



The
William Booth
Collection

A FAIR WIND FOR SALVATION

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There can be no question that whilst God is ever willing and ready to co-operate with us in the salvation of men, there are times when circumstances are more favorable to this work than others. There are days of power and influence when the dry bones are more easily moved and lifted to their feet, and more readily clothed with flesh and blood, and more easily vitalized with the force of the Divine Spirit than others.

There can be no controversy with us that a favorable gale of heavenly grace is blowing all over the varied fields of our operations at the present moment. Perhaps nothing to equal it has occurred in our past history, wonderful as have been the facilities for effecting the salvation of men with which we have been favored.

Reports are crowding in upon us from all parts of the world, testifying to the awakening and salvation of extraordinary numbers of people. There is scarcely a country which forms an exception to this rule. Those least likely seem to be obtaining the biggest share of the blessing. India leads the list with a record that should cause a shout of praise from every true-hearted Salvationist. The telegraph has flashed the marvelous intelligence across the Indian Ocean, through the Suez Canal, and over the Mediterranean Sea that 9,700 Hindoos have knelt at the penitent-form and professed salvation through Jesus Christ during the month of March. The record elsewhere, although not equaling these unparalleled numbers, is still very remarkable, and furnishes ground for the profoundest gratitude. Let us sing, at least let us say from the depths of our hearts,

“Praise God from Whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him all creatures here below,
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”

But what is to us Officers of all but equal interest and significance in view of this astounding intelligence, is the fact that some of the hardest and most discouraging Corps in every Country are having their full share of this heavenly wind. Little struggling Societies, alike with hard, barren Districts, are being watered by the glorious rains. Take Birmingham, for instance; what



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Collection

A FAIR WIND FOR SALVATION

a long, wearying and disheartening pull that great town has made upon our sympathies and hopefulness and faith! Have not officers toiled and prayed and fought there night and day in all seasons for years gone by? Has not almost every fashion of method been tried; nay, have thousands of pounds just lately been spent in erecting a noble barracks in the very centre of the town; and yet with this outlay, added to all the struggles of the past, has not the outcome been comparatively small - darkness and hardness and poverty still brooding over the place?

But lo! See what a change has been wrought! Birmingham, viewed from a Salvationist's standpoint is, I am informed, quite another town. Holy influences attend all that is done. A steady procession of people march day by day to the penitent-form: and seeing that this has not been the result of any extraordinary effort, there is every reason to expect the continuance and increase of the blessing as the days go by.

What has been done in Birmingham has been done elsewhere. Nay, these blessed influences are going out from us. In one town a leading Wesleyan minister comes to a meeting, is convicted of inward unrighteousness, acknowledges his need of a deeper cleansing, is filled with the righteousness of God, and goes forth in the power of a holy life.

In another city, a minister of the Methodist Free Church is convicted of having lost the blessing of a clean heart; goes to the penitent-form, and seeks and again finds the sacred gift, and at his own request testifies from the platform the same afternoon to the grace that has been given him. The day after, a clergyman of the Church of England mixes with the seekers for holiness and rises up to testify to the work of the Holy Ghost and for two days labors with our people, the busiest amongst the busy, in leading souls to Jesus; and then goes home to bear the tidings to his own parish, promising to visit the villages all round his own vicarage with the proclamation of a present, free and full Salvation.

In another town, a Wesleyan minister acknowledges to obtaining, in a single hour, at a meeting, that which is going to influence for good the preaching of his future life. So a flame is burning and spreading; and it does not seem unreasonable for us to hope that we may see the nation in a blaze.



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Collection

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Now, my object in writing this paper is to entreat every Officer whose name is on our Roll, to lend his hand and heart to help to make the very best of this Heaven-born Wind. The saying, "Strike while the iron is hot," has been improved upon, and made to say, "Strike the iron if cold until it is hot." Good! Both advices are excellent. Let us act upon them alike, and strike with all our might, and strike often, whether the iron be hot or whether it be cold. If it is to be so, my comrade -

I. *You must rouse up your own soul for the business.* Salvation charity, like all other charity, begins at home. You cannot very well go beyond your own experience. I want you to be a leader in this glorious fight. Make haste and come to the front, and compel every soul in your Corps to feel that you belong to the Heavy Brigade.

If you are not what you were in holiness and in tender love to Jesus Christ and perishing souls in the past; if you are not as ready to serve and sacrifice for their salvation as you once were - as you were in the days when you were a cadet or a soldier, here is a blessed opportunity for you to shake yourself up and make a new start.

The expectation everywhere prevalent is worth a fortune to you. Your soldiers themselves expect something, and are willing to labor, if I mistake not, to help to assist in bringing it about. Anxious eyes at home and abroad eagerly look through every issue of the "War Cry," to find the name of your corps amongst those who are being carried successfully forward by this gale of grace.

Now is your opportunity, and heaven and earth are wondering whether you will be equal to it. If your heart is only broken up and filled with the Spirit of Jesus Christ and of compassion for souls, it is difficult to suppose that you can be other than a great success. Even if you are not able right away to testify to the possession of a clean heart - if you are only seeking it, "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness," even before they are filled. Oh! there is a wonderful power in the tears and prayers and longings of hungering souls; while the men and women whose hearts are filled with righteousness must ever be more than conquerors. I care little about the size of the vessel; your intellect and learning and capacities may not be



The
William Booth
Collection

A FAIR WIND FOR SALVATION

very extensive, but God will do wonders by you if your soul is only in sympathy with Him, and full of desperate determination to have souls or perish in the attempt.

II. *Try and be more definite in your work, both with sinners and soldiers, whether in visitation, in the barracks, in the open-air, or anywhere else.* In all your singing, praying, and talking have a distinct aim. Don't be content with general talk which signifies little or nothing - merely talking good to people or singing songs just because they have a nice tune, or because the people know it; praying with the same sentences over and over again, just because you have got used to them; speaking or delivering addresses because you think you will be likely to have a good time on them. Go directly in everything you do for some distinct blessing - for such as you have reason to believe is needed by the people there and then, and don't be content unless you have good ground for believing that you have made an impression upon them in this direction.

With respect to the ungodly, always endeavor to make them see and feel the great evil and terrible danger of a life of sin, the importance of renouncing their evil ways a once, of flying to Christ without delay, of the possibility of being saved on the spot wherever they may be. You cannot very well deal with sinners in too serious a spirit. If they see that you think their souls' salvation is an important business, and are concerned about it, you will make a mark whenever and wherever you may speak to them.

Always pray for every sinner you talk to, either while you are conversing with them, or after you leave them; and best of all, if at all convenient, fall down and pray for them there and then. Never mind their kneeling with you, leave that to them. In no circumstances, I should think, could you ever kneel and pray for a sinner, specially if it be out of barracks, without producing a powerful impression.

With Soldiers there are three things which you should keep particularly in mind and dwell upon with the greatest plainness at every opportunity -

I. *Insist upon its being the duty and privilege of every soul to live all the time in the favor of God.* The great tendency amongst soldiers is to drift away from God and peace and power,



The
William Booth
Collection

A FAIR WIND FOR SALVATION

and then to get some hope from the experience of bygone days. Oh, what crowds live on memory merely; what they once were; how they were once converted, and rejoiced and worked and prayed and the like; whereas now they are cold and poor and wretched and blind; in fact, half backsliders, if not outright.

Hold them to the truth, that if they have not the realization of peace and power to-day, if ever they did possess it, is because they have lost God. Push them up to return at once in order that they may again have the joy of His Salvation, and be real witnesses for Him, and help you to win other souls to His feet.

II. *Begin afresh to urge upon every soldier in your corps who does not already possess holiness, the duty of seeking a clean heart.* Find out those who have the Blessing. Let them know that you are conversant with their experience; explain Full Salvation to them; hold it up before them continually; urge their immediate acceptance of it. Say something about it in every meeting, and you will be bound to win them over as witnesses to the power of Jesus Christ to save them from their sins.

Of course, all this, and all that goes before and follows after, should be done wisely and lovingly, and then you need not fear offending anyone; and if some do run away because you dealt faithfully with them, for every one you lose you will gain twenty more.

III. *Then in dealing with soldiers be very straight in reference to Consecration.* I am sure that while more definitely instructed as to the nature and duties of full consecration than any other people under heaven, still thousands of our soldiers are comparatively ignorant of the requirements which God makes upon their services in this life. You must explain this to them, and be very patient. Let them have line upon line, and precept upon precept. Show them that as the Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for them, so they must give themselves for Him; and they must do this as really and truly as He did. And He used Himself up for them, not in song or sentiment merely, but in hard, dry agonizing fact; hands, feet, brain, heart, time, talents, life, goods, blood, all - all - ALL; so they must use themselves up for Him. He may not, probably will not, ask them to do this by dying at the stake, or in the wild beast's den, or on the cross, as multitudes have done for Him in the past, but He does ask them to present their bodies a living



The
William Booth
Collection

A FAIR WIND FOR SALVATION

sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is their reasonable service. That is, He asks them to live for Him in their homes, shops, factories, towns, or wherever they may abide.

IV. *As soon as possible have some sort of dealing with every one of your soldiers on this subject.* Go in for a straightforward personal conversation with each man and woman and child, to make every soldier feel that he is looked to, and expected by the General, and by you, his officer, to take some part in the coming Revolution.

Now, don't put this on one side as a matter of trifling importance, but go and seek out every soldier and tell him you are authorized by the General to seek his or her co-operation, as the case may be, in bringing about the great Revolution. Urge upon them their responsibility; make plain their ability to render real help; by prayer, consecration, and by some particular form of work, they can render valuable assistance, and you will raise up a body of coworkers who will bring about very marvelous results.

Then, O officer, whosoever you are, if you can go forward and map out something which each soldier can accomplish, and can persuade him to undertake it, what a spectacle your corps will be to the great Salvation Army throughout the world. Oh, what is there for our soldiers to do; or rather I should say, what is there not for them to do? Work of infinite and eternal moment wanting doing, and with all these thousands of willing hands and hearts only wanting something to do, where are the Officers who have the faculty to set them on?

Copenhagen, April 13th, 1893.

P.S. At this point I was compelled to break off, and abandon all idea of being able to write anything worthy of "The Officer" for this month. But the Editor insists on the insertion of even this fragment, and I suppose he must have his way. To the last moment, however, I clung to the idea of adding a few other counsels, but have been prevented. All I can do more is to send a line further from Hamburg, on my way to Copenhagen, where I go to hold a Staff Council for the north of Europe, to beg of you to push forward with the attack.



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Collection

A FAIR WIND FOR SALVATION

What can I say more to encourage those to go forward who have already made a start and had a taste of success? and what can be said or done to arouse those to action who have not moved out of their old and formal, lifeless way of doing things? One or two things in the postscript, however, I may say. One of which is,

AIM AT OBTAINING SOME DEFINITE RESULT IN EVERY MEETING.

Never mind how small that result may be. If it be only a boy or a girl at the penitent-form, or a soldier pledging himself to some direct work for God and souls, have something done. It is not given to either you or me to measure the magnitude or value of results.

Be determined never more to be satisfied with a service that is a mere outside performance.

Begin from this hour, if you have not already done so, and plan for this - pray and believe for this. Tell God and tell your people that you are determined to have souls, or something that is on the same level of usefulness with souls, at every meeting you hold, and that they must help you in the realisation of your aim.

And then I want to tell you a remarkable incident in connection with this "Revolution" that has reached me since writing the foregoing. I do feel that it should encourage any and every Officer who is struggling with difficulties and fancy that the success I ask for from him is beyond the range of possibility.

There was, three months ago, in a certain part of England, what we will designate Splitville. It was the despair of every officer that had anything to do with it, from the Home Commissioner down to every captain or lieutenant who had ever made its acquaintance. For ten long years it had been desolation, emptiness, division, wrangling and disappointment. Almost every class of talent and devotion in F.O.'s had been tried upon it and had failed. It was a case of despair.

There was one thing however in its favor - there was a population. If the people treated the Army with contempt and refused to listen to its voice, still they were there, and they had hearts the D.O. knew full well, and it was only a case of reaching them. But who would do it? A



The
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Collection

A FAIR WIND FOR SALVATION

selection was made an F.O. was appointed. To an outsider he was not the most likely man for the difficult task. He was not particularly bold or talented, but rather quiet on the platform and timid off it, but he was possessed of the spirit of the Coming Revolution, and he went to his appointment in the strength of a determined resolution and relying on the Spirit of God. He made up his mind to know nothing - either among saints or sinners - but Christ and Him crucified, and to convey the salvation of God to them in his barracks if they would come there, and if they would not come there, to carry it to them in the streets and in their own homes. He started in this spirit. Soon sinners began to cry for mercy. They were saved at the penitent form, in their houses, in the streets. The D.O. was invited to come over and help him, which he did. They had a week together. The D.O. acted as the captain, and the captain as the lieutenant, and you will find everything changed - congregations, finances, all have gone up gloriously. Instead of give at knee-drill there are fifty, and instead of despair, all are full of hope and confidence for greater things. My comrades, again I say that I rely upon you, I pray for you, and expect glorious news from every country, division, and corps through our borders.