

DOING YOUR DUTY

I

Comrades and Friends, — In The Salvation Army you will hear the exhortation ringing out on every hand, 'Do your duty.'

God expects the Salvationist to do his duty; your General, your Officers, your Comrades, and even the wicked world around you, expect it of you.

By doing your duty I mean doing what you know you ought to do – to yourselves, to your fellow-men, and to the God above you.

I. –Doing your duty to yourselves means:

1. Doing your duty to your body.

That is, feeding, clothing, sleeping, cleansing, and managing it in that manner which will best promote a pure and vigorous life, and a reasonable length of days.

2. Doing your duty to your mind.

That is, feeding, clothing, sleeping, cleansing, and unclean thoughts and useless imaginations, and generally cultivating it so that it may be able to render the greatest service to God, to your fellow-men, and to yourselves.

3. Doing your duty to your soul.

That is, keeping it right with God. TO enjoy a clear sense of His favour, to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and to be wholly consecrated to the service of mankind must certainly be your duty.

II. – Doing your duty to your neighbours means dealing honestly and kindly with them.



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Especially striving for their Salvation, so far as you have opportunity, indoors and out of doors, and whoever you come across, in season and out of season.

You are not responsible for saving them, but you are responsible for giving them some idea of the Salvation that is provided for them, setting before them the glorious possibility of its attainment, and the means by which it can be realized.

III. – Doing your duty to your Lord.

This will mean submitting yourselves to His authority, accepting His Salvation, and offering yourselves for His service. This must include the consecration of yourselves, your families, your talents, your money, and everything else that you possess to the doing of His will; and then going forth, as you have opportunity, to proclaim His Salvation and to bring glory to His name.

Do not forget what your Bible says, that 'to fear God and keep His Commandments is the whole duty of man.'

IV. – Now the consciousness that you are doing your duty is much to be desired.

To eat and drink, to move about the world, to go in and out of your home conscious all the time that you are doing your duty, must be a very desirable experience. That must be what the Apostle Paul means when he said, 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.' That is, those who are so united to Jesus Christ by their faith and His power that they are able to live not to please themselves, but to please God.

1. To know that you are doing your duty must be very satisfactory to the Comrades who are fighting you.

Your Corps will be proud of you. The old people will rely on you. The young people will imitate you. While the people who look on from the outer world will believe in The Army, and admire it, and give it their support, because they believe in your reality.



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2. To know that you are doing your duty will be a joyful pride to the members of your families.

At any rate, this will be the case if they realize the importance of the War in which you are engaged.

3. The knowledge that you are doing your duty must be welcome intelligence to the inhabitants of Heaven.

'Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us' (Hebrews xii. 1).

4. To know that you are doing your duty must be very satisfactory to your Lord.

Hear what the prophet Zephaniah says of the feelings of Jehovah towards those who do their duty: 'The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing.'

5. The consciousness that you are doing your duty to God and man after the fashion I have described is the only true foundation on which you can build your hope for the future.

It is true that you obtained Salvation by faith in Jesus Christ, but it is equally true that you can only maintain it by keeping the Commandments of God. It is therefore a ruinous delusion to pretend to have a religion of any value either for this world or for the next, if all the time you know that you are neglecting your duty.

6. True peace is impossible to any man who willfully neglects his duty.

Whether that neglect concerns small or greater matter does not affect the question. The things done, or left undone, may be of the most trifling importance in themselves, much as the weeding of a garden path, or the wearing of a dress; but if it is a neglect of duty it becomes immensely important, because it is destructive of all confidence, and is in reality a defiance of all authority.



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Any form of religion, therefore, that allows a man to keep a hope of Heaven while living in the conscious neglect of duty, is a hypocrisy, and, perhaps, the most dangerous form of hypocrisy ever invented either on earth or in Hell.

V. – On every possible ground, therefore, my Comrades, I call upon you to do your duty.

By the satisfaction it will bring to your own souls:

By the profit it will bring to your neighbors:

By the usefulness it will mean for The Army:

By the satisfaction it will be to your friends on earth, and the delight it will impart to your dear ones in Heaven:

By the joy it will create in the heart of your Saviour:

By the fact that there is no other true ground for a good hope of Heaven; to every man, woman, and child in this place, I say, Do your duty!

Your affectionate General,
William Booth.