening those who slept.

Does your Corps resemble that city, my Comrades? I hope not! But if it does it is high time for you to obey the apostolic command, and awake out of your sleep.

Your affectionate General,  
William Booth.