

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CHRISTIANS

WITH RESPECT TO

THE SALVATION ARMY.

By MRS. BOOTH.

FIRST.—You are responsible to look at it—to acquaint yourself with its history—what it has done—and what it aims at doing.

You say, "Why am I under obligation to do this?" Because it comes before you with Divine credentials: it professes to be a special work of God, adapted, through Divine inspiration, to meet the peculiar and distressing needs of these times. Further, it gives ungainsayable proof that it is *such*. No honest-hearted man can examine these proofs without being convinced of the fact. Hundreds of the most devoted and intelligent Christians of this generation *have* been convinced, and are amongst the best and warmest supporters of the work.

Perhaps you say, "Well, but I am a member of a Church, and I do what I can at my own place."

Are you sure of this? Do you ever lift up your eyes to behold the godless multitudes who never come near your place, nor any other, where God and Eternity are put before them? Do you ever think of the awful fact that ninety out of every hundred of your fellow-country men and women never cross the threshold of any place where God is mentioned, except it may be:

blasphemies and contempt? Do you realize this fact? or, if you never have before, will you TRY NOW?

Ninety out of every hundred of the inhabitants of your town or city never go into a place of worship!

Now, what are you doing individually, and what are they doing at your own place to meet this awful state of things? What? Alas! I know, as a rule, little or nothing. Then, I say, you are responsible to examine an agency which reaches and deals with four millions of these masses in the streets every week, by the living voice of its speakers, most of them raised from these godless masses themselves.

You are responsible, because you profess to belong to Him who shed His blood for them, and because you are kept in being *on purpose* to do your part towards saving them. You are responsible, because if you let them alone in their ignorance and sin, an ever-increasing tide of depravity will go on rising until it overwhelms this nation with bloodshed and ruin; and your children, if not you, will reap the bitter consequences.

SECONDLY.—You are responsible for speaking the truth about us according to your conscience. Said a lady, the other day, in a town where we have three large Corps, "I was the first to speak for The Salvation Army in our church. I had been to their meetings and got such a blessing that I could not keep it in, and I said, in one of our Church-meetings, 'Well, I feel I ought to say that I have been to The Salvation Army meetings, and I believe that work is of God. They teach God's truth with the power of His Spirit, and I don't care where that is done, nor who by. I think we

ought to acknowledge it, and I, for one, will do so.'"
I said in my heart, "Hallelujah! That is the way to help us." Speak out what you believe and know about us. But many people come, and hear, and see, and get blessed, and then sneak back into their holes and corners, and are ashamed to own where they got their blessing. No wonder they so soon lose it! and when they come across any of our small friends who delight to pass over the great body of good that is in The Salvation Army, and pick out the sore spots, these people join hands with them, and play fast and loose, blow hot and cold, belie their consciences, betray their Master, and slander us! Away with such perfidy! SPEAK THE TRUTH ABOUT US; tell out, like that lady, what your conscience says, and then God will give you a Salvation Army blessing, as He did to her; for she got her husband—for whom she had prayed fifteen years—and four children converted through The Army.

THIRDLY.—You are responsible for helping us to deal with the mass of heathenism which you have allowed to grow up in your midst. Here it is an ever-increasing element of danger. If it goes on, neither you nor your children will be able to walk abroad unmolested.

What will you do with it?

You are as much responsible as I am. You can help us to cope with it by trying to spread the knowledge of what we are doing by sending our *War Cry* and books to your friends, with a kind note bespeaking their attention to the contents. You can help us by trying to influence magistrates and police where they are in ignorance of our aims. One lady did us untold service

writing to an editor of an influential paper on our behalf, giving him her personal experience of our meetings. You can help us by writing for explanation or contradiction of any absurd reports which may be going the round of your circle, and then exploding them. A lady of the Society of Friends did this recently in a remote town, and completely routed the slanderers, and won for us some new and valuable friends. You can help us by sending your tradespeople, such as your greengrocer, milkman, butcher, cabmen, or others to our meetings, where the Holy Spirit is sure to lay hold of them, and they will probably get saved. You can help us by giving our *Little Soldier*, a Salvation paper for children, to the little ones, and inviting them to the meetings for children, if they exist in your town. I heard a great, bully-looking man say in a meeting, a few days ago, "I was saved through my little girl asking me to come to a Salvation Army meeting."

FOURTHLY.—You are responsible for sympathising with us in our unprecedented difficulties, trials, and disappointments. As our Wesleyan friends express it, in a circular just published, "We cannot hesitate to give these, our buffeted fellow-workers for Christ, a warm and practical support."

Buffeted, indeed! For ten years of this movement we might be said to have every man's hand against us. Misunderstood, misrepresented, and traduced on every side, we had to fight almost single-handed against hurricanes of prejudice and opposition. Every failure of an officer, every fall or inconsistency of a private, every breakdown of a Corps, has been dragged out and

paraded against us, as though we, out of the roughest, most ignorant, and depraved of sinners, were expected to make saints of the first water in a day. Multitudes of stories one would have thought too silly for a schoolboy to credit have gone the round of the papers against us, and, in some instances, our contradictions have been refused insertion.

Our doctrines have been grossly misrepresented and assailed; we have been said to preach Antinomianism, against which our lives and voices and pens are a daily protest. Our teaching of Holiness is still persistently represented, in some quarters, as Sinless Perfection, notwithstanding our most outspoken protest against that monstrous dogma. Our motives have been publicly traduced, again and again, and The Salvation Army represented as a money-making concern in the interests of private individuals, notwithstanding all the proofs possible to the contrary—open to everybody who will take the trouble to enquire. Our *War Cry*, the most out-and-out spiritual and godly paper in the world, has been most unfairly criticised and condemned, odd sentences having been separated from their explanatory connection, and quoted in altogether a different spirit and connection to which they were intended. In short, our enemies have pursued us with as genuine a hatred as they did our Master, and our fast-and-loose friends have joined hands with them, and turned upon us, as the Pharisees did upon Him, with, "He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils." Through all this we have gone on, often most deeply wounded in the house of our dearest friends, even they being moved and influenced by all this out-

ward tumult; but God has kept us going forward, CASTING OUT DEVILS, and now we are able to say, as our Master did, "The works that we do, they testify of us; if ye believe not us, yet believe us for our works' sake."

We feel that we have a right to the love and sympathy and prayer of all true Christians.

Above all, you ought to pray for us continually, and ask God to strengthen our minds and hearts and bodies to go on with this war. We are often sore pressed—almost fainting under the load of responsibility and effort that comes upon us—beset with difficulties and perils, known only to God and ourselves—withstood by Satan almost in visible form, who sets his emissaries, the publicans, and others who live on the sins and woes of their fellow-men, to gnash upon us with their teeth. In perils more abundant, in deaths oft, we claim your sympathy and prayer and effort.

FIFTHLY.—You are responsible for finding us money to carry on this war. We ask not for a penny for ourselves, nor for any official or semi-official salaries. Every officer on our staff does the work of two, and some of three men, receiving only what enables them to keep their families in moderate comfort; and some of these have given up lucrative situations, business, or Government appointments, ranging from £300 to £1,000 per annum. If you want proof of this, come to our Headquarters, and spend a day with us. *Every penny is rigorously* devoted to aggressive work on the most *economical principles* possible. Go and ask our accountants if this is not so, and then, I say, you ought to send in your cheques. You say that you are only

stewards; then here is your Lord's harvest-field white to the harvest! Millions of people flock to our meetings. We CAN—we DO—reach them, and, by the power of the Holy Ghost, we do

SAVE THEM.

Take the following, related by Col. Colville at our last Exeter Hall meeting, as an illustration of what the Salvation Army is doing:

I was in a town, the other day, when a man got up on the Sunday afternoon—a fine-looking fellow, six feet two inches high—and said, "Friends, God forbid that I should say it but to the glory of God. I never think of the past but with a broken heart, and I am going to tell you my story so as to encourage those who think there is no hope for them. I have spent eleven years of my life in penal servitude. I have been cat-o'-nine-tailed four times when in Her Majesty's service. I have the brand of a deserter on my shoulder to-day, but praise God and the Lamb, nine months ago I was going through the street and I heard a procession singing, and two little lasses leading it. They sang—

You must be a lover of the Lamb,
Or you'll never go to heaven when you die.

I said, "That is just what my mother used to tell me." I went to the hall and God saved my soul." A leading tradesman, at whose house I stayed, got up and said, "Yes, it is true, every word of it. That man is a pattern to the town." A dear old man, with white locks and shaking hands, got up, and, with the tears running from his eyes, said, "That be my son. I had four of them, and every one of them took to drink and went to the bad. They turned out thieves and everything that was bad. I didn't know where any of them was, but, glory be to God, they are all in this hall this afternoon, and they are all converted." What is more, they were all four converted in different towns through the instrumentality of the Salvation Army.

I had the old man and his four sons up on the platform, all in a row, praising God."

You can see such men as these by thousands. Go to our Stations, look at them, talk to them, ask them what they were, what they are, and what they are doing, and then ask yourself how much these souls—these redeemed lives—the rescued lives of their wives and children, are worth to society, to Christ, to God, and to heaven? IF YOUR MONEY DOES belong to Him who bought these—not with money, but with strong crying and tears, and agony, and blood—then, I say, we have a right to it. Thousands of drunkards wait to be reclaimed, multitudes of poor, half-starved wives to be delivered, millions of untaught, unkempt children to be rescued from lives of sin and crime and shame.

We can do it, by the power of God, in our agencies.
WE ARE DOING IT.

Will you help us, by giving according to the depth and length of the desperate need, and according to the **HEIGHT AND BREADTH AND GRANDEUR OF THIS WONDERFUL, GLORIOUS OPPORTUNITY?**

SIXTHLY.—Remember that you will be held responsible at the Judgment Seat as to the way you dealt with this movement. The fact that you wrap yourself up in Pharisaical indifference—that you refuse to listen to our revelations of the dreadful condition of the people, or to respond to our cry for help—does **NOT ALTER YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.**

2s. per 100.

Headquarters of the Salvation Army, 101, Queen Victoria Street, London, E.C.