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Chapter XIX

DOING YOUR DUTY II

Comrades and Friends, — You will remember that last week I wrote to you about the importance of Doing Your Duty, and the satisfaction that such a course of action brings.

I can readily imagine one or other of my hearers saying, at the close of my Message: 'Yes, General, what you have been saying about duty is all right. I know it very well. The most sorrowful hours of my life have been those in which I have had to suffer condemnation for not having done my duty.'

And, then, I can fancy another Soldier joining in, saying: 'No one can be more anxious than I am about the discharge of duty; but I have so many hindrances; I am so awkwardly fixed in my home, at my work, or in my circumstances, that it seems at times absolutely impossible. What can I do?

And I can imagine some one else adding: 'All that my Comrade has just said applies to me with regard to my doing my duty at my Corps. I went to the Open-Air, joined a Public-House Brigade, sold "War Crys," and did ever so many other things for a time. But I confess that there were so many difficulties in the road, that I gave it up, and have felt awfully miserable ever since for having done so.

What must I do?

To one and all I say:

I. — Settle in your own minds what the duty you have the most difficulty in doing actually is.

Consider your opportunities, your abilities, your circumstances, and find out what you can do to please your God and to bless your fellows. That work will be your duty.

II. — But, you may say: 'How shall I know it?'



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1. Well, you must settle, first, what the duty is which you owe to yourselves.

Your own well-being is of the first importance. The keeping of your own body, mind, and heart in a healthy condition has a direct relationship with the right discharge of every other duty you are called to perform.

Paul said: 'Do thyself no harm;' and I may add to it: 'Do yourselves all the good you can, so long as it is consistent with truth and righteousness.'

- a. It must be your duty to form such personal habits, whether public or private, as will tend to your well-being.
- b. It must be your duty to eat such food as you have reason to believe will promote your health, and to leave you alone such eatings and drinking are as likely to weaken you.
- c. It must be your duty to take such exercise, wear such clothing, allow of such sleeping, and other things, as you are satisfied are for your good.
- d. It must be your duty to make good use of your time, refrain from foolish gossip, and generally conduct yourselves as wise men and women of God.

2. If it be your home that is in question, settle what your duty is with respect to it.

Not only decide on your duty to your home, but also on its discharge.

- a. It must be your duty, if you are married, to love and cherish your husband or wife, and your children, if you have any. Are you discharging it?
- b. It must be your duty to love and cherish your parents. Are you discharging it?
- c. It must be your duty to act justly and honourably by all who in any way are dependent upon you. Are you discharging it?

3. If it is your daily work that is in question, settle what is your duty with respect to it.

- a. This will very much depend on the kind of work it is. If it is opposed to the honour of the Lord, whose servants you are, and the welfare of the people, for whose Salvation you are responsible, it will be your duty to get out of it as soon as you possibly can.



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b. If your work asks you to practice deception, dishonesty, or falsehood, you must refuse it right away. But if it be such as Salvationists can approve, it will be your duty to engage in it with all your heart.

In acting in this manner you will do your duty to your employer, your mistress, or your servant, as the case may be.

III. – Having settled in your own minds what your duty is, give yourselves up to the doing of it, without regard to any cost or consequences.

If it really is your duty, that is, if God has called you to the task, you can rely upon His furnishing you with the means you require for its discharge.

I have trusted Him myself, again and again, for the means and power to carry me through with the discharge of my duty when the task has appeared all but impossible; and, glory to His Name! He has never failed me. Neither will He fail you. He loves Salvationists who are prepared to struggle with difficulties in the discharge of their duty.

IV. – Then you must put away all that would be calculated to hinder you doing your duty.

Come out from those pursuits and associations that are likely to make the discharge of your duty difficult, if not impossible.

How foolish, I am sorry to say, some Salvationists are in rushing into conditions which make their faithfulness to Christ and their spiritual warfare almost impossible. They form friendships, or cherish companions, or join in recreations and worldly pleasures that all but destroy their ability to maintain the spirit of faithfulness to Christ, and the discharge of the duties they owe to the ungodly around them. Then they complain of the hardship they experience in doing their duty! What folly this is!

V. – You must cast yourselves on the Living God for strength to do your duty.

He will enable you to grapple with any work He may have called you to do. He has promised that His grace shall be sufficient for you.



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VI. – Lastly, you must persevere.

Do not be afraid of either circumstances, men, or devils. Satisfy yourselves on the rightness of the path on which you are travelling, and then let the cry be 'Forward!'

By this kind of perseverance you can look forward with confidence to the joy of receiving that crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge will in the Last Great Day give to all those who have done their duty.

Your affectionate General,
William Booth.