

TO MY FIELD OFFICERS **THROUGHOUT THE WORLD**

*written by William Booth, Dec. 1900, to encourage his officers,
at the beginning of the new century.*

My Dear Comrades,

The dawn of the New Century, although in I reality little more than a sentiment, draws out my heart, and sends my spirit wondering after you, scattered as you are throughout the world, and prompts me to write you a line of counsel and affection.

1. I WANT TO EXPRESS THE CONTINUANCE OF THE DEEP AND UNDYING INTEREST I FEEL IN E V E R Y T H I N G, WHETHER LARGE OR SMALL, THAT CONCERNS YOUR WELFARE. Whatever has to do with the health, happiness, and progress of my officers is a matter of real moment to me.

2. I WANT TO HAVE THE SATISFACTION OF TELLING YOU HOW FULLY I APPRECIATE THE SACRIFICES DAILY CALLED FOR BY YOUR POSITION. My own experience qualifies me not only to rejoice with you in your satisfactions and joys, but also to understand, and to sympathize with you in your trials and difficulties. I have travelled the way of Toil and Conflict before you. I know what it is to have mocking crowds in the open air, and small audiences indoors; or, what is more disheartening still, small audiences everywhere.

I know what it is to contend with the opposition of Fractious Sinners and Hopeless Outcasts, and to suffer the contradiction of Cantankerous Saints. I know what it is to fight the Fight of Faith for want of people, and souls, and money, and every other good thing. I know, with the Apostle, what it is both to suffer want, and to be full, and to abound.

3. I WANT TO REPEAT WHAT I HAVE, PERHAPS, TOLD YOU BEFORE, HOW FULLY I REALIZE THE FACT THAT THE WELL-BEING OF THE ARMY IS, TO A LARGE DEGREE, IN YOUR HANDS. You have had much to do with the wonderful successes of the past, while the present and the future are very largely within your power. I feel this. I want to repeat it to you over and over again. How great, then, is your responsibility.

And now in that future, right in front of us all, is this New Year; nay, this New Century. Does it not strike you as being of infinite importance that we should make the very most of it? And that means that we should begin it well.

THE NEW YEAR MAY BE MY LAST ON EARTH. Who knows? While I write this I may be on the very borderland of the Eternal World. I appreciate that nearness, my comrades; but some dear brother or sister into whose hands my epistle will come may be nearer still. Major Elmslie, who went to Heaven so suddenly in August last, said to his dear wife, as he left home for the last time: "If the Trumpet sounds before my return, everything is in order. I am ready." Oh, to have the same blessed preparedness for Earth and Heaven! To that end, my Comrades, bear with me while I make a suggestion or two, which, if you follow, will, I think, go a long way towards making 1901 a holy, happy, and useful - year to you; that is, if you should be permitted to spend it on earth. -

1. MAKE A NEW START. What a privilege it is to have the opportunity. Avail yourself of it. You say sometimes: "Oh, if I could begin my life over again, how differently would I act!" That cannot be, but you can do something very like it. You are, comparatively speaking, young, only in the morning of your days; and here in the light of all the experience of your past years, you can begin afresh; and so, perhaps, be able to make a big piece of your existence new.

2. DON'T WASTE TIME BY WORRYING OVER THE FAILURES OF THE PAST. Let them go. One of the greatest men of modern times gave, as one of the reasons for his success, that he never spent time or energy in lamenting his failures. When he had failed in any of his various enterprises—and where is the man that does not fail at times?—he tried again in some other fashion. That is the plan upon which I have acted, my Comrades. It has stood me in good stead. I recommend it to you. Always be aiming at some thing good and important to God and man. Do your best for its attainment. If you fail to gain your object by one means, let that go, and with your whole soul try another, never departing from that Supreme Purpose to which you have committed yourself for Time and Eternity; namely, the Glory of your Saviour in the Salvation of the lost.

3. BE SURE YOU START THE NEW CENTURY WITH A CLEAN SHEET. Don't be afraid to call up and face the things in which you have been wrong during the year just gone. Acknowledge them before God, and if necessary, confess them before men; then, by faith, claim the full virtue of the Cleansing Blood, and so roll all the ugly blotches of the past into oblivion. Pass them into the "everlasting forgetfulness," never to be mentioned again. Oh, the wonderful possibilities that flow out of the Sacrifice of the Cross!

4. START THE NEW CENTURY WITH THE INFLEXIBLE DETERMINATION TO DO YOUR DUTY AT ALL COSTS. Oh, that precious word "duty." Discovering what duty is, accepting it as the law of your life, and going forward in obedience to it, irrespective of what seems pleasant, profitable, popular, or anything else, will be the making of you. That is the sort of thinking, and feeling, and acting that makes Saints, that makes Heroes; aye, and that makes Conquerors. Cultivate it. Do you want a Watch word for 1901? Can you have a word more useful, more stimulating, or more God-honouring than that one word "Duty"? I am not sure whether you can. That is, if you interpret it as meaning "faithfulness to your Vows, loving God with all your heart, and loving your Neighbour as your self." If you take another motto, be sure and have that precious word in addition.

5. RESOLVE TO MAKE THE BEST YOU CAN OF YOURSELF. I care not what your age, or experience, or doings may be. I think I am prepared to venture the statement, that you are as yet an unknown quantity to yourself, and more to other people, as far as Natural Capacity is concerned, and you will only discover yourself to yourself by hard work and patient perseverance.

I tell you again, that you don't know what you are capable of doing. Why, I feel very much like that about myself! You may, perhaps, think that I have come to some sort of complete self-knowledge at my age; but no, I feel as though I had only reached the beginning of the knowledge of my capacity for the service of God and man; as though I was only just learning how to take hold of the mighty forces, Divine and Human, which are at my disposal.

Make the most of yourselves, I beseech you, my Comrades.

Multitudes are buried while yet their talents and qualities are all undiscovered and unexercised. Don't let it be so with you. You must make mighty strides forward during the coming year.

How are you to do it? I am sorry I cannot give you more than two rules for improvement here, but they are very choice—indeed, they are my favourites.

1. Try to please God in everything you attempt.
2. Do everything as well as ever you can.

Those are two royal Rules, worthy of being printed in letters of gold. Write them on your memory. Cherish them in your heart. Reduce them to practice, and do it at once.

6. MAKE SOUL-SAVING THE BUSINESS OF YOUR LIFE. I began here. I have continued here. I am here to-day. I propose dying here. I remember it being said of some popular preacher in my early days, “He ought never to leave the pulpit: he should live and die there.” Fain would I live and die toiling at the Mercy Seat. If any thing material should be put into my coffin as an emblem of my heart’s choicest delight, I would say, “Let it be a Penitent Form.”

Accept and cultivate the work of Soul-Saving, my Comrades, not only at the Penitent Form, but make what it represents the spirit of all your exercises. Start right away with this object before you, in your Open Air and Indoor Gatherings, in your Visitations, in your Shelters and Homes and Colonies, in your conversations, and in all else. Whether you eat or drink, sing or pray, or talk, or whatsoever you do, do all with your eyes on glorifying God, in saving and sanctifying the souls of the men, women, and children with whom the Holy Ghost will bring you into contact.

7. MAKE THE MOST OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY. “In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.” Don’t despise the day of small and feeble things. Rather glory in doing your very best with them. I always reckon to do as well for a few people as I do for many. I never allow the excuse of putting the few off because the many are not there. Make the best you can of what appears to be only small chances. The Scotch proverb says: “*Mony a mickle makes a muckle.*” If all the little opportunities that my dear Officers have through out the world in a single day were thrown together, what a mighty muckle that would be!

8. DON’T OVERLOOK THE CHILDREN. DON’T! DON’T! DON’T!
Oh, I feel as if I could on bended knees beg of you to care for the

young people. But of late years I have always been saying this. Will you attend? Will you strive to gratify me in this? Will you, among the other things, make 1901 a young people's year.

9. CULTIVATE HOME BLESSINGS AS FAR AS YOU HAVE OPPORTUNITY. If you do so they will become very precious. I know I am ever asking you, Paul-like, to sacrifice the ease and delights of home for the sake of your Saviour, and the souls for whom He died. Still, I have a feeling that the Salvation Officer finds as large a measure of the sweetest earthly peace and the dearest earthly joy in wife, or husband, and children, and home, as the average individual around him. That is, when he is faithful to the duties and obligations that belong to them.

I know what it is to sacrifice home and home duties, and home joys, for the sake of my Lord and the Salvation of men; and I have known what it has been to have the satisfactions and joys of home given back to me. I know what it is, too, in this respect, to make Christ first and last, and all, and in all. Go and do the same, my Comrades. Do the same.

I send my love to you and to each and all the dear ones in your home, and may all the needed blessing of God be upon you, and upon all who are dear to you, and may all the blessing you need be with you all through the coming Year and through all the coming Years of your life, and ever remember me as

Your affectionate General,

William Booth.

INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS OF THE SALVATION ARMY,
LONDON, E.C. December, 1900.