The Salvation Army
International Headquarters
London

To My Officers Throughout the World

My Beloved Comrades,

On the coming 10th of April, in many lands and in many ways, the Officers, Soldiers, and Friends of The Salvation Army will be celebrating my Eightieth Birthday.

The occasion is one which inspires in me many deep emotions; and, next to the gratitude I feel to Almighty God for the unmeasured blessings He has been pleased to vouchsafe to me, I find the desire to write and tell you, my dear Officers, something of the love and sympathy ever welling up in my heart towards you.

The times and friends of long ago are sometimes said to have been brighter or better than those of today. This may have been the experience of some. It has not been mine. It is true that in the early years of my Salvation warfare there were battlings and victories of deep interest and value, but no conflicts or triumphs in those far-back times exceeded, or indeed equalled, in value and interest the conflicts and triumphs of my later days.

It is true that from the beginning I have been associated with many remarkable men and women – men and women whose ability, affection, and devotion to God have been of the greatest service to me. But with perhaps one or two exceptions I have had no coworkers who have excelled, or even equalled, in ability, in affection or devotion, the Comrades who at this present hour are struggling with me all over the world for the highest well-being of their fellow, and for the advancement of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.
To you, then, my Helpers and Comrades, I instinctively turn at this interesting moment of my history, desiring to tell you something of the thoughts and feelings and hopes and purposes concerning you that are uppermost in my soul.

1. I feel impelled thus to speak to you by the love I bear you.

I need not tell you that I regard you as my spiritual sons and daughters, and that my soul yearns in the highest degree to promote your welfare in every respect both in relation to this life and the life which is to come.

2. I feel impelled to write you by the anticipation of the mighty part you are destined to play in the future, whether as individuals or in combination.

Men wholly occupied in the political, scientific, commercial, military, and other departments of the world’s activities will, beyond question, exert a powerful influence for good or ill upon the future welfare of mankind; but the results of their strifes and labours will, in my estimation, be trivial compared with those which I believe are destined to flow out of the work of The Salvation Army Officer.

3. And I feel specially impelled to speak to you at this time because of the responsibility that has, in the providence of God, devolved upon me as your General, and which, by His grace, I have been so long able to carry with a certain amount of profit to yourselves and to the world around you.

But the time is flying, and every year bring the hour nearer when my last communication must go forth, and it may be – who can tell? – that my Eightieth Birthday Message – the Letter I am now writing you – will prove the closing utterance of my career. I am sure you will listen to it.
1. The counsels I am about to give you have been tried and tested by years of close and careful reflection.

That reflection has been greatly increased in value and importance by the fact that my life has been spent under the influence of a definite purpose.

Sixty-five years ago I chose the Salvation of men and the extension of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ as the supreme object for which I would live and labour. Although that choice was made in my early youth, in much ignorance of the world, and of the religious needs of those about me, still, it was not arrived at without much thought and some information; and that purpose is still, and will be to the end, the object which has shaped and mastered the thoughts, ambitions, and activities of my whole life.

From the hour of my first Prayer Meetings in one of the cottage homes of my native town, down the present moment, that object has been the governing principle of my life. The adornments and flowers and music and other pleasant things connected with religious service have all been secondary to efficiency in the search for that object and success in attaining it.

My hourly usage with regard to every effort I put forth has been to ask myself: What does this action contemplate? What will it achieve? Can it be improved upon? I believe I can say that every conversation and prayer and song and address and Meeting I have had a hand in, have been valued in proportion to their ability to promote the realization of that great purpose.

2. The counsels I shall give have also been tried and tested by years of observation.
The interest awakened in my soul by the object on which at the beginning my heart was set, led me to carefully study the lives and conduct of those servants of God around me who had achieved any remarkable success in religious warfare, and from whom I might hope to learn something bearing on the work before me.

Then I have hunted the world over to find successful soul-winners, studying their histories and utterances, and striving to discover the principles and methods that led to their success. To many of them, now gone to their reward, I owe a deep debt of gratitude for the influence they exerted upon my career.

I think I can say that from the day of my conversion to God I have never read a biography, heard an address, or attended a Meeting, without asking myself the question: Is there anything here from which I can learn how better to fulfill my own mission in enforcing the claims of my Lord, and saving the souls of men? All this has been of untold service in helping me to store my mind, to mould my character, and to determine the nature of my warfare.

3. The counsels I shall give have been tried and tested by actual experience.

No greater mistake can be made with respect to The Salvation Army than to suppose that it is not a school for thought. Perhaps more theories have been produced and more schemes invented by us for gaining the highest ends of the Christian faith (bearing in mind our age and the extent of our work) than by any other religious movement in existence. Indeed, as I have often said in public, when we have so many thousands of hearts inflamed with the love of Christ for sinning, suffering, and dying men, and possessed with a passionate desire for their rescue, you must have the constant evolution of new plans and contrivances for that purpose.

But, while thus inventive, The Army does not content itself with hopes and theories merely; it seeks to put every fresh idea to the test of practical application, waiting for
the issue, before it regards it of permanent value. At least, that has been my own usage, and the practical character of my mind and work has come to be generally allowed.

While, then, I glory in the fact that our religion is Divine in origin and manifestation, I equally maintain the necessity for human skill, human energy, and human enterprise, in the efforts put forth to establish and extend it; and accordingly I have only adopted any efforts so far as they have proved themselves effective in the school of experience. So with this confidence in my convictions I proceed once more to push them upon your attention, and, in doing so, I would say:

(1) Acquaint yourselves with them as they are described in this Letter.

Read them carefully. About them there may be but little novelty; you may have heard before from the lips and pens of others, and possibly you may have already received counsels not unlike them from myself, but in themselves and in their far-reaching consequences, they are, on that account, none the less important. Rely upon it, there are no subjects more intimately associated with your welfare, and the welfare of those you love — nay, I might say, with the welfare of the whole human family — then the things to which I desire to call your attention.

(2) Seek to take in their full significance.

It is fearfully possible to suppose that because you have an acquaintance with the words by which truth are described, you therefore grasp their meaning. Words, in their relations to truth, our little more than the rind is to the fruit, the shell to the kernel, or the body to the soul. Look to it that you are not satisfied with the rind, or the shell, or the body; it is the soul of things alone that can serve or satisfy you or benefit anybody else.
(3) Strive to appreciate in your heart the convictions and feelings for which these truths naturally call.

To cultivate this appreciation has been my life’s practice. I should think that those who have known me best, and watched me closely, will largely attribute the success that God has been pleased to give me in dealing with the hearts and consciences of men, to the fact that I am a man of feeling.

While accustomed to reason about every doctrine taught, every principle adopted, and every method employed, I cannot afford to neglect emotion. Knowing the power for good that feelings exerts upon the people, and the benefits following its lawful use, I have ever felt myself all but powerless without its co-operation. Indeed, my whole religious career has been characterized, and in some measure rendered effective, by this cooperation. The prayers I have offered, the faith I have exercised, the songs I have sung, the addresses I have delivered, have, when anything like satisfactory to myself, been saturated with feeling. In fact, their value has often been just in proportion to their ability to arouse feeling in my own heart, and in the hearts of those whom I have been trying to benefit.

This feeling has, no doubt, been in large measure the result of realization. Perhaps realization is only another word for feeling, for what is realization but the consciousness – that is, the inward knowing – that things are what they appear? As some of you have heard me say: ‘How can a man realize the existence of God, the forgiveness of sins, the value of his soul, the terrors of the Judgment Day, the glories of Heaven, and the anguish of Hell, without the feelings that correspond with those tremendous truths?’ When truths are known to be what they seem, the heart will be stirred, and feeling must be the inevitable result.

So with Death, and Judgment, and Heaven, and Hell right before me, and the possibility, nay, the certainty, of soon being face to face with the things that are eternal,
I proceed to speak of the great business of your lives, and to give you some words of counsel as to its discharge.

I

I want you to stand up more boldly and firmly than you ever have done for the great object of which God has made you Salvation Army Officers.

You know what that object is. You know that it is not merely the doing of certain duties, the maintenance of particular beliefs, or the conducting of special meetings, important as those may be, but that it consists in an intelligent, practical partnership with God in the great business of saving the world.

This you may take to be:

1. The putting down of the rebellion of men against the Divine government.
2. The expulsion of all wrongdoing from the earth.
3. The dethronement of the devils that now occupy the hearts of men.
4. The universal acceptance by men of Jesus Christ as their sovereign Lord.
5. The bringing about of the reign of righteousness, and the obedience of the entire race to the law of love.

There can be no possible room for doubt in your mind, as to this object being the Divinely appointed end to which, as Salvation Army officers, you are to aim.

(i.) You can read it written on every page of your Bibles.
(II.) You will gather it from the example of every true Salvationist.
(iii.) It will be urged by the instincts of the nature that you received at conversion; and if you will only listen, you will hear it whispered by the Spirit of the Living God in your own hearts.
That is the object God has been seeking after from the beginning. That is the object for which Jesus Christ came into the world. That is the end for which, day by day, the Holy Ghost wrestles with the souls of men. That is the object in accomplishing which God invites you to join hands with Him. That is the object to which you are already pledged before Heaven and Earth and Hell. Are you clear that you are aiming at it, and that with all your might? To be not doing so is to come very near to being a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

That object, I need not say, is a tremendous magnitude, being beyond anything to be found in the earth beneath, or in the heavens above; including, as it does, saving men from the hell into which their rebellion has plunged them here, and from the everlasting Hell into which it will plunge them hereafter.

Now I want you not only to see more clearly the vastness and the desirability of this object, but to give yourselves up to its realization with more passionate earnestness than you have yet done. I am cherishing that ambition for myself. The little fire that burns in my bones for the accomplishment of the task with which my Heavenly Father has honoured me, is put to shame by the zeal which I see burning in the hearts and lives of men and women around me for the petty baubles of earth that perish in a day.

For money, pleasure, fame, and other earthly attractions, men sacrifice time, treasures, friends, health, and life itself; nay, even the friendship of God and the Salvation of their souls.

Oh, throw open the doors of your souls to the spirit of compassion which, by night and by day, in season and out of season, shall, in a more restless and resistless manner lead you out to be saviours of men, and Christs in that particular world in which the providence of God calls you to live and labour.
Oh, my Comrades, do not seek to excuse yourselves on the ground of the humbleness of your position, or the apparent insignificance of your talents, your strength, or your past accomplishments. Do not forget that God has from the beginning chosen the ‘things which are not, to bring to nought things that are’.

Gideon, a deliverer of Israel, was only a farmer’s son; Saul, a mighty king before his backsliding, was of common degree; David, who built up that mighty kingdom, was a shepherd boy; Elijah, the miracle-working prophet, was, probably, a village ploughman; the Apostles were mostly plain working-men; the earthly calling which Jesus Christ Himself condescended to follow was that of a humble carpenter.

When that lad of fifteen walked out unsolicited and unnoticed to the Mercy-Seat, and made full consecration of his little all to the service of his King, who would have thought that God had such a wonderful future in store for him? That boy certainly at that time entertained no higher notions of his own powers and possibilities than to have the privilege of leading a cottage Prayer Meeting, or singing ‘His Blood can make the vilest clean’ in the slums of his native town. And yet, see the honour that God has conferred upon him by making him The General of The Salvation Army!

Oh, my Comrades, let your souls embrace this glorious object that God has set before you, and give yourselves, at all costs and consequences, to its attainment, and mightier things will come to pass than you have yet dreamed of. Do not say, I am not a Field Officer, or, My work is in the Trade, or the Social Departments, or in the Office, or in some section that lies away from the main track of saving sinners. My brothers, my sisters, there is no position in The Salvation Army which, in its main issues, does not contribute in some important measure to the accomplishment of the object I have set before you.

My Comrades, you say this object is the end of your lives. I want you to make it more so.
II

I want you to be more determined than ever to make yourselves the kind of Officers likely to gain this object.

Men of energy, intelligence, and daring are a necessity for the successful accomplishment of any great enterprise. The great feats of exploration, engineering, warfare, government, and the like, that have astonished the world from time to time, have only been performed by such men; and as with these earthly undertakings, so with the mighty task that lies before you. The difficulties that bar the way to its accomplishment can only be surmounted by this kind of men.

But they must be men of God, known and felt to be such. Are you? They must enjoy His favour. Do you? They must be fully sanctified. Are you? They must understand the work to which they are appointed? Do you? They must be desperate, determined, and reckless as to consequences in the discharge of duty. Are you? They must have a life of faith? Do you? They must have the spirit of perseverance. Have you?

Oh, my Comrades, whoever you may be, every qualification I have named is within your reach; and if it is not already yours, I entreat you to seek it right away, and to seek until you find. Think of the power the possession of those qualifications will give you. Take the influence of example alone. Who can measure that?

Take it in my own case. Oh, what thousands of times during the years of my pilgrimage have I known it to be said, in private correspondence, on the platform, and in the public press: “O General, your words are good—we read them. Your appeals are powerful—they reach our hearts; but that which exerts the most powerful influence upon our characters and practice is the life you live before our eyes.”

I can well understand this feeling. As I have said, I have felt its influence flowing out from the lives of the warriors of the Cross who have fought by my side; and it may
have been so to some extent with the influence of my life. To make a devoted, fighting people, is one of the highest ambitions of The Salvation Army; but to fulfil that ambition is utterly impossible without Officers whose lives are a pattern of all the devotion that is asked.

Where are you, my Comrades?

III

I want you to more clearly discern, and then to more resolutely adopt, those methods by which you are most likely to gain your great object.

Here let me remind you of the impossibility of remedying the awful condition of things in the people around you by any methods that stop short of ending the sin that has brought it about.

“Death to sin in every shape and form, and that by the ‘Blood and Fire’”, will make a good motto for you. No one will feel more strongly the falsity, the groundlessness, and, I was going to say, the absurdity of the arguments lately attributed to some professed public teachers in opposition to the doctrine and fact of sin, than you Officers. To give up your belief in the existence and ruinous nature of sin would be to contradict your Bibles and your knowledge of human nature; to belie the miracles performed by the Holy Ghost in the transformation of character, so commonly witnessed in The Army; to render useless and meaningless the Divinely conceived plan of Salvation; and, last of all, to go against the testimony of your own consciences.

You will know, my Comrades, if anybody does, the utter vanity of any plan for remedying the present state of things that does not contemplate an actual change in the hearts and dispositions of men. But while, on the one hand, we have men strangely and insanely affirming that there is no such thing as sin, on the other, we have professed prophets without number, who, although admitting its existence,
profess to be able to remedy the evil without prescribing any means of deliverance from it.

In all directions you will hear men propounding panaceas that promise the rescue of the world from the miseries that oppress it, and the introduction of the reign of universal satisfaction and joy, without any regard to the deadly evil that is the root and spring of the whole agony. They have a fanciful thing, a Christianity without Christ – and without the mercy bought for the world by His great sacrifice.

The advantages of various patents sworn to accomplish this object will be sounded in your ears – political patents, socialistic patents, atheistic patents, educational patents, dreamy, imaginative, poetical patents – all promising in different forms, and on varied conditions, the advent of a new Heaven and a new Earth. But none of these things go to the root of the matter. They do not attack the evil in its citadel, or show how to drive the sin, which is the cause of all our miseries, from hearts in which it is entrenched.

When you hear men boasting of the remedies they have for the disease which, like a cancer, eats at the heart of humanity, you will know that they are all a mockery, a delusion, and a snare, if they fail to effect the actual regeneration of the individual. So far as misery is concerned, the new Heaven and the new Earth will only be a continuance of the old Heaven and the old Earth, unless they are the dwelling-place of righteousness; and righteousness is only possible in this world by Salvation from sin.

‘Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.’

IV

The methods of accomplishing your object will differ.
They must of necessity do so. Variety has a great charm. Truth must be the same, but the garments in which we clothe it may differ. I hope you will be designers of plans that will attract attention, convey instruction, and produce conviction. Anyway, here are some simple lines you must follow, if you want to attain your end:

1. Keep your great object constantly in view.

Value everything you do in proportion to the promise it gives of assisting you to attain it.

2. Cultivate personal effort.

No public office, no rank, or performance can relieve you from the responsibility of dealing personally with the men, women, and children around you in the interests of their everlasting Salvation.

Watch for opportunities, and promptly and courageously seize them. Few things have more strikingly tended to create the reputation enjoyed by The Army for the loving service of God and man than the unflinching manner in which its Officers have helped the poor and suffering, rebuked sin, testified for Christ, and in a hundred ways poured out their compassion upon people as they have met them by ones and twos in the ordinary walks of life.

3. You must work in combination with Comrades who are like-minded.

Combination to you means the increased force which unity gives to individual effort. This advantage should make you willing to patiently endure any inconveniences which may flow out of such combination in view of the benefit gained by it.
4. There are many others things you will have to do, but I must remind you of the unchanging necessity of looking after the young.

So great are the advantages flowing out of the discharge of this duty, and so self-evident must be the importance of compliance with it, that I need not take up time by presenting any arguments in its favour. With all the emphasis of which I am capable, I plead for the intelligent, compassionate, religious, and persistent duty of saving children and young people.

I cannot help feeling that if a band of angels from Heaven was deputed to undertake the mighty task at present resting on our shoulders, they would begin with the young. Passing by the matured, and hardened, and hoary-headed slaves of sin and vice and crime, they would turn to the children, and say, ‘This is the shortest, surest, and most economical method of saving the world’. Oh, my Comrades, my Comrades, let us do our duty by the young.

5. You must cultivate discipline.

We are only at the beginning of things in this respect. Laws, usages, and principles are of little worth except men and women can be brought to conform themselves to them. Only imagine what would happen to the world if the entire Army was brought strictly into line, doing, or attempting to do, every duty enjoined upon it.

6. I greatly desire that you should see more clearly than ever what it is that the Holy Ghost wants to do for the world, and that you should avail yourselves more fully of His co-operation.

All around us multitudes of men are involved in the bitter consequences of their sin, and are rushing on to destruction. This not only on account of the appalling evils that possess them, but because of their utter despair of finding any means of deliverance.
Their sins, their vices, their crimes, their selfishnesses, their atheistic indifferences, their anarchies, their suicides, and a thousand other evils, are all, more or less, consequent upon the selfish and godless spirit that has taken possession of them, and of the hopelessness which, like a moral nightmare, has descended upon them, blotting out every prospect of a better state of things.

Whichever way you look, men everywhere feel that they are ruinously involved in the coils of their own evil associations, engagements, and passions. To them Salvation appears to be impossible. They are in their own eyes beyond deliverance. They say in effect, if not in words, ‘We cannot help ourselves, we cannot help each other, and so we have given up the strife after better things, and allow ourselves to drift away on the accursed stream that sweeps us onward to our fate’.

You, my Officers, feel this. No one more so. Day after day you lament it; night after night you lie down exclaiming, ‘Who is sufficient for the Salvation of the drunken, starving, backslidden, blaspheming, unbelieving, godless people with whom I am called to deal? I am not. My tears and prayers and entreaties and contrivances do not compass the task.’

To you, to me, my Comrades, the doctrine of the Holy Ghost should come as a revelation straight from the Eternal Throne. To know that God himself wants to help us by His own operation directly and indirectly upon the hearts of men, should inspire us with hope and with courage, and send us into the fight more confident of victory than ever.

This is the doctrine of The Salvation Army.

This has been my faith from the very beginning. I began my career with the old-fashioned affirmation, “I believe in the Holy Ghost’, and all the way through life I have striven, although often, alas! in a very imperfect fashion, to shape my labours so as to
be in harmony with that conviction. I expect to do so to the end, and to pass away with the expression of this glorious belief upon my dying lips.

The Salvation Army has known a great deal of this Divine inspiration. It is itself the creation of the Holy Spirit. All it knows of life and vitality, and all the power it possess to bless the world, come from the Holy Spirit; and to this day waves of Divine influence, in a lesser or greater measure, are sweeping over it which proceed from Him alone.

But what we have already been privileged to see has, in my estimation, only been the prelude to spiritual upheavals that shall shake the nations. I am expecting that The Army will see God coming out of His hiding-place as a consuming fire — not to destroy sinners, but to burn up the atheisms, the devilries, the selfishnesses, and the conceits which master their lives.

But if the Holy Ghost is to do greater things for us, we must do greater things for Him.

(1) Let us see to it that our faith in the existence of the Holy Ghost is more definite and pronounced than it has hitherto been.

I am afraid that the faith of many in the existence and co-operation of the Holy Spirit is not much more than a dim sentiment. How is it with you? Do you really believe that He personally comes to your hearts, and helps you in your work? Consider whether your faith might not be intensified. I am sure that would please Him.

(2) Let us yield ourselves, such as we are, and with such capacities and interests as we possess, to be used by Him according to all the good pleasure of His will.

Invite the Holy Spirit to more than ever work through you, using your hands, your feet, your lips, your eyes, your brains, and your hearts, just as He wishes. Practically and really put yourselves, your loved ones, your all, at His feet, for His service.
(3) Let us more scrupulously obey the commands of the Holy Spirit, regardless of pain or pleasure, friends or foes, costs or consequences.

(4) Let us more carefully than ever recognize Him as an Almighty Partner with us in our War.

I am afraid we often leave Him out in our calculations. We think of the Bible, the song, the Band, the audience, the Comrades, our Leaders, and many other things; but I fear we sometimes forget God the Holy Ghost.

(5) Let us trust Him.

I do not say that you have not done so. I know you have. You would not be reading this Letter were it not so. But I want a stronger and more desperate faith in Himself and in His work than hitherto. I want to experience it myself. I want to see it in you.

Begin now! Say to yourselves while your eyes rest upon my words:

‘The Holy Ghost is with me. He is in my heart at the moment. He is in the work I am doing. He will be with me in the business and in the Meetings I am contemplating. He will inspire me with the words I want to speak. He will furnish me with the money I need. He will raise me up the friends I require. He will see me safely through my whole career, and He will make me more than a conqueror, living, dying, and for ever.

Say to yourselves, over and over and over again, ‘I believe in the Holy Ghost’, and then act consistently with your belief.

V

Let me now look at some of the results which the Officer who is obedient to these aims and principles has a right to expect.
1. Temporal things that are great and glorious in human estimation may come out of your devotion to the standard I have here described.

Wealth, honour, comfort, and the admiration of the crowd, are occasionally connected with the service of God and man. The following of Christ is not always done in tears and blood. Many true warriors of the Cross have found godliness to be profitable in this life as well as in that which is to come.

2. On the other hand, poverty, sorrow, and even death itself, may be the heritage of the true Soldier of Salvation. Anyway, in some form or other, the following of Jesus Christ is sure to bring the Cross.

There are, however, some precious consequences which result from this unswerving devotion to Christ, about which there can be no uncertainty.

For instance, there will be:

(1) The assurance of the Divine favour.

If that is not enjoyed there is something wrong. How is it with you?

(2) Power equal to the discharge of the duty of the hour.

Do you find it in your experience?

(3) The success that is designed and promised to the faithful Officer, whether that success be seen by the mortal eye or no.
It will ultimately be proved that no honest, disinterested, and believing effort put forth for the glory of God and the Salvation of souls has ever been in vain.

(4) Then, if faithful unto death, my Comrades, will come with absolute certainty the crowning chapter of your career. That will be Heaven.

I have neither time nor space to dilate upon that topic, neither is there any necessity for my doing so. You know as much about it as I know myself. Anyway, there are four aspects of the Celestial World that must be of unspeakable comfort to every Officer:

(a) There will be the Heaven, created by the welcome of the Master. To hear Him express His approval of the fight you have made, and receive his invitation to share His joy, will certainly thrill with rapture every part of your being. I am sure that will be Heaven for me.

(b) Then there will be the approval, nay, the admiration of the angels, and the crowds who have preceded you to the Celestial Land.

You know something of the unspeakable satisfaction now, when at the close of a campaign, or at the end of an appointment, or upon the issue of a Balance-sheet, Officers and Friends congratulate you on your success. Their approving words will haunt your memory, and their pleasing smiles and their rapturous applause will crowd your dreams by night and by day for years to come. But think of the delight that must flow out of the appreciation of the blood-washed spirits at whose side you fought on earth, already safely landed, and of the angelic hosts who will fill the air, and throng around the stranger who has just come out of the thick of the fight below!

You say sometimes, ‘Nobody knows the bitterness of the cup I am called upon to drink, or the weight of the burden I have to bear, or the fierceness of the foes with whom I have to fight’. But the crowd who will greet you on that great day will at least know
enough of your tears, your loneliness, your poverty, your disappointments, and your sacrifices, to be able to gauge with some measure of justice the value of the struggle you have made. They will also know something of your bravery and loyalty, your courage and faith, your love and perseverance; and, full of admiration, they will praise God for the Blood that redeemed you, the Holy Spirit who inspired you, and the holy determination that will have carried you through.

Oh, my Comrades, shall you want any gladder Heaven than all this happy welcome will create?

(c) Then in those rapturous days there will be the approval of your own hearts. You know the peace and rest created in the soul by the feeling that you have had a good time, and that you have paved the way for better and brighter things in the future.

Now imagine yourselves waking up amongst the mansions and music and all the other glories of Heaven, with angels and archangels, and the Comrades who have gone before looking admiringly on, while you are possessed of the inward assurance that you have fought a good fight and gained the victory. I cannot conceive of anything that would be much more heavenly to me than the realization of such circumstances.

(d) Lastly, my Comrades, there will be the Celestial City itself. I do not know what the character of the residence of the saints will be, and I feel further off from imagining it than any other aspect of the inheritance. it is enough for me to know –

That it is a prepared place;
That is has been prepared directly for us;
That it has been prepared for us by our Lord Himself;
That it will, therefore, be blessed and glorious, and there will be degrees of glory and blessedness answering to the devotion of all who live for God and fight for the Salvation of souls.

You will be rewarded according to your works. I hope those works will merit a glorious inheritance in the Heaven that awaits you.

VI

This Letter has already exceeded the limits I had assigned to it, and yet I feel that I must write something still further, if it be only a word especially addressed to the Officers engaged in each Department of our great combine of mercy.

To the Corps Officers engaged in Field and Corps work, I may say that all the way through the preparation of this Letter you have been specially in my mind. I think you will discern this in almost every paragraph it contains, and not desire me to say anything additional.

To the Officers working in the Social Agencies, I would say, do all the good you can to the bodies and circumstances of the unhappy and restless wanderers who come under your influence.

My heart goes out with you in every effort you make to succour them in their suffering and to ameliorate their lot. But while you strive to deliver them from their temporal distresses, and endeavour to rescue them from the causes that have led to their unfortunate condition, you must seek, above all, to turn their miseries to good account by making the help the Salvation of their souls and their deliverance from the wrath to come. It will be a very small reward for all your toils if, after bringing them into the conditions of well-being here, they perish hereafter.
To the Officers of every rank engaged in the Literary, Administrative, Organizing, and Business Departments of The Army, I would say, never forget that you constitute a most important section of this great Organization. Ever remember that you have a share in the blessing for every advance it gains, every starving one it feeds, every man, woman, and child it rescues, and every soul, which, by God’s grace, it saves from sin and Hell.

In short, you are a partner in everything it does for the honour of God and the benefit of men; and, consequently, you will be a sharer in the reward. Oh, encourage yourselves with this knowledge, and thank God that you are allowed to bear a part in this great Organization.

To my Staff Officers, I would say, yours is the most important responsibility of all. On your shoulders rests the duty of guarding and maintaining the great principles from which must spring the vitality, strength, spirituality, and continuance of this vast Movement.

Every one who has had any lengthened and intimate acquaintance with the network of undertakings which together compose The Salvation Army, and has known anything of the multitude of Officers engaged in its service, must realize something of the difficulties which the wise direction and effective administration of such varied and powerful forces involve.

The burden of all this oversight falls largely on the shoulders of the Staff Officers, themselves the product of the Movement, and who, I am delighted to know, are every day increasing in numbers, in courage, in skill, and, above all, in devotion to God.

And while expressing my admiration of my Staff Officers generally, which I do in truest sincerity, and acknowledging my deep gratitude to them, every one who has been in close communion with the heart of our Operations will feel how impossible it is for me
to refrain from mentioning one Officer in particular who possesses capacities for government in all its branches, whether those of leadership or administration, in a remarkable degree. You will know that I refer to my son, the Chief of the Staff.

He stands high, I know, in the estimation of every Officer of every rank, and especially is he held in esteem by those who have been privileged to work under his immediate direction. He is dear to you all on the ground of his practical godliness, his familiarity with the principles of The Army, and his devotion to them. His unswerving impartiality in dealing with the characters and movements of Officers the world over endears him to all who know him; while his unflagging energy, his untiring industry, and his readiness and capacity for dealing with details as well as with fundamentals, make him a worthy example for every Officer in The Army to copy.

The service he has rendered to me, and you, and I think I may say the world as well, all through these long years, in the construction and building up of this great Movement, is beyond my power to describe in this Epistle; but I can acknowledge that service, and commend him and his devoted to wife to the fullest confidence and affection of you all.

Now you may expect that I should not conclude this Letter without a word or two as to the position and prospects of the Organization with which your interests are so closely bound up.

As to the present position of The Army, I need say nothing. The publications that come into your hands, and the exceptional opportunities you have for personal observation, must convince you of the strength and vigour of the Movement at the present juncture of its history, and the importance of the remarkable extensions that are being made in our varied operation the world over almost every day.

With respect to the future, I can speak, I think, with equal confidence.
What a living, ungainsayable contradiction of the melancholy prognostications with which we were assailed during the early years of our history is presented by The Army today!

It was for years proclaimed almost everywhere that the Movement was nothing more than a rope of sand, a creation of passing excitement, a bubble that must inevitably burst, covering all connected with it with mortification and disappointment, if not with shame. Instead, however, of such a melancholy conclusion, consider the wonderful structure of faith and beneficence which, by the good hand of God upon us, is in existence at the present time.

Look at The Army, with its Officers, Soldiers, and property! Look at its principles, laws, discipline, and multiplied forms of loving labour! Look at the spirit of energy, enterprise, and love that possesses it, and, what is more important still, consider the evident approval of God, which, like a cloud of Divine glory, covers the whole!

It is not perfectly rational to assume that as the gloomy forebodings of those early times have been belied by the marvelous and probably unexampled history of the present, so the despondent fears indulged in by some timid souls of today will be contradicted by the triumphs and achievements of the future?

No doubt, my Comrades, you will sometimes have to listen to the question: ‘What will become of The Army in the years that are to come, when you and your children have passed into the world beyond?’ To this inquiry you will reply that The Army will still remain. That –

The will of God concerning it will remain. The principles on which it is founded will remain. The laws which it has proclaimed and expounded will remain. The discipline which binds it together will remain. The spirit of burning, compassionate love for the
Salvation of the world will remain. The hundreds of thousands of men and women of all classes and conditions who have bound themselves together by the strongest pledges that human minds can conceive will remain.

I feel here that I must give expression to my heartiest thanks for the outburst of sympathy you have shown me in connexion with my recent operation. I am assured of a gratifying recovery by those who understand my affliction, and who are responsible for the treatment I have received. In which case the increased ability I shall possess for helping you in your Warfare will be ample reward for any inconvenience I may have suffered, and make me more than ever grateful for your prayers to God on my behalf.

With this I send assurance of my love for all who are Comrades with you in the Holy War, and of my prayers that those of your own families who still remain without the Kingdom may be speedily brought within, and join with you in this heavenly Warfare.

And now where can I find a phrase that shall most emphatically express the longings of my soul with respect to you and your future? In my search I find one short exhortation that truly expresses the feelings with which I would close this Letter. That exhortation you have heard a hundred times; indeed, I have given it you myself again and again. Here it is—'Go Forward!'

My Comrades, what else can you do? To stand still is impossible. To go back is to cover yourselves, your Saviour, The Army, and your General with shame. 'Go Forward!' then, must be your motto, and at greater speed than ever. You must go forward to more holy life and power in your own hearts! Will you? You must go forward in the Christlike task of winning souls! Will you? You must go forward in the all-important work of Soldier-making! Will you?

You must go forward in securing stricter discipline in the management of your people, and more intelligent obedience to Orders and Regulations! Will you? You must go
forward to more desperate aggression on the world outside, specially the darkest, the most hopeless, the most abandoned! Will you? You must go forward to the acquisition of more suitable buildings for your Warfare, specially for suitable Halls for your public Meetings and Young People’s Work. Will you? You must go forward in more resolute and self-denying efforts at self-improvement in those qualifications you need for making yourselves efficient Officers. Will you?

Oh, my Comrades, a thousand thousand voices call you forward. I can hear them while I write. What response will you make? Listen to your Heavenly Father. He is saying, ‘By the loving mercies I have lavished upon you, on your loved ones, on your homes, on your souls, and on the world around you, Go Forward!’

What response will you make? Listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. He is pleading, ‘By all the aid I have given you in your fight with doubts and devils and difficulties, you must Go Forward’! What response will you make?

Listen to the Host of Heaven! They are saying, ‘We are reckoning on you filling up the sufferings of Christ, and fighting on to gain the end for which He lived and died. We are pleased with the beginning you have made, but you must do better. You must Go Forward!’ What response will you make?

Listen to the crowd of holy men and women who have gone Home before you. You can recognize some of their voices. My loved ones are there. My beloved and precious daughter, the Consul, is among the number. Our old Comrades are among them. Some of your dear ones also are there. They are crowding round you while you read this. Oh, what a cloud of witnesses! They say and they sing, ‘For Heaven’s sake and our sake, Go Forward!’ What response will you make?
The Soldiers and Salvationists saved by your efforts, sanctified by your instrumentality, and commanded by you in the fight, will be disappointed if you do not Go Forward! What response will you make?

The Young People, our own children, the children you have pulled out of the depths, cannot think or dream of you doing anything else but to Go Forward! What response will you make? The godless, drunken, gambling, blaspheming crowds in the drinking – saloons and hells and streets say if ever they are religious they will be Salvationists. I am sure they will think and say you are faithless and foolish if you don’t Go Forward! What response will you make? The success of your past career cries out, ‘Greater, grander things are ahead, if you will only Go Forward!’ What response will you make?

The real servants of God and the true lovers of men who have learnt so much from your example, and who expect so much from your work in the future, hope and pray that you may Go Forward! What response will you make?

And, last of all, there falls into this overwhelming chorus the closing entreaty of your General – Go Forward! May I not believe – nay, may I not boldly claim – that the response of your inmost souls is, ‘By the Grace of God, WE WILL GO FORWARD’?

I believe you will, and so unspeakably gratify the heart of

Your affectionate General,

William Booth