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SALVATION SOLDIERY

CHAPTER 19: DIE AT YOUR POST

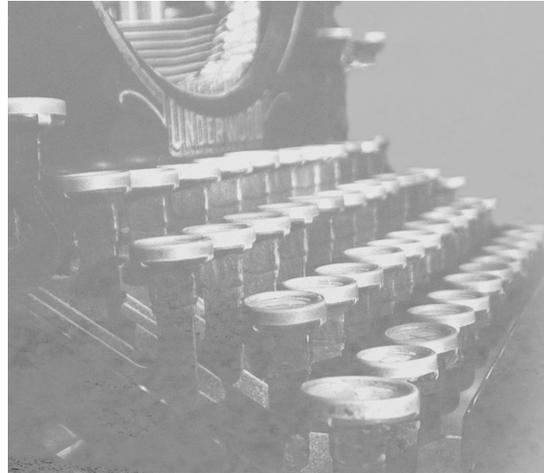
SOME of us have been singing during the Christmas festivals, with a good deal of spirit and repetition, a song with the chorus about "Dying at our post." It has been, and bids fair to be, rather popular, and we are not sorry for it. Sing away at the sentiment, only be sure and live it out in daily life.

Men and women who will die at their post are the very sort in demand just now in The Salvation Army and elsewhere. They are what the world needs; what we are praying for, and what God wants. We remember that during the great French revolution, some of the more decided party, who thought the Moderates were not going fast enough, wrote to Marseilles, to know if 600 men could be found, and sent on to Paris, who were not afraid to die. They were speedily found, and equipped, and marched; and many of them did die for the cause for which they did march. But they did not die until they had moulded and coloured the fortunes and probably the destiny of their country. Much can be done in any cause, how much more in ours, by men who are willing to die. Wesley said he could have done a great deal with six. We don't ask for six, nor for 600, but for 600,000; and we send the enquiry into every city and village, and home, where we have the opportunity of being heard, for men and women ready and willing to take up a position for God, and the rescue of the world; and ready and willing also at the required moment to die at their post.

We present our readers with an engraving which embodies an idea of this sentiment carried out to its natural consequences. These men did what the song says and what a multitude who will read this paper have vowed before God to do, – they died at their post.

When they are right before you, don't turn your eyes away.

Unpleasant to look upon, is the picture? Gives a shock to your sensitive nerves, and makes you shudder at the bare thought of the suffering endured, does it? Never mind, have a long look at it. It may do you good, and help you to some rather more practical ideas of Christianity than those which have hitherto obtained with you. Anyhow, it will,



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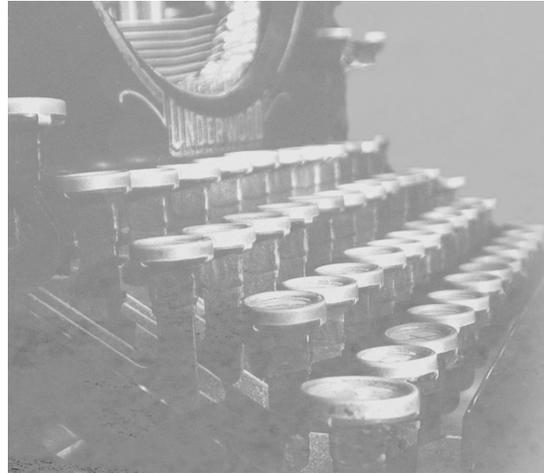
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perhaps, modify your estimate of the depth and extent of the great sacrifices and sufferings you profess to have made, and of which you make more than a little to-do. Anyhow, then, look at these men standing in this fire, and you will find in them A PICTURE OF A REAL AND WHOLE HEARTED CONSECRATION. There was nothing held back here. They laid all on the altar, and no mistake.

We are constantly being told that we make the Service of God and the obtaining and retaining of His favour too important and serious a thing. That we demand too much when we say that there must be no compromise, no holding anything back, no denying Him in little matters – that His disciples are to come out and be separate, and neither touch, taste, nor handle whatever God Almighty is against. When, in the name of our Master and the Bible, and the very nature of things, we make these demands, men reply to us with weeping and wailing, how can these things be so? The price is too high, the sacrifice is too great. They say plainly that husband and wife, and father and mother, and brother and sister, and houses and lands, and friendly circles, and business, and money, and politics, and health, and big idols and little idols, bar the way, and they cannot suffer what it would cost them to come and stand forth before the heavens, having dared to leave and offer all up for the sake of Him who left and offered all for the sake of them.

Oh, friends, what about these heroic spirits? What about those faces that look at you to-day through that blinding smoke and those devouring flames? Are there, then, two standards of service, one high and Christ-like for them, and one much lower, made to meet the case of little, lean and cowardly souls? Nay, are there three ways for the feet of those who travel towards eternity? One wide and broad for the wicked, another straight and narrow for martyrs and martyr spirits, and the other a middle middling, sort of silver slipper path, for those who would have the pearl without the price, the crown without the cross.

No! No! No! Look again at those martyr-men. They stood up there before heaven and earth, and said in the loudest language that can be spoken in this or in any other world, that they gladly gave up, not only friends and kindred, and lands, and money, and every other earthly treasure, but life itself, which to them, as to everybody else, is far dearer than all else put together, for the truth, and love, and cause of Jesus Christ.



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That is the royal road for you, my brother. Come along! No more reckoning up of what an out-and-out life for Jehovah down here among men will cost. Here is the Altar, put all on. All has not gone on yet, and you know it. And here is the secret why both the early and the latter rain have been withheld. Now let go, and look out for the deluge. Have another look at these men, comrades.

THEY WENT THROUGH WITH THE FIGHT. It was a terrible ordeal, and we don't wonder at the horror with which this faint resemblance of that agony inspires our readers, for it must be borne in mind that they were men of like passions with ourselves. They, and those who suffered with them, were men and women as we are; and husbands and wives, and mothers and fathers, and brothers and sisters, and children and friends, were just as precious to them as they are to us. Life was just as sweet, and agony as painful, and death as hard, as it would be to anybody else, but they were made up to be true to God and His truth, and as that meant dying, they went through with it, and died just there, and made but little to-do about it either. Now, you cannot help but admire that. We cannot, and don't disguise the fact that we admire it immensely. Had it been otherwise – had they dodged, or compromised, or given in at the last moment, and gone back when the matter had seemed like coming to a serious issue that might mean loss, or suffering, or death, or anything of that sort – rather than have admired them and made a picture of them, men would have despised them and forgotten them. And so would you. But they went through with it, and the nearer the devil and his tools went doing their worst, the bolder was the front they showed, and the louder the defiance they hurled in his teeth.

Oh hallelujah! for ever, for such examples. But reader, consider where are you? Are there not some whose experience in this crucifying business is just the reverse of this? Always beginning to build, but alas! never able to finish. We know some who are always coming up with hammer and nails to some particular cross, and saying with a flourish – "Here nail me up – I am ready to be offered. Kill this lust, this disposition, this tendency, this idolatrous affection, – crucify me; let me die with Him." But, alas! this crucifying business is not a pleasant one to flesh and blood, and with the first pang they utter indescribable groans, and as the fire grows hotter with this martyrdom they grow weary of dying, and cry out to be taken down. And the next time you see them at a consecration meeting it is on the skirts of the crowd, and they are just where



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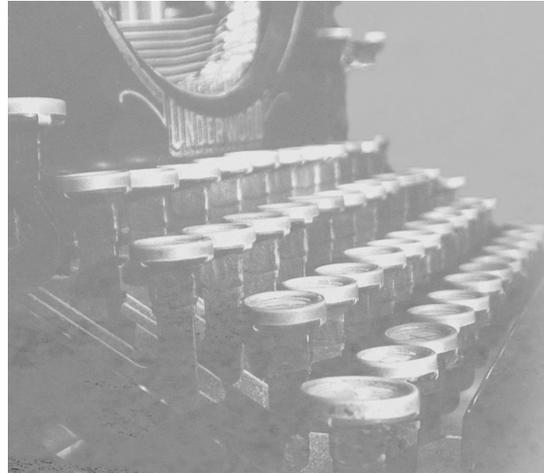
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they were before, or a little further off from the victory they desire.

Oh, how men will sing about the Cross, amuse and ornament themselves with the Cross, weep oceans of tears about the Cross, which means painful and ignominious death, not only to the Master who hung upon it, but to the loves and lusts He died to destroy; but as to making it the tree on which they are crucified, on which they die to the power, and charm, and fascination of a vain, fashionable, frivolous, God-hating world, that is quite another thing; and yet surely the Cross was intended to be to us what it was to Paul, who said, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

We know some who are always beginning to live for Him, but who, at the first shot from the enemy, the first sneer, or jeer, or ridicule, or loss that Christ-life brings, grow craven and flinch, and turn their backs and run. These are not the stuff martyrs are made of. The spirit that carried these men into the midst of that blazing pile would have made them heroes in the East End, or the West End, or any other end of any place God set them to live in. That is the spirit we want – the spirit that goes through with God's business, whether it involves that you either live or die at your post. But as you look at these men you feel that **THEY MUST HAVE BEEN WONDERFULLY SUPPORTED**. They must have had consolation amounting almost to **DIVINE POSSESSION**. However else could it be? That crowd – that fire – that agony, and yet so bold – so calm – so heavenly. Already ceasing from the human, and surrounded by so much demoniacal, assuming before their time the Heavenly, the Divine. Oh, verily, verily, they must have had God about them, God in them, or how could it have been thus?

Oh, dear reader, so it was, and this is what you forget. The more ferocious their foes, and the fiercer the fire, the nearer the Comforter came, and the mightier were His consolations. This is His custom still, to faithful soldiers. It would not have been like Him to have deserted such heroic sufferers for His sake. If we admire and glory in them, how much more must He have done so. Oh let us follow in this track. We are safe as to the ability. He will see to that. Out then on to the pathway of duty, though it lead us to the trackless ocean without a plank, or the martyr's fires without a friend. Anywhere with Jesus we are safe.



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"When our sorrows most increase,
Then His strongest joys are given,
Jesus comes with our distress,
And agony is Heaven."

We remember a story of one called to die for Christ, who, when he came to the cell and the short hours that preceded his death, appeared to be deserted by all those rich and striking manifestations of the Master's presence to which he had been accustomed. This seemed strange to him – passing strange. He had thought that in this hour of hours, when called to die for Him, there would have been more than ordinary comfort and additional tokens of His pleasure and approval. He had one friend who, early and late, was his companion, and they fasted, prayed, and sought that God would come again with the light and joy more than ever needed now. But the last night – the night that preceded the execution – came, and the darkness continued. They embraced with the last embrace, and parted to meet no more until they met before the Throne. At parting, they agreed that, should the Master come with His joyful presence during the night, the martyr should lift up his hand on the morrow as a sign to his friend, who would be in the crowd. The morning came, and the mournful procession, and in that mournful procession, the observed of all, walking with a firm step, came the martyr, who, as his eye fell upon his faithful friend, with a countenance beaming with heavenly glory, threw up his hands, exclaiming, "He is come! – He is come!" and then went on and died in the strength of that visitation. He came! – came at the right moment. He always comes to faithful martyr souls. Is yours one? If so, He has come to you, and will come and stay yet more and more – coming in mightier power and force in every hour of special need, and finally coming and taking you to your reward in Heaven, if, like a hero, you are faithful to Him, and die at your post.