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Standards of Life and Service

Thomas Henry Howard

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STANDARDS
OF
LIFE AND SERVICE

BY
COMMISSIONER T. H. HOWARD



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PREFACE

The following pages contain reports of addresses delivered by Commissioner Howard, of our International Headquarters, during an important series of Holiness Meetings held in the Congress Hall, London, principally in 1908. Those Meetings were widely used by God, and at my request the Commissioner has revised the short-hand reports of his words for this volume. We now send forth his messages in the hope of still further extending their usefulness.

Christianity is a present-day call to a good life. If it be anything less than that, it is really not worth troubling about. It is, of course, rich in holy memories, and venerable in its association with all that is true and best in the past. But it is not only ancient in its origin and triumphs—it is intensely modern in its touch with human need, and in its demand that the spirit of righteousness should be the controlling force in human life—in the common life of to-day. It is the aim of the following addresses to bring that truth home to us, and to help us to go direct to Jesus Christ Himself for power to respond to that claim.

Cast in popular form, as was necessary for meeting such occasions as those which called them forth, these addresses do not attempt any comprehensive statements of the philosophy of Holiness. Anything of that kind, no matter how successful, would have been the undoing of the whole effort. Nevertheless, the diligent reader will, I think, find underlying these practical counsels certain valuable principles. In particular, he will find implied, when not actually expressed, an important distinction between the work of God in the justifying and purifying of the soul, and the work of man in walking in obedience to the laws of God. It is that obedience I am thinking of when I say that Christianity is a demand for righteousness. It is that obedience we mean when we talk of Holiness—in its practical aspects.

One of the dangers to which all deeply spiritual teaching is open, is a kind of antinomianism—a species of religious bargaining between the soul and God; and that is a thing which is, of course, totally alien to His will, and completely ruinous to true progress. The process of such thought is something like this: 'Christ has performed for me a work of infinite love and merit. If I confess and

deplore evil, I may claim pardon for it and purifying from its guilt by faith in the Divine Sacrifice made for me. That will ease my burdened soul and free me from apprehension as to future peril—peril which would otherwise have proved very real. As to temptation to further evil, I must watch against it; but if by chance or evil impulse, or even wilful choice, I fall into it, let me not be too deeply concerned. I can easily obtain again what I have obtained before.'

Now, that is not only a false position, but it involves an extremely dangerous error—an error which in practice is ultimately destructive of real faith. Salvation—indeed, all spiritual experience, is entered into by faith, of course; but it can only be maintained by hearty, determined obedience on our part. Christ has died for us, but He has not obeyed for us. The 'new heart' is by faith in Him—but the new life can only be lived by watchful and often painful obedience to the law of love. 'I counsel thee to buy of Me', saith He that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, 'white raiment that thou mayest be clothed'; and 'Blessed', He says also, 'is he that watcheth, and *keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked*'. Paul prayed for the saints of his day 'that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith'; but he prayed also that they 'might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, *being fruitful in every good work, strengthened with all might* unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness'.

It is towards standards for this life of rightly living that Commissioner Howard is working in the following chapters. May the blessing of the great Standard-Bearer rest upon his words, and give the light and grace which He alone can afford to every reader.

Bramwell Booth.

The Salvation Army,
London, April, 1909.

FOREWORD

I wish that these Addresses could, in their present form, be marked by those personal experiences which made the thoughts so

alive to me when the words were uttered in public Meetings. If the flashes of light, the intensity of conviction, and the sense of Divine help which were mine when speaking, could be reproduced in cold type, the impression upon the readers would be much more effective. That may not be fully possible, but I pray that in His own way God may use the book to the helping of many souls in the things which make for Holiness and happy service.

T. H. H.

Thou hidden love of God, whose height,
Whose depth unfathomed no man knows;
I see from far Thy beauteous light,
Inly I sigh for Thy repose:
My heart is pained, nor can it be
At rest till it finds rest in Thee.
Is there a thing beneath the sun
That strives with Thee my heart to share?
Ah, tear it thence, and reign alone,
The Lord of every motion there!
Then shall my heart from earth be free,
When it hath found repose in Thee.
Oh, hide this self from me, that I
No more, but Christ in me, may live;
My vile affections crucify,
Nor let one darling lust survive!
In all things nothing may I see,
Nothing desire or seek, but Thee!
Each moment draw from earth away

My heart, that lowly waits Thy call:
Speak to my inmost soul, and say,
'I am thy Lord, thy God, thy All!'
To feel Thy power, to hear Thy voice,
To share Thy cross be all my choice.

'We believe that it is the privilege of all believers to be "wholly sanctified", and that their "whole spirit and soul and body" may "be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ". That is to say, we believe that after conversion there remain in the heart of the believer inclinations to evil, or roots of bitterness, which, unless overpowered by Divine grace, produce actual sin; but that these evil tendencies can be entirely taken away by the Spirit of God, and the whole heart, thus cleansed from everything contrary to the will of God, or entirely sanctified, will then produce the fruit of the Spirit only. And we believe that persons thus entirely sanctified may, by the power of God, be kept unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight.' – *The Doctrines of The Salvation Army*.

STANDARDS OF LIFE AND SERVICE

I

God's Call

'What manner of persons ought ye to be?' (2 Peter iii. 11.)

'As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.' (1 Peter i. 15, 16.)

When we set up standards for life and character we must be quite clear that our teaching fits in with God's purpose as revealed towards His people. Therefore, when we enforce the doctrine of personal Holiness, there is no reason more weighty than that which Peter gives us in the verses quoted, namely, that God calls us to Holiness.

The statement I have read seems to me to show that *it is a mistake to suppose that personal Holiness is left optional*. Many people go to Meetings, and, when they are shown the teachings of the Bible about Holiness, they recognize that it is a state of being cleansed, filled with the love of God, and kept by the indwelling Holy Ghost. They see it as a very desirable thing and a possible experience. But, somehow or other, they sit and listen, come and go, and seem to have the idea that it is quite left to themselves whether they should obey the call and claim this blessing or not.

Some talk as if there were two roads to Heaven; I mean the sinning and repenting life; falling down and getting up again; persevering in their journey with just enough religion to make them want to save their souls from going to Hell, in contradistinction to the experience of the saintly man or woman who says, 'By God's help I am going to live a life without sin! I am going to have my heart fully sanctified, and walk in the will of God.'

Some, I am afraid, even go so far as to deliberately say, 'Holiness is a very good thing if you want it; but I am not quite prepared for this, or to give up this, that, and the other. I think I shall get on very well as I am. If *you* want the blessing I am glad to see you go in for it.'

That is what I mean when I talk about people regarding the matter as if it were optional; and I like these words of Peter's because they show us a direct command: 'Be ye holy, for I am holy'. They fit in also with the other injunction: 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing'.

It is a grand and glorious privilege to have a clean heart; to have God Almighty coming and taking full possession of you; and to have His Holy Spirit day by day, filling your heart with love and keeping you in Divine fellowship. But I want you also to realize that it is a binding duty upon every follower of Jesus Christ to seek to become holy.

I think it was John Wesley who said something to the effect that professing Christians who had not got the blessing of a clean heart, or were not earnestly seeking to be delivered from sin, could not consistently be regarded as Christians at all. I do not put it as strongly as that; but I do, from deep conviction, say this to you, that every Salvationist, and other persons who, in Meetings of this kind, are taught that the will of God is that they shall be delivered from all sin, that they shall live a life of purity and Holiness, that they shall walk in the enjoyment of a Full Salvation, and yet are not willing to follow the light, and do what they know God wants them to do, are probably heart-backsliders, and in a fair way to backslide altogether.

I tell you, God has called you, not unto uncleanness, not to remain in a state of impurity, but to Holiness; and he that despiseth that calling despiseth not man, but God. Therefore, I beg of you not to imagine that, with clear light as to your duty, and the possibility of Full Salvation, you can either take it or leave it, and yet remain in the favour of God.

Then these verses are very useful because they *set the standard for our personal spiritual condition*. Need I explain what I mean by this? Let your minds turn to weights and measures, and you will see my meaning exactly. If you went to a draper's shop, and asked for so many yards of material, you would not be satisfied by his guessing the quantity—you would want it measured by the yard-stick, the proper standard of measurement. So with weights. If you ask for so many pounds of sugar or potatoes, it would not be for the shopman

to say to you, 'Will that do for you? Put another in? All right! Will that do?' You would say, 'Please weigh them properly according to standard'.

Now it seems to me that in spiritual character we must have something by which we can measure and compare ourselves, and Peter gives us just such a standard when he says, 'As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy'. The standard is the character of God.

If Peter had said, 'As He is almighty, so be ye almighty', or, 'As He is infallible, so be ye infallible', then at once you would know that the standard was altogether out of your reach, and could not be realized. But, if you are a Christian at all, your inmost conviction tells you that to be holy is a reasonable requirement, and the law of consistency endorses it.

As you study your Bibles you will find many references to this standard of conformity with the Divine character, and will quickly see that nothing short of that can satisfy. It is not only the standard that exists in the Divine mind, but the world rightly expects that we, as Christian men and women, shall be holy. I know the world is very often disappointed, and that, unfortunately, the failures of some so-called Christian people are used as an excuse for disregarding the claims of God, but the world is right in expecting us to live holy lives.

That passage of Peter's contains a significant reminder in the sentence, 'Be ye holy in all manner of conversation'. Now, that word, 'conversation', has a much broader meaning in old English than the sense attached to our common use of it, generally limiting the word to mean intercourse between each other by speech. Here it really means the whole manner of living.

To me it is a matter of unspeakable joy to think that there is no right association, no duty, and no proper relationship in life that cannot be wholly sanctified and have God's smile upon it. Your eatings and drinkings, your speakings, your workings, your dressings, your courtings and marriages, also many other things, such as business and recreation, can all be sanctified, and the functions performed in harmony with the profession of Holiness and the maintenance of a clean heart.

But do not miss *the true inwardness of this command*: 'Be ye holy, for I am holy'. It is this—we cannot live up to the true standard, we cannot fulfil life's obligation, without a sanctified heart.

The General very frequently says, with reference to the failures of certain classes of people who call themselves Christians, that they make the mistake of supposing that they can keep the holy law of God with an unholy heart. The thing is absolutely impossible, and I should only be deluding you if I told you otherwise.

We sometimes say that in Heaven there is, and ever will be, an unwavering fulfilment of the highest will of God. But what secures that condition in Heaven? Do you think it is the absence of a personal Devil? Not only that—although the hope of it counts for a good deal with some of us. Do you think it is the absence of wicked surroundings and temptations from evil men and women? Not only that. Do you think it is the possession of things that produce unfailing pleasure and satisfaction? Not only that. It is just the fact that every heart is confirmed in its perfect acceptance of the Father's will, and is in the fullest conformity with the holy law of a holy God. There are many other things that go to make up Heaven, but without that there can be no Heaven at all.

Did you repeat the Lord's Prayer this morning? If so, you came to that little sentence, 'Thy will be done on earth as it is done in Heaven'. Now, I ask you, do you really mean that? Do you honestly want that for yourselves? Because, unless you can put yourselves in line with that petition, unless there is a compliance with these words of Peter's, 'Be ye holy, for I am holy', you can never get that prayer answered.

II

Consecration Complete

'Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.' (Romans xii. 1.)

Surely, amongst those who love God and desire His Kingdom to come, there can be no difference of opinion with regard to the duty of whole-hearted consecration to the service of God.

The rightness of God's claims is beyond dispute among His own people; and so it ought to be recognized as our absolute duty to yield fully to those claims. The feeling of every professed servant of Christ ought to be, nay, surely is, 'I am not my own; I am bought with a price: I should "therefore glorify God in my body and soul, which are God's"'.

Whilst, however, in so many words all this is acknowledged, when it comes to practically facing the question, with its personal responsibility, how few there are who respond to the claims of the Master, rendering Him that out-and-out devotion of which we hear and speak.

Of a consecration that consists in attending Holiness Meetings, singing hymns, and uniting in prayers full of the most sublime sentiment, we have an abundance. With eyes closed and hands up-raised, many vow that henceforth they will live, not unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again; but when the Meetings are over, the surroundings changed, and the actual duty presents itself, how much of this consecration is found to be mere sentiment, for 'as the early cloud and morning dew' so it passeth!

1. Now, let it be understood that *real consecration is a practical thing*. I have a saying, which cannot be repeated too often—'that which I give away I no longer have'. If we can only persuade people to recognize that truth, and make their consecration on these lines, something practical will follow.

Men like to say, 'I am the Lord's!' but when the Lord wants to make practical use of His own, Oh, what backwardness to obey! What slowness of speech on the part of the tongue that was profess-

edly given to the Lord! What weariness of body will sometimes be found when that body is demanded by the Master for some special service! A dumb devil seems to take possession of the tongue, and the fear of man brings a snare, and all this often results in a shameful compromise. The fact is, much of the popular consecration means, 'Everything in general and nothing in particular'—mere words, clouds without water, leaves without fruit—and the world is little better for the vows that have been made.

We may want to follow Jesus without denying ourselves; but He says plainly that we cannot. If any man will deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Christ, he, and he only, shall be a true disciple.

Real, true consecration is a plain, matter-of-fact piece of business; sublime, not so much because of the character of the work it does, as because of the constraining love that is the motive and the results flowing from it. The beautiful halo and glamour clinging round our vows and prayers and songs during a Meeting, are gratifying to our senses; but real consecration manifests itself in hard, self-denying labour, when no eye but His sees; often, perhaps, when no heart but His appreciates, and no voice but His commends. The halo no longer seen, the glamour no longer felt, the soul steps forward and meets its duty, and, in the strength of God, does it: that is the consecration which tells for God and the Kingdom.

2. Let us also understand that *real consecration is an 'all-round' thing*. Many recognize the claims of God in great things, but are not so particular in the ordinary matters of everyday life.

I recall a young man, who, in private Meetings, and on the platform, would go into rhapsodies as he spoke of his love for a perishing world, and his intense desire to be sent on some great mission. I spoke to him of the hundreds of recklessly godless men with whom he daily associated at his work, and who lived round about his house, and asked him what he did in reference to these. Need I tell you how suddenly this man collapsed? He did not think that consecration meant such a commonplace thing as being faithful in the ordinary duties and walks of life, for I had inquired as to what happened when the men gathered for meals or conversation in the intervals of work.

Does it seem to some of you an evidence of entire consecration that we stand on platforms and lead Meetings, or are doing some work which draws other eyes towards us in appreciation of—what is deemed—untiring devotion? Well, I trust that the appearance does not go beyond the spirit of the business; but I tell you, the real test lies elsewhere. It shows itself in such an abandonment to God and the interests of the Kingdom, that no duty is felt too small or trifling. The man is not found saying, 'I'll do *this*', or 'I won't do *that*', and '*that* doesn't matter'; but whatsoever his hand findeth to do, he does with his might, and does it unto the Lord.

Be not deceived, my friends. Consecration in great things will not atone for neglect in smaller and more trifling matters, and that only is a perfect consecration which is real and all round in its application. In little things and great things self is to be denied, ignored, and God and His glory to be the one end from attaining which the consecrated soul never swerves.

Let this be faced at the commencement, and it will save endless controversy later on. It is because so many do not take all this in at the beginning, that disappointments come, and very often breakdowns. Let your consecration take in all time and circumstances, and remember that the soul's responsibility is only limited by its opportunities. 'All for Jesus' should mean 'nothing left out'.

3. *Whole-hearted consecration is a joyous thing.* I don't know how the delusion has become so popular that entire devotion to the service of God means melancholy and sadness, and irksome duties and burdens. It may have only come by a roundabout road, but it is a doctrine of the Devil, who is a liar from the beginning, and the fully consecrated soul hurls the lie back to its father, proclaiming, with a heart full of gladness, 'I delight to do Thy will, my God'; 'My meat and my drink is to do the will of my Father', and 'His fruit is sweet to my taste'.

Singleness of purpose and simplicity of intention soon clear discontent and unhappiness out of a man's heart. When the soul has cut loose from all self-considerations, and has put an end to such wretched questions as, 'Will it pay to follow the Master?' or such thoughts as, 'If I give myself fully to God, perhaps I shall have to suffer the loss of many things I hold dear; people will be down up-

on me, and chaff me, and, perhaps, persecute me; and, besides, I really do want to make a little money for myself and my family, and I must not be righteous over-much'; when, I say, men or women have cast aside all such thoughts, and come to the determination to live for God and for God alone, then indeed are they freed from many things which cause sadness and bitterness. It is the double-minded who are strangers to true lasting joy and peace.

The great sorrows of most lives spring from disappointed ambitions, covetousness, or from love of praise, fear of man, or similar things; but when this life of selfishness is crucified, and a man is alive only unto God, none can deprive him of that which he most values. Whilst others may be saying, 'We know thy poverty', he hears the Lord say, 'But thou art rich'. Christ has been revealed to him as a living Friend, and though by the outward eye he sees Him not, 'yet believing, he rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory'.

Do you remember what John said about that white stone which will be given to him that overcometh? It had 'written in it a new name which no man knoweth save he who receiveth it'. The joy of whole-hearted service for God is like that; no man really understands it save he who possesses it, but of its reality thousands daily testify.

Are you fully consecrated? Not after the fashion we spoke of at the beginning, but practically, and in a whole-hearted, all-round way? Have you settled it to go all lengths for God? If not, 'I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies—yourselves—a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service'.

III

Divine Fellowship

'That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.' (1 John i. 3.)

My mind and heart have been dwelling upon that sweet word 'fellowship'. We all know what it means in ordinary social intercourse—it means acquaintance, friendship, communion of spirit, interchange of thought and feeling. But I want you to see that all this marks the fellowship prevailing between the Lord and His sanctified saints.

There is a chorus we sometimes sing, which expresses something of what I mean:—

Friendship with Jesus,
Fellowship Divine;
Oh, what blessed, sweet communion,
Jesus is a Friend of mine!

I have been reflecting on this principle as it works itself out in the current everyday life of the sanctified. I will not now try to exhaust all the wonderful things in the vision which has come to me in relation to this matter, for I really could not explain to you all that has been in my mind and heart, but the thing has come to me somewhat in this fashion:—

1. First of all, I have thought of the *fellowship of Salvation*. That may sound rather low down for a Holiness Meeting, and yet that is just where true fellowship began, so far as I was concerned. There had to be a co-operation, a uniting of God and myself before my soul could be saved at all. Two words were in my mind—'He' and 'I'; He doing His part, and I doing my part. His heart; my heart; His approaches to me by the power and influence of His Holy Spirit; my approaches to Him. Jesus died; I believed. He called; I answered. He gave; I accepted. I trusted, and Jesus saved me.

I want you to see what I mean, because it was that union of the Lord Jesus Christ and my own heart which brought life, and light, and peace to my soul. My Salvation life began at that point, and I was able to say, as we often sing:—

'Tis done, the great transaction's done,
I am my Lord's, and He is mine;
He drew me, and I followed on,
Charmed to confess the Voice Divine.

2. Then, pursuing this line, my reflection brings me up to this: there is a *fellowship of love*. 'He loved me, and He gave Himself for me'. We love Him because He first loved us. So, you see, our relationship has been built up, and is to be built up, upon that double plank. It is all in that. I do not suppose there is anybody in this Hall who does not know something of the power of love. You not only know the power of loving, but the sweetness of being loved. I am not quite sure which is the better side of the two, but they are two beautiful sides of fellowship.

Do we not see it in our family life? At any rate, I do. I can speak for myself in this matter because my family always has been a very affectionate one, and this loving and expressing our love to one another has brought us very close together. I think about the children. I go back to the time when they were little, and remember how they would climb upon my knee, and how they used to press their little faces against mine, and their little hearts, as it were, against my breast; and how, with more feeling than their words could express, they used to say, Dadda, papa, father, you *are* a dear! I *do* love you! You would readily imagine what I should say back to them.

It has been just the same with my wife. She has sweetened my life very much with her expressions of love. She has done it by responding to my appeals, and by sharing my sorrows and joys. And I have no doubt that were she here to speak for herself, she would say she has equally felt the force and sweetness of my expressions of affection during the many years we have loved and lived together.