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Département des études anciennes et de sciences des religions**

Ph. D. Thesis

**"BODILY COMPASSION:" VALUES AND IDENTITY
FORMATION IN THE SALVATION ARMY, 1880-1900**

by

© Barbara ROBINSON

Supervisor: Prof. Robert Choquette



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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

“BODILY COMPASSION”: VALUES AND IDENTITY FORMATION IN THE SALVATION ARMY, 1880-1900.

Candidate: Barbara D. Robinson

Dissertation Director: Dr. Robert Choquette

By the end of the nineteenth century, The Salvation Army, an offshoot of British Methodism, had become a respected feature on the Victorian cultural landscape. The fierce opposition the Army faced in its earliest days, for the manner in which it adapted forms of working class popular culture as a means of religious expression, and for its controversial use of women as preachers or “Hallelujah lasses,” had been replaced by popular admiration for its philanthropic work among the poor and the socially marginalized.

This thesis analyzes the course of this transition. Much of the rehabilitation of reputation can be attributed to the work of a second wave of women recruits who assumed less socially transgressive ministry roles as rescue workers or nurses in the Army’s expanding network of social services. Informed by a “heroic” spirituality which emphasized social duty, self-sacrifice and moral influence, these “Social Officers” dramatically embodied an idealized late nineteenth-century behavioural ethos and won the movement admirers if not adherents.

The Salvation Army's concerted commitment to a "principle of noncontroversy" broadened its cultural acceptability and invited some unusual alliances. This can be particularly demonstrated in the denomination's interaction with a range of Victorian health reform movements: hydropathy, homoeopathy and vegetarianism.

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So many people have offered me their support and encouragement through the duration of this project that it is difficult to know where to begin to say thank you. Dr. Robert Choquette, my thesis advisor, has engaged in countless conversations about the nineteenth century and its religious history. His close historical attention to the work of the Oblate Fathers in North America has offered a fascinating vantage point for a comparison of the nature of mission passion in the “Evangelical century.” He has offered unfailingly helpful suggestions and critique and has gamely tolerated the reality of my other, nonacademic vocational life with its demands upon my time.

While accessing the part-time instructor’s office at The University of Ottawa, I frequently benefitted from informal discussions pertaining to the sociology of emerging religious movements with the Department Chair, Dr. Peter Beyer. Dr. Beyer subsequently served on my thesis examining committee, a committee of scholars I highly respect, and whose work has significantly influenced my own academic trajectory: Dr. William Westfall, History, York University; Dr. Pamela Walker, History, Carleton University; and Dr. David Jeffrey, English, University of Ottawa.

Because I am a Salvation Army Officer, that is, an ordained member of the denominational clergy, I am both grateful and substantially indebted to The Salvation Army for allowing me adequate flexibility in my current role at the Ottawa Grace Hospital to complete this project. Majors Bert and Kathie Sharp and the members of the

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I have appreciated the assistance of the efficient archivists working for The Salvation Army in both England and Toronto. From the International Heritage Centre in London, a particular thanks must be extended to Lt. Colonel Jenty Fairbank, Mr. Gordon Taylor and their gracious and humourous staff. My work in England was always done under extreme time pressure, and they went out of their way to help me make the time productive. Although my thesis concentrated on mission developments in the United Kingdom, Major Flo Curzon, then of the George Scott Railton Heritage Center in Toronto also provided helpful research assistance. I am grateful to have been the recipient of an Ontario Graduate Scholarship which made this archival research financially possible.

While in the United Kingdom and missing my family, I valued the kind hospitality of Officers associated with the headquarters in London: Connie Croly, Cynthia (White) Dalziel, and Ann Powell. And I will not soon forget the delightful day of insightful conversation in Norwich Cathedral with Commissioner Dr. Harry Williams, an important “health innovator” from a period later than my own research focus. His story and that of his colleagues in medical missions remains to be told: a later project?

Dr. Vikki Bennett of the University of Ottawa Press found me a desk in a back room to work, shared with me her comprehensive knowledge of religious history and material culture, daily modelled a disciplined approach to academic endeavour for which I will always be grateful, and plain and simply “blessed me” with her warm and generous friendship. Elizabeth Thibeault, in the same office, is another supportive and creative friend.

On a number of occasions, I benefitted from conversation and the sharing of archival resources with James Opp, a doctoral candidate in the Department of History at Carleton University, whose work focuses on faith healing narratives in nineteenth-century North America. James also gave me the needed boost to present my first academic paper by inviting my participation with him in a session for the Canadian Historical Association. I am also grateful for the encouragement of Pamela Walker, professor of British History at Carleton University. Our conversations were informal and too few: this in no way due to any unwillingness on Dr. Walker’s part but reflecting instead my own student insecurity in the light of the excellence of her work, as well as her sabbatical leave from the Ottawa-Carleton region when I finally arrived at the writing stage of this project.

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working “church person” to feel both connected to the academic environment and challenged by the ongoing debate surrounding the nature of the Academy in contemporary culture.

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My children, Jonathan, Laura and Ian have been so patient with a project they must have thought would never end. I will always cherish their understanding.

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INTRODUCTION

But the search for facts, for places, names, influential events, important conversations and correspondences, political circumstances - all this amounts to nothing if you can't find the assumption your subject lives by.¹

On a chill and overcast February morning in 1886 The Salvation Army administration in London, England received sobering news from the “battlefront” in Paris. A “Cadet” - the Army’s term for a candidate for ministry, had died the previous night in France as a result of injuries received in a street disturbance. In the aftermath of the tragedy, Florence Soper Booth, the young daughter-in-law of William and Catherine Booth, recorded her feelings in her journal.

Read dear Katie’s letter telling of the death ... our martyr of Quai. Beautiful. Will be put in War Cry. Oh! that God would give me grace and power to be such - to die a daily death to self and care - this seems somehow more difficult than to face a mob.²

This is a thesis which attempts to make sense of sensibility. It seeks to understand the nature of the religious passion colourfully dramatized in the nineteenth-century evangelical revival movement known as The Salvation Army. It endeavours to contextualize a spirituality like that of the young Officer who interpreted the violent death of a colleague in ministry as a martyrdom and therefore a “beautiful” event, and in so doing explicate a religious mentalité of the late Victorian period. The formative faith of a woman like Florence Soper Booth was not nurtured within an environment of radical

¹Anne Michaels, Fugitive Pieces (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1996), 222.

²Florence Soper Booth, Journal (unpublished) February 7, 1886. The Salvation Army International Heritage Centre, London, England.

sectarianism. She was the eldest daughter of a successful physician living in retirement in Blaina, Wales. She had received the typical “cultivating” education in the arts, music and languages favoured for their daughters by the Victorian professional classes. Her initial encounter with The Salvation Army came through attending a lecture given by Catherine Booth in Steinway Hall, a presentation of Army thought far removed from the rough and tumble informality of William’s preaching missions in London’s East End.

This, then, is a study in quest of lived religious assumptions. By definition, an assumption is a notion or concept taken for granted. Assumptions undergird the values a given slice of society holds dear or regards as normative. The phrase “lived assumptions” describes the manner in which notions commonly taken for granted or the values generally accepted as valid at a particular time and place are expressed in daily life. So this thesis represents an attempt to identify those ways of thinking and constructing religious reality in the Protestant denomination known after 1878 as The Salvation Army which contributed to particular ways of behaving or “being in the world”; behaviours which in popular perception became integrally associated with the movement and which shaped an emerging denominational identity.

Throughout the final two decades of the nineteenth century, the Army was the subject of a vigorous and highly polarized public debate. From the year of its formal constitution in 1878 until the late 1880s, the Army was reviled as a peculiarly vulgar expression of working class religiosity. Historian Pamela Walker correctly asserts that the burden of conventional church and public opinion regarded with “horror ... the Army’s attempt to

create an innovative religious movement.”³ Early Salvationists were routinely described by reporters as that “shrieking crowd of religious fanatics.”⁴ The public services or “meetings” conducted by Salvation Army Officers were characterized as “tasteless, noisy, pretentious” gatherings, attractive to the working classes only because they managed to “gild the homeliness and disguise the painfulness of true religious discipline.”⁵ And yet, during these years, when the fledgling denomination experienced negative social regard and overt hostility, the Army attracted into its ranks a small but influential cadre of comparatively “cultured” Officers who would largely constitute the consolidating Army’s leadership core. Despite a certain seriocomic quirkiness, The Salvation Army had, by late century, become a respected feature on the British cultural landscape, and one which enjoyed a broad level of popular affection.

This thesis seeks to account for the relatively rapid redemption of reputation and securing of public trust. It will be argued that despite The Salvation Army’s commitment to the counter-culture language of radical, or what Salvationists would have called “primitive” Christianity, and despite its adoption of authentically working-class forms of religious expression, the “way of being in the world” emphasized by the movement was a dramatic expression of a culturally idealized late nineteenth-century behavioural ethos. Anthony Kenny, in his philosophical exploration of Victorian values, stresses the need for historians to attend to the distinction between what counts as a fact and the nature of a

³Pamela Walker, “Pulling the Devil’s Kingdom Down: Gender and Popular Culture in The Salvation Army, 1865-1895” (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers University, 1992), 15.

⁴The Spectator (London, England), 15 July 1882.

⁵*Ibid.*

value. What is at issue in historical attempts to identify and clarify cultural values is not what or whom the subjects in fact were, but what and whom they admired.⁶ It will be argued that The Salvation Army embodied a heroic, earnest sensibility which proved culturally attractive at late century, and reaped admirers, if not adherents.

It will be further argued that The Salvation Army was rescued from sustained sectarianism by a self-conscious commitment to a principle of non-controversy⁷ and an emphasis on what Salvationists regarded as the pan-denominational “essentials” of the Christian faith. Army leaders claimed to be religious pragmatists, not metaphysicians. As self-declared devotees of John Wesley, theirs was an evangelicalism forged in the Enlightenment and largely bypassing the sentimental accretions of the Romantic movement. This can be demonstrated not only in the denomination’s approach to theology but also in the manner with which Salvationists interacted with and utilized other elements of popular culture, notably for this study, the engagement with the nineteenth-century health reform movement.

⁶Anthony Kenny, “Victorian Values: Some Concluding Thoughts,” Proceedings of the British Academy (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 78 (1992): 217-224. “In order to judge Victorian values, the question each of us should ask is not: would I like to be the kind of person the Victorians were; but, would I like to be the kind of person the Victorians admired?”

⁷George Scott Railton, “The Salvation Army Following Christ,” 1907. Subsequently reprinted in Popular Christianity (Atlanta: The Salvation Army, 1986). Commissioner Railton argued that a critical key to the Army’s inter-cultural expansion was its decision to avoid controversy. “The one-minded and one-heartedness of The Army is strikingly exemplified in its newspapers and its prayers. It has 61 publications, issued in 49 different countries and colonies, in 23 different languages. In not one of these can there be found any recognition of the controversies which disturb the Christian world. They represent minds always engaged upon the one subject - the subjugation of the world to the dominion of Jesus Christ.” 195.

Additionally, this thesis will assert that much of the eventual admiration of The Salvation Army and its increased cultural legitimacy was won by middle-class women Officers who did not feel comfortable in the flamboyant public roles the Army offered to women as preachers or “Hallelujah lasses,” but instead carved out expanded opportunities for ministry in what historian Anne Digby has defined as the “gender borderlands.” By this term she means those largely socially invisible and frequently voluntary spheres of activity in which women gained work experience and wielded administrative influence “using familiar feminine skills in an extended but not separate area from their domestic territory.”⁸

These women, frequently engaged in ministries in what was known as the Women’s Social Services, have been largely ignored in previous academic studies of The Salvation Army. Significant scholarly attention has been directed to the analysis of the ways in which working-class women in the late Victorian era benefitted, either directly or indirectly, from the Army’s egalitarian commitments. Pamela Walker’s very fine doctoral dissertation, “Pulling the Devil’s Kingdom Down,” focuses upon the public, visible participation of women in the Army and the resultant implications for the analysis of class and gender in nineteenth-century Britain. In a direct sense, women assumed public ministries as preachers and evangelists for which the Army assured them they were admirably fitted by nature if previously impeded by conventional religious nurture. In an indirect sense, working-class women benefitted from a redefined working-class

⁸ Anne Digby, “Victorian Values and Women in Public and Private,” T. C. Smout, ed. Victorian Values. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 210.

masculinity. Enjoined by Salvationists to renounce the drunken street brawl for aggressive engagement in a War against sin and gin, working-class fathers testified to the sobering effects of the conversion experience within their domestic situations.

Lynne Marks is a Canadian labour historian whose work has also focused primarily upon the experience of working-class women in The Salvation Army. Marks has investigated the social background of women who became Salvation Army "Officers" or clergy in late nineteenth-century Canada. Working with extant archival personnel records, she ably analyzes the high attrition rates of those Officers assigned to branches of the Canadian Army's social service work who had been employed as domestic servants prior to their association with The Salvation Army.⁹ Marks contends that the practical work expected of Officers in the social departments approximated too closely the work left behind with the "calling" to join the Army. Working-class women seem to have favoured the broadened opportunities and expanded social sphere made possible by appointments to the "Field" - the Army's preaching or congregational work.

This was not however the only response to engagement in Salvation Army Social ministries. The conversion narratives of the middle-class British women who joined the movement frequently reveal an alternative discourse, a discourse which will feature prominently in this thesis. Many of these women preferred the role of philanthropist or

⁹See Lynn Marks, "The Knights of Labor and The Salvation Army: Religion and Working Class Culture in Ontario, 1882-1890," *Labour / Le travail* 28 (Fall 1991). "Information on the occupations of the 1,228 Officers who entered the Army in Ontario during the period 1882-90 provides ... evidence of the class background of Army members ... As was the case with converts, over half (55%) of all Officers were female. These women, almost all of whom were single, were far more likely to have been employed than the average single woman." 98.

social advocate to that of preacher. Benefiting from the Army's emphasis on encouraging the role of women in ministry, they assumed active and often powerful administrative roles in the new denomination without overtly challenging notions of social "respectability." To care for the poor and the sick, particularly with only minimal financial remuneration, fell within an acceptably female sphere of concern. A Salvation Army Women's Social Officer could be brave without being brazen - heroic without being perceived as hysteric.

Why Health?

The specific context of this study will lie within the formative Salvation Army's understanding of health and optimal human well-being. At first glance, health may seem to be a matter of marginal importance in a movement committed from its inception to what it termed "aggressive evangelism." The very title of this thesis, "Bodily Compassion," is a phrase that was used in a pejorative sense by Catherine Booth, cofounder of The Salvation Army. By it she was referring to a range of late-century church-based initiatives intended to alleviate social misery but which she accused of bypassing or minimizing "serious soul need."¹⁰ Nonetheless, ways of thinking about the human body prompted the Army to adopt and promote such approaches to self-care or "hygiene" as hydrotherapy, vegetarianism and homeopathy. Concepts of health influenced the direction and structuring of Army philanthropy and the day-to-day lifestyle demands made upon mission workers.

¹⁰Catherine Booth, "Sham Compassion and the Dying Love of Christ," Popular Christianity (London: The Salvation Army, 1887), 58.

The historical study of how health is defined and health care is practised offers what medical historian Wendy Mitchinson terms a “particularly fruitful lens for social scrutiny.”¹¹ The first and most obvious reason for this disciplinary fruitfulness is because it reflects the nature of a broad and passionate popular discourse. The therapeutic practices utilized and promoted by the Army’s founding family are among the more curious and largely unretrieved elements of the denominational history. Although frequently alluded to in Army biography, William and Catherine Booth’s concern with health is generally regarded as a rather eccentric, even neurotic preoccupation. It is only by taking into account the wider cultural context and the values of mid-century evangelicalism that one can adequately make sense, for example, of Catherine Booth’s dismay at the interest shown by her oldest son, Bramwell, in pursuing a medical career, of her convinced anti-vaccination stance, or her preference for the elaborate paraphernalia of hydropathy to the swig of “black draught.”

Health was an obsession with the Victorians because illness was a source of genuine peril. The considerable advances made in medical knowledge in the nineteenth century cannot be denied. However, through much of the period, the identification of causes of disease and the prescription for cures remained haphazard and speculative. This was particularly the case with three devastating epidemics or general contagions which swept the United Kingdom in the first half of the century, decimating towns like Sunderland and

¹¹Wendy Mitchinson, The Nature of Their Bodies. Women and Their Doctors in Victorian Canada. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).

in particular, the poorer neighbourhoods of major urban centres.¹² The years 1831-1833 saw two waves of influenza and the first appearance in Britain of Asiatic cholera. In 1836-42, the nation was swept by influenza, typhus, smallpox and scarlet fever. Again, in 1846-1849, cholera made an appearance in conjunction with epidemics of typhus and typhoid. Nothing could equal this “foreign” disease for its fearful impact on the populace. One observer wrote in 1862,

Our other plagues were home-bred and part of ourselves as it were; we had a habit of looking on them with a fatal indifference, indeed inasmuch as it led us to believe that they could be effectively subdued. But the cholera was something outlandish, unknown, monstrous; its tremendous ravages, so long foreseen and feared, so little to be explained, its insidious march over whole continents, its apparent defiance of all the known and concentrated precautions against the spread of epidemic disease, invested it with a mystery and terror which thoroughly took hold of the public mind, and seemed to recall the memory of the great epidemics of the middle ages.¹³

To experience poor or “delicate” health rendered the Victorian citizen vulnerable to the horrors of the “general contagions” - physically, socially, economically and spiritually. Consequently a historian like Bruce Haley goes so far as to suggest that health maintenance could be described as the primary preoccupation of the Victorian “mind.”¹⁴

Health in the nineteenth century is a critical topic for the history of philanthropy and religion because of the ascendancy of science as a culturally legitimated source of

¹²Bruce Haley, The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1978). Haley's book is the most comprehensive study of the idealization of health in the Victorian era. He argues that “nothing occupies a nation's mind with the subject of health like a general contagion”, 6-8.

¹³Public Health in Relation To Air and Water (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1862) cited in Haley, 15-16.

¹⁴Haley, The Healthy Body, 3. Haley contends that “No topic more occupied the Victorian mind than Health - not religion, or politics, or improvement, or Darwinism. Victorians worshipped the goddess Hygeia, sought out her laws and disciplined themselves to obey them.”

authority and behavioural proscription. By late century the laboratory was displacing the rectory as the voice of moral guardianship. Alcoholism, for example, was recast as a physiological condition rather than as a moral failing. Masturbation was condemned more on the grounds that the practice over-stimulated the immature nervous system and impeded normal growth and development, than on classical Biblical understandings of the sin of “onanism” or philosophical injunctions to avoid personal hubris. Within branches of science like physiology, the discovery of and emphasis upon natural “laws” operative within biological systems, contributed to a bold optimism that humankind was on the verge of the discovery of the very “laws of life” and also to the reinforcement of gender-based social roles. Nowhere was this more evident than in the medicalization of women’s reproductive experience with the attendant rationalization for limiting their participation in the public square. While The Salvation Army claimed to maintain a self-conscious distance from such scientific controversies of the period as the Darwinian debate, and in practice rejected the notion of a restricting feminine delicacy, Salvationist writing about health frequently reflected the popular physiological theories of the day.¹⁵

Late nineteenth-century Britain was preoccupied with the topic of appropriate relationships between the social classes. In order to hold social anarchy at bay in the increasingly economically polarized late-Victorian cities, reformers, church-men and philanthropists applauded those initiatives believed capable of bridging the gap “between the classes and the masses.” Health workers seemed admirably suited for a role in healing social division without the revolutionary dissolution of class boundaries. The emerging

¹⁵See thesis, chapter 3:137ff.

nursing profession, particularly in its appeal for “ladies” to train as nurses, challenged women with the responsibility that the “higher” social classes had for spiritual influence on the “lower” classes. For example, Jane Shaw Stewart, the first Superintendant General of the post-Crimean female Army nursing service and a colleague of Florence Nightingale, described the nursing vocation as “a coarse, repulsive, servile, noble self-sacrifice, the action and influence of one individual over others, the Christian leaven in the indifferent lump.”¹⁶ Salvation Army leadership in the last two decades of the century shared this belief that nurses and slum sisters could help the movement go “lower”: that nurses had a vital role to play in softening the cultural soil for the reception of the gospel.

The scholarly literature on late-Victorian Britain has been described as an insistent discursive tide. In a thesis of this nature, insights from multiple sub-disciplines of historical study merge; the history of medicine, British social history, women’s studies, denominational history, labour history. This is of course secondary to an immense primary literature of what is termed “social spectatorship”; the literary and journalistic exposés of the plight of the labouring classes which riveted a politically uneasy late-nineteenth-century public. The filtering of knowledge of working class subjectivity through middle-class categories of analysis has posed a particular challenge to social historians. Francoise Barret-Ducrocq, in her brilliant study of sexuality and desire among working-class men and women in nineteenth-century London, describes her work as a

¹⁶Jane Shaw Stewart, cited in Anne Summers, “Victorian Ladies and Nursing Reform,” Victorian Values: Personalities and Perspectives in Nineteenth Century Society, Gordon Marsden, ed. (London and New York: Longman, 1990), 129. Stewart assured prospective nurses that their social standing would be preserved inviolate, despite the required contact with the poor. “The real dignity of a lady is a very high and unassailable thing, which silently encompasses her from her birth to her grave.”

foray into a world “made opaque by poverty, wordlessness and a crucial penury of first hand documents.”¹⁷ In the study of The Salvation Army this opacity has been penetrated by two exceptional doctoral dissertations. In the aforementioned work of Pamela Walker, the historian has compiled biographical material on 549 women and 609 men who held office within The Salvation Army in Britain, or its antecedent organization, The Christian Mission, and used this extensive archival collection to develop a class and gender analysis of the role of religion within urban working-class communities at late century.¹⁸

A critical source for Ann Rowell Higginbotham’s thesis, “The Unmarried Mother and Her Child in Victorian London, 1834-1914,” are the extant case record books kept by the Women’s Social Services covering the years 1886-1888, and the years after 1895.

Higginbotham’s use of this documentation has made possible a tentative social profile of the women using the Army’s homes in the 1880s and 1890s and has revealed much about the values and attitudes to “fallen women” of the Officers engaged in rescue work.¹⁹ But, other than a vast hagiographic concentration on the Booth family, little attention has been paid to the religious subjectivity of those middle-class Salvationists who assumed leadership responsibilities and “rescued” the movement from sustained marginalization.²⁰

¹⁷Francoise Barret-Ducrocq, *L'Amour sous Victoria* (Paris: Plon, 1989), 3.

¹⁸Walker, “Pulling the Devil’s Kingdom Down.”

¹⁹Ann Rowell Higginbotham, “The Unmarried Mother and her Child in Victorian London, 1834-1914” (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1985).

²⁰Two weeks prior to the deposit of this thesis, I received from Harvard University Press, Diane Winston’s just published and highly engaging study, *Red Hot and Righteous: The Urban Religion of The Salvation Army*. Winston’s work, although focused on the work of The Salvation Army in the United States and its interaction with American commercial culture, takes up a number of the themes explored in this thesis: The Salvation Army’s thoroughgoing pragmatism, the vocational opportunities the denomination opened up to those middle- and upper-class women “both religious and adventuresome,” and the way in which the Army and the “era’s ideology had strong affinities.” 8.

Given that discussions of “method” are ambiguously regarded by historians, the goal of this study is a modest one: to demonstrate a fidelity to the available sources pertinent to the questions raised by the project, and to take seriously what nineteenth-century Salvation Army missionaries had to say about their personal religious consciousness. Roy Porter’s seminal work, A Social History of Madness, offers a particularly lucid example of a historical approach which rejects the artifice of psychobiography, favouring instead a careful attention to autobiographical writing in order to “simply and quite literally see what they (the historical subjects) had to say.”²¹

While it is recognized that an emphasis on either a movement’s “Great Personalities” or its “Grand Ideas” is less than historically fashionable, it is impossible to divorce an understanding of the spirituality of The Salvation Army from an awareness of the lives and personalities of William and Catherine Booth. Both of them were convinced Methodists who chafed under organizational constraint. Both were autocrats. Both regarded themselves as divinely destined for prominent public ministries. But the spirituality of the “Army” they inspired reflected their dispositional differences as vividly as their commonalities. “Salvationism” - the term by which the spirit or ethos of the movement came to be known, was a religious attitude which combined and embodied William’s practical, street-smart whimsy and Catherine’s intense self-scrutiny. It allowed for the imaginative and playful while relentlessly challenging its adherents to the hard and

²¹Roy Porter, A Social History of Madness (London: Phoenix, 1996).

the holy. In its hybrid ambiguity it was a spirituality which intrigued and enraged a late-Victorian public.

Both William Booth and Catherine Mumford were born in 1829: Catherine on January 17 at Ashbourne, Derbyshire, and William on April 10 in Nottingham. Although baptized in the Church of England, William was attracted to the Methodists in his mid-teens and commenced a lay preaching ministry shortly thereafter. Married in 1855, William was ordained to the Methodist ministry on May 27, 1858, but resigned three years later from the Gateshead circuit in a dispute with the General conference over his conviction that he was “called” to the work of itinerant evangelization. It was during the time that William was the incumbent at Gateshead that Catherine commenced her own public preaching ministry: the congregation, having heard her speak, asked her to substitute during the months that her husband was recovering from a health breakdown at a hydro in Derbyshire. Throughout her life, Catherine remained an uncompromising advocate for what she regarded as woman’s Biblical right and responsibility to preach.²² In July 1865, after five years of independent revivalism throughout England and Wales, William commenced an evangelistic work among the poor in London’s East End. This, he claimed, represented for him the discovery of personal “destiny.” The Christian Revival Association he organized became The Christian Mission, and then, in 1878, reflecting the

²²In 1859 Catherine Booth anonymously published a spirited defence of the ministry of the American Holiness teacher, Phoebe Palmer. It was entitled Female Teaching: or the Rev. A. A. Rees versus Mrs. Palmer, Being a Reply to a Pamphlet by the Above Named Gentleman of the Sunderland Revival. See Pamela Walker, Pulling the Devil's Kingdom Down for an insightful analysis of this critical Salvation Army document. Almost twenty years before the formal constitution of The Salvation Army, this tract articulated the position it would adopt with respect to the ministries of women.

militarism of both the mission's approach and structure, it was renamed and reconstituted as The Salvation Army.

Between 1856 and 1868 Catherine and William Booth became the parents of eight children. From a very early age, the children shared in the evangelistic work of The Christian Mission and The Salvation Army, and were entrusted with significant leadership responsibilities.

In the first chapter of this thesis I discuss the "heroic" spirituality of The Salvation Army with its emphasis on self-sacrifice, risk taking and evangelical urgency. Additionally, chapter one looks at the relationship between the Army and the Faith Healing or "Divine Cure" movement which galvanized attention in those denominations associated with the "holiness tradition" throughout the 1880s.

Chapter two considers the way in which the Booth family promoted for personal and corporate benefit the sectarian healing systems of hydrotherapy and homeopathy, while the third chapter examines the role of vegetarianism in denominational practice, particularly highlighting the manner in which early Salvationists applied popular physiological understanding to the care and treatment of alcoholism.

Chapter four explores both The Salvation Army's attitude to an ever-widening flood of late-Victorian philanthropy and the opportunities for ministry the Army's own "social

schemes” presented to women of the middle and upper classes characteristically attracted to the denomination by exposure to the Booth women’s vocational independence. Finally, the thesis examines the role played and the cultural legitimacy secured by health professionals in Salvation Army mission strategy: nurses, midwives and physicians.

The primary source material for this thesis has been retrieved from the archives of The Salvation Army International Headquarters, London, England; from the manuscript collection housed at The British Library, and from the files pertaining to Smedley’s Hydropathic Establishment held at the Derbyshire County Record Office, Matlock, England.

CHAPTER ONE

Heroic Spirituality: No War Without Wounds

Who wants in the hospital a man too tender to probe the wound, too “merciful” to amputate the mortifying limb, too “loving” to say with firmness, “Do this, bear this, or die”? Away with such a sentimental surgeon, you would cry; send him to pick rose leaves.¹

During the last two decades of the nineteenth century The Salvation Army faced sustained criticism from the secular press and disaffected former mission workers over its seeming disregard for the temporal welfare of its active membership. Critics sought to expose what they perceived as pervasive ideological contradictions within the rapidly consolidating revivalist Movement’s understanding of optimal human well-being. The Army was accused of indifference to the physical needs, bodily limitations, and living conditions of a membership drawn predominantly from the working class. Here, critics asserted, was a spiritual fighting force which shot its wounded. How could The Army reconcile its advocacy on behalf of the urban poor with the expectation that its clergy adopt a lifestyle of severe, frequently physically debilitating poverty? Why, they asked, would Salvationist leaders promote and popularize elements of the health reform movement influencing Victorian culture - hydrotherapy, homeopathy, and vegetarianism - while simultaneously applauding the self-abnegating fervour of those who had “given health away to Christ?”

¹Catherine Booth, “Sham Compassion and the Dying Love of Christ,” Popular Christianity, Lecture III. (1887: reprint, Atlanta: The Salvation Army, 1986): 67.

What these critics failed to reckon with was the singlemindedness of intention in the organization under scrutiny. Driven by triumphalist, postmillennial expectations, these 19th century missionaries regarded themselves as shock troops in a winable war for the souls of men. In the heat of spiritual conflict, sacrifices were required and suffering was inevitable. Their consequent approach to health and the human body was pragmatic and instrumental. Physical health, according to a Salvationist understanding, was never an end in itself. It was neither an ethical state of constitutional well-being nor a moral achievement. A perfected body was not the physiological equivalent of a perfected soul. For soldiers, the term which refers to members of The Salvation Army, health was a proximate rather than absolute good, desirable as a source of adequate strength and necessary energy for the fulfilment of duty. An unapologetic commitment to what The Army characterized as “aggressive Christianity” and the comprehensive nature of the utilization of the military metaphor shaped a denominational “code” or “way of being in the world” in which health was defined as the capacity for usefulness or “success in the Salvation War.” Responsiveness to this military imperative meant that not only were neighbourhoods to be wrested from Satan’s occupancy and secular space recaptured and sacralized: the very physical body of the soldier or member was ground to be subdued and conquered. Paradoxically, the demanding nature of such a religious code created the need for a rather uneasy alliance with a series of health reformist regimes which emphasized oppositional values - self-care, balance and moderation of lifestyle.

The formative Salvation Army's vision of health and the methods adopted to promote it illustrate the non-linear dynamism of religious innovation: at times absorbing, at other times resisting the dominant ethos of the broader social body. The Army's summons to self-sacrifice, spiritual aggression, zeal and self-abandonment embodied the Victorian admiration for the heroic, useful and socially constructive life. Simultaneously, Salvationist rhetoric consistently attempted to set up a contrast between the new movement's "vigour" and what it scorned as an anaemic, effete Christian spirituality which had debilitated the nineteenth-century Church. The Army also endeavoured to stress motivational contrasts in its approach to the care and cure of bodies with the values informing a range of late Victorian philanthropic initiatives. Any social scheme or bodily therapeutic which minimized the importance of spiritual health would only insure a "more eternal weight of misery at the cost of a little present relief."²

Not all criticism of the toll exacted on bodily health by the power of The Army's religious passion came from without. In an article about The Salvation Army in The Contemporary Review, late 1898, John Hollins, a professional journalist and lay member or "soldier" of the Protestant movement described The Army as being "wondrously kind to their sinners, but very severe on their saints."³ Hollins contributed his critique twenty years after William Booth's revival mission in the East End of London consolidated its image as a fighting force of militant Christian evangelicalism by changing its name from The Christian Mission to The Salvation Army. In Hollins' article, "The Salvation Army:

²Ibid., 64.

³John Hollins, "The Salvation Army: A Note of Warning," The Contemporary Review 74 (July - December 1898): 442.

A Note of Warning,” the journalist was lamenting the lack of what he described as “really discriminating views” of the denomination. External perspectives, both church and secular, tended to be sharply polarized, resulting in a situation where “enemies batter” and “friends flatter.”⁴ Internally Hollins claimed there was a paucity of open discussion. “... under the domination of the military idea and in the name of loyalty, we appear to have agreed to keep silence concerning the disquieting symptoms and weak places.”⁵ This, for the journalist, was unfortunate, for he argued that the organization was essentially sound, in many ways admirable and well able to withstand constructive observation of potentially problematic trends. Hollins applauded what he described as “much deep spirituality” within the Movement. The Army warranted credit for what he termed a “sensible recognition of women’s right to do what she has capacity for.”⁶ The cosmopolitan nature of expansionism had demonstrated an ability to dissolve racial barriers and had offered to the British working class vastly expanded horizons for work and religious vocation.

John Hollins expressed reservations both about the organizational structure and about the physical cost exacted by The Army’s heroic expectations of its membership. A church system as autocratic as that of The Army, observed Hollins, “tends to summary action and the suppression of legitimate opinion. It will not bend to compromise: it does not admit mistakes.”⁷ Furthermore, the informing value system placed heavy, and at times

⁴Ibid., 437.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., 438.

⁷Ibid., 439.

physically debilitating demands upon mission workers. The ministry practice of Salvation Army clergy or Officers at late century closely approximated that of the Methodist itinerants a century earlier. Hollins claimed that the average length of stay in an appointment or posting was six months. During that time, the Officer would conduct an average of 400 indoor and outdoor services; fifteen per week. Consequently, wrote Hollins, “we seem to be working up to the extreme limit of our powers of endurance; we have no margin of strength; we lack some element of calm; we have scarcely a green place for rest and recuperation.”⁸ Because members in many congregations were poor and because Army policy mandated that creditors be paid before clergy salaries were drawn, Hollins further asserted that “in some the strain is serious and extremely harmful, and occasionally there is a condition of things where the Officers are existing at very little above starvation point.”⁹

Other observers and critics of The Army’s perceived vocational demands were less conciliatory. Samuel Horatio Hodges, a disaffected Officer of Quaker background who resigned in the late 1880s, self-published the tract, General Booth: The Family and The Salvation Army, Showing Its Rise, Progress and Moral And Spiritual Decline in 1890. The fact that Hodges later apologized to William Booth, retracted the contents of the pamphlet, and requested reinstatement in combination with Hodges’ checkered employment career outside of The Salvation Army puts his credibility as objective informant in question. But Hodges, like Hollins, commented on the extreme physical and

⁸Ibid., 442.

⁹Ibid., 443.

emotional demands placed upon Salvationists. The Army, he claimed, was “made by the blood of its martyrs.” He accused the organization of “mistreating some of the best men and women that ever lived; sending them home in a steady stream either backslidden in heart or broken down in body and sometimes broken both body and soul.”¹⁰

The toll exacted on the health of men and women engaged in Salvation Army ministry was not only an issue in The Army’s inaugural decades, at the zenith of its evangelistic fervour and in the cauldron of popular controversy. A critic by the name of John Manson appealed to the English public in the early years of the twentieth century to withhold financial support from the movement. The Army, he claimed, was an “organization which, while professing to raise men with one hand, deliberately and secretly sinks them with the other, and which oppresses both the bodies and minds of those in its service.”¹¹ Robert Brown, M. D., the denomination’s medical advisor in 1903, claimed to have been “astonished and disturbed” by his clinical experience among Army clergy. He wrote, “many very active and enthusiastic Army Officers break down completely within a comparatively short time. This *should* not happen and *would not* happen if they exercised ordinary foresight and care in regulating their daily round of toil.”¹² The physician asserted that Officers “must obey the laws of health, which are the laws of God.” They must learn to reject “zeal without discretion.”¹³

¹⁰S. H. Hodges, General Booth: “The Family” and The Salvation Army, Showing Its Rise, Progress and Moral and Spiritual Decline (Manchester: Printed and Published by the Author, 1890), 41.

¹¹John Manson, The Salvation Army and the Public: a Religious, Social and Financial Study (London: Routledge and Sons, 1906), 151.

¹²Robert Brown, “Ailments of Army Officers,” The Field Officer (July 1903): 267.

¹³Ibid.

Health: Capacity for Useful Endeavour

But for many Salvationists, to live out the demands of the denominational code seemed to call for the rejection of Dr. Brown! Inasmuch as the idealized religious life was a life of holiness, defined as a life of what The Army termed “complete consecration” and absolute self-abandonment to the will and purpose of God, cautionary rebuke like that of the good doctor smacked of capitulation to the spirit of the world. George Scott Railton, influential early Army Commissioner wrote of the movement’s membership,

To all these people home and comfort are as enjoyable as to yourself or any one else; yet they glory in the possibility of a whole life of self-denying activity for Christ, and eagerly look forward to the day when, far from home and old friends, their bodies shall be lowered into a Salvationist Soldier’s grave.¹⁴

The most consistent exponent of The Salvation Army’s ethic of aggressive Christianity was William Booth’s wife, Catherine. Catherine had commenced her own public ministry in 1860 as a replacement preacher for her husband while he was recuperating from a “health breakdown” at a hydro in Derbyshire. As early as 1859 she had written and published a spirited defense of women’s right to preach in reaction to a pamphlet written and circulated by the Rev. Arthur Augustus Rees opposing the ministry of American holiness teacher, Pheobe Palmer.¹⁵ For close to two decades, Catherine preached regularly in the salons, auditoriums and churches of London’s West End, and in the English seaside resort towns. In this way she managed to supplement the family income and offset the financial precariousness of her husband’s work among ‘the poorest’.

¹⁴G. S. Railton, “The Salvation Army Following Christ,” *Popular Christianity* 197.

¹⁵See Pamela Walker, “Pulling the Devil’s Kingdom Down: Gender and Popular Culture in The Salvation Army, 1865-1895” (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers, 1992) for the most comprehensive analysis of Catherine’s position on women’s responsibility within the church.

Catherine Booth possessed a unique ability to rivet the attention of a crowd. In appearance, she was dark and slender with huge expressive eyes. She was renowned for her ability to combine authoritative spiritual presence with the womanly, gentle bearing and demeanour so admired by West End society. Her vast popularity as a preacher is nonetheless surprising in that her rhetoric was consistently combative and polemical vis-à-vis the Victorian churches. She attacked as trivial the aspirations and lifestyle of middle-class English women - locked in what she called "the ordinary, silly, sickly circles of gossip and croquet ... drawing room occupations considered most respectable and satisfactory in the case of young girls..."¹⁶ The failure of the church to affirm and utilize the gifts of women had, according to Catherine, resulted in women's consignment to an irrelevant round of daily tasks, and more tragically, to a dilettante spirituality. She described conventional public worship as "cold, stiff, stilted... Listen to their songs, mostly sung by a few dressed up dolls perched in an organ loft or singing pew ..." ¹⁷

Both William and Catherine Booth claimed that the churches had degenerated into venues of public discourse where congregants gathered to "have their intellects amused, their feelings tickled," and this represented a direct contradiction with an evangelical Christocentrism. "Any profession of Jesus Christ which brings no cross is all nonsense; it is not confession at all."¹⁸ The cross, as the symbol of violent opposition to the Kingdom of

¹⁶Catherine Booth, "Popular Christianity: Its Cowardly Service vs The Real Warfare," Popular Christianity: 107.

¹⁷Ibid., 110.

¹⁸Ibid., 101.

Christ, voluntary and unjustified suffering, and confidence in an ultimate victorious dénouement, was symbolically central in the spirituality of the Army . Converts were not called to comfort, but to a creative existential conflict which could result in both cultural and physical dis-ease. Consequently Catherine and other Army preachers would unapologetically assert, “You cannot fight without wounds of body, heart or soul.”¹⁹

Bruce Haley, in The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture, has identified interweaving discursive threads in the health ideology of the nineteenth century: one strand placed primary emphasis on health as “telicity,” meaning the capacity for responsible action within one’s environment. Haley cites the definition of health offered by Archibald McLaren, founder of the Oxford gymnasium, as representative of this understanding: “that condition of the body and that amount of vital capacity which shall enable each man in his place to pursue his calling, and work on in his working life, with the greatest comfort to himself and usefulness to his fellowman.”²⁰ If one brackets the phrase “with the greatest comfort to himself,” McLaren’s definition was entirely congruent with a Salvationist characterization of a life of holiness. Holiness was a lived expression of the Divine purpose for human experience. The holy life was a life of Christ-following and Christ-conformity. Pre-eminently, a life of radical identification with Christ was not a life of comfort but of usefulness. Salvation Army Orders and Regulations for Officers made this understanding explicit:

Health means strength to endure hardness, knocking about, coping with exhaustive open-air work and continuous house to house visitation; also to

¹⁹Ibid., 103.

²⁰Bruce Haley, The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), 20.

endure the changeable and severe climates of foreign lands; in other words, to follow the Lord Jesus in manifold labours and self-denying toil. As the ability to endure these hardships means success in the War, health is greatly to be coveted on this account.²¹

The testimonial literature of the 1880s and 1890s consistently stressed the desirability of a life of sacrificial usefulness. The experience of Harriet Field, an Officer writing in The Deliverer, periodical of the Women's Social Services, is representative:

We most cordially agree with Charles Kingsley when he says, "We can become like God only in proportion as we are of use," and however weary the end of the day may find us, we rejoice in spending and being spent in the service of the King of Kings.²²

Commendation for "having spent and been spent" was a frequent element in Army obituaries and prescriptive literature. Memorializing the life of one early Rescue Officer, The Deliverer reported,

Holiness in our late comrade was a divine purpose, which enabled her to do and dare for God; a force which impelled her to think and labour, to "spend and be spent," without stint of time or strength or goods; an exhaustless energy of Spirit, leading her on to the very fullness of desire and glorious achievement.²³

Although Officers may have been motivated by an "exhaustless energy of Spirit," their bodies were less tractable! It is evident from organizational reports and periodical literature that Salvation Army leaders were both aware of the behavioural excesses which a rhetoric of Christian radicalism could prompt and anxious to contain criticism or inferences of fanaticism circulating within the broader public. Characteristically, articles

²¹Orders and Regulations for Field Officers of The Salvation Army by the General. (London: Headquarters of The Salvation Army, 2nd Edition with Supplement, 1888), 38.

²²Harriet Field, "Behind the Office Door," The Deliverer (15 August 1889).

²³"Mrs. Major Cooke As A Rescue Officer," The Deliverer (February 1896).

pertaining to the physical well-being of Salvationists included both commendation for the level of devotion being demonstrated and warnings against incurring public censure for extremism. For example, in December 1879, an article appeared in The Christian Mission Magazine entitled a “General Order Against Starvation.” In this article, the Officer was ordered to inform headquarters of privation or destitution before personal health was jeopardized. Writing on behalf of General Booth, the author stated,

He wished every one to understand that such devotion, however noble, is to be avoided and condemned, especially because it not merely exposes the strength and life of the Officers, which are of unspeakable value, to great risk; but it is likely to bring great discredit upon The Army. It was never intended that those who are faithfully and zealously labouring amidst difficulties should suffer want; but only that full salary should not be drawn and unnecessary expenses incurred ... without the General’s consent.²⁴

Reporting on a meeting conducted by William Booth on the grounds of Smedley’s Hydropathic Establishment, one of the largest centres of alternative medicine in Victorian Britain, care was again taken to emphasize the interest of Army leadership in the well-being of the troops. The War Cry heading declared “The General as a father loves the sick and wounded.”²⁵ Five years earlier, an Army benefactor of Quaker background from Leicester by the name of Lawrence had donated a ten room house at Matlock Bank, Derbyshire, for use as a place where sick and wearied Officers could recuperate. Described by the 1879 War Cry as “Our Hospital,” it stood adjacent to the famed Victorian hydro. Although the demand for care quickly outstripped the allocated financial resources, in the first five years of operation over 500 Officers received consultation and

²⁴“General Order Against Starvation,” The Christian Mission Magazine 10 (December 1878): 317.

²⁵The War Cry (8 November 1884).

treatment at Matlock courtesy of Smedley's medical director, Dr. Hunter, an allopathically educated convert to hydrotherapeutics. Army write-ups about what were called the Homes of Rest For Sick and Wounded Officers tended to link the need for such institutions with the physical persecution experienced by Officers rather than the more controversial reality of officer fatigue or breakdown from excessive demands.

To the degree that health as a religious concern was codified in The Salvation Army, it was described in utilitarian terms. Officers were encouraged to recognize the role health could play as a recruitment strategy. Healthy people would "create a good impression as to what religion could do for people."²⁶ Health accrued economic advantage to the organization. "A man or woman who has good health can live upon a much smaller income than one who is ailing and sick." Health ensured better troop deployment. "... if these delicate ones were strong and these sick ones were healthy, those engaged in nursing and waiting upon them could be employed in other ways profitable to the kingdom of God."²⁷

But declarations of the Army's priorities remained explicit. In a sermon preached in the summer of 1880, Catherine Booth took as her text Ephesians 5:18, "Be filled with the Spirit." Her sermon provided a succinct summary of her religious views.

The very essence and core of religion is God first, and allegiance and obedience to him first ... if I cannot keep my health and be faithful to Him, then I must sacrifice it ... if I cannot keep my life and be faithful to Him,

²⁶Orders and Regulations for Field Officers, 38.

²⁷Ibid.

must be prepared to lose it, and lay my neck on the block if need be... This is my religion, and I do not know any other.²⁸

Despite the denomination's critics, The Salvation Army was unwilling to acknowledge any contradiction in its rhetorical approach to physical health: bodily well-being, although desirable, was of infinitely less significance than spiritual health. Soldiers were summoned to engagement in a war against sin and the Devil, on the side of a Christ who "flung aside contemptuously the thought that living well in this world was a real benefit."²⁹ For the formative Army, it was not a matter of contradictory values, but of the subordination of a lesser to a greater good.

The Sick Soul

The greatest good was the salvation of the soul. This was the "whole work of Christ ... and not the less true because he also benefited their bodies by healing their diseases and sympathizing with their sorrows."³⁰

The language of sacrificial self-negation was not unique to The Salvation Army. It infused the rhetoric of a revival of interest in the doctrine of Holiness in the mid-nineteenth century. Unique to The Army was the explicit link drawn between self-sacrifice and Christian militancy. But even here the language was softened by a wider Methodist heritage shared by the Booths and other early evangelists associated with the new movement. The "warfare" in which Salvationists were challenged to engage was

²⁸Catherine Booth, "Filled with the Spirit," Aggressive Christianity (1880).

²⁹Catherine Booth, "Sham Compassion and the Dying Love of Christ," Popular Christianity (1887): 72.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 78.

humanitarian in intention. The evangelistic campaigns of Salvation soldiers were rescue missions, forays for the deliverance of the “wounded” and “captive.” The ultimate goal of the Salvationist revivalism was the proclamation of the possibility of restoration of spiritual health to sin-sick souls. Here, the therapeutic nature of the emerging movement’s pastoral language revealed the depth of its Wesleyan roots.

It is indisputable that the theology and pastoral practice of William and Catherine Booth were profoundly influenced by the writings of the American lawyer Charles Finney and the transatlantic campaigns of James Caughey, and Walter and Phoebe Palmer. The approach to revivalism adopted by these leaders of what has been termed in the North American context the “layman’s revival” or Second Evangelical Awakening, emphasizing as it did the doctrine of sanctification or holy living, profoundly resonated at mid-century with what Melvin Dieter has described as a “widespread desire for a quality of Christian experience more stable than that which frequently accompanied continual revivalism.”³¹

John Kent, in Holding the Fort: Studies in Victorian Revivalism goes so far as to assert that it was the ministry of Phoebe Palmer in England in the late 1850s which constituted the major influence in the development of The Salvation Army’s formulation of the doctrine of holiness. Obviously, there were affinities between the Booths and the Palmers in the practice of Christian ministry. The way in which the Palmers engaged in itinerant

³¹Melvin Dieter in “Wesleyan Holiness Aspects of Pentecostal Origins: As Mediated through the Nineteenth-Century Holiness Revival,” in Vinson Synan, ed. Aspects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Origins (Plainfield, New Jersey: Logos International, 1975), 61.

revivalism as a married “team” provided a helpful model of complementary ministry for William and Catherine Booth. But Kent argues that the Palmers’ influence was also theological: that the accounts of the Booths’ personal experiences of sanctification in the early 1860s represent a precise restatement of the “altar theology” of the American teacher and evangelist. Phoebe Palmer explained the experience of entering into sanctification as a formulaic progression through the stages of conviction or admission of need, renunciation of all known evil, consecration, in which the life was placed on the “altar” in self-abandonment and a culminating faith in the Biblical witness that such a sacrifice was received. Kent contends that William and Catherine’s experiential testimonies can be read as a striking “description of an exercise in Phoebe Palmer’s spiritual discipline.”³² He regards any direct influence of John Wesley upon the holiness teaching of The Salvation Army as remote and secondary.

However, both William and Catherine claimed a thorough-going commitment to what they regarded as classical Methodism. William described his youthful religious orientation as a lay street preacher in Nottingham,

I worshipped everything that bore the name of Methodist. To me there was one God, and John Wesley was his prophet. I had devoured the story of his life. No human compositions seemed to me comparable to his writings, and to the hymns of his brother Charles, and all that was wanted, in my estimation, for the salvation of the world was the faithful carrying into practice of the letter and spirit of his instructions.³³

³² John Kent, Holding the Fort: Studies in Victorian Revivalism (London: Epworth Press, 1978), 327. See Booth-Tucker, The Life of Catherine Booth vol. 1:273 for Catherine’s account of “entering into the experience of sanctification.”

³³ F. de L. Booth-Tucker, The Life of Catherine Booth vol.1: 52.

Catherine similarly laid considerable emphasis upon her Methodist formation. She described herself as having been “nursed and cradled in Methodism,” loving it “with a love which has altogether gone out of fashion among Protestants for their church.”³⁴

What distressed her was what she perceived as Methodism’s defection from the disciplined lifestyle preached and cultivated by the Wesley brothers.

At the same time I was dissatisfied with the formality, worldliness and defection from what I conceived Methodism ought to be, judging from its early literature and biographies as well as from Wesley’s own writing and his brother’s hymns.³⁵

It does seem that this youthful attraction and attention to the primary texts of the Methodist tradition resulted in both William and Catherine adopting a soteriological language which demonstrated close affinity with the writings of John Wesley. Wesley, perennially fascinated both theoretically and practically by the practice of medicine or “Physic,” frequently described the salvation event in the language of remedy and redemptive cure. Salvation effected a healing and restoration with implications for the entire created order. Wesley described sin as a disease, “a disease with terrifying symptoms: pride, wilfulness, self-deception, blindness and a vast array of other disordered tempers.”³⁶ To deal with such a universal plague, “the Great Physician of souls applies medicines to heal the sickness; to restore human nature totally corrupted in all its faculties.”³⁷

³⁴Ibid., 48.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶E. Brooks Holifield, Health and Medicine in the Methodist Tradition (New York: Crossroad, 1986), 15.

³⁷John Wesley, “Original Sin,” Works 1:398. See also, by way of example, “The Fall of Man,” Sermon lvii, The Works of John Wesley Vol. vi. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958), 223. “But can the Creator despise the works of his own hands? Surely that is impossible! Hath he not then, seeing he alone is able, provided a remedy for all these evils? Here is a remedy for all our diseases, all the corruption of our nature.”

A similar emphasis permeated the preaching and writing of the Booths. The events of salvation and sanctification were more than legal or situational transactions. They were occasions of profound, transformative healing.

It is not a scheme of salvation merely - it is a scheme of restoration. He proposes to restore me - brain, heart, soul, spirit, body, every fibre of my nature: to restore me perfectly, to conform me wholly to the image of His Son.³⁸

Catherine maintained that the cure of souls was frequently rendered ineffective and superficial by a premature focus on spiritual solutions in the absence of sufficient and careful pastoral diagnosis. In the sermon "Assurance of Salvation," Catherine described an interaction she had with a woman at the conclusion of one of Dwight L. Moody's missions in London. Moody had preached a sermon entitled "The Cities of Refuge." According to Catherine, he had eloquently shown "how the soul who desired to be saved had nothing to do, and nothing to suffer, but only to run into the Cities of Refuge and be saved - a beautiful sermon for convicted sinners."³⁹ Moody's emphasis on the gratuitous nature of grace and his pandenominational essentialism was rhetorically expressed through the evangelist's encouragement of audiences to "only believe" and be saved. The woman who requested Mrs. Booth's assistance in Moody's counselling room claimed to "believe" but also to know that she was not, in fact, in a state of salvation. It was this pastoral dilemma, often accentuated in the immediacy of revivalistic approaches to evangelization that the early Army believed it could address through a therapeutic

³⁸Catherine Booth. "Holiness IV" Godliness: Addresses on Holiness, Exeter Hall, 1881, 165.

³⁹Catherine Booth, "Assurance of Salvation," Aggressive Christianity, 70.

Wesleyanism. Catherine wanted to revive the “plain, cutting, personal dealing”⁴⁰ which had characterized the Methodist class meeting to counter those liberalizing trends in late nineteenth-century Protestantism which had virtually eliminated “all serious soul need.”⁴¹

In A. G. Schneider’s monograph “The Ritual of Happy Dying Among Early American Methodists,” the traditional Methodist class meeting is described as “a peculiarly intense form of quasi-public self-revelation and shared self-scrutiny.”⁴² The ideal “class” was composed of twelve to fifteen members, who met together weekly. The role of the class leader was both to individually question those in attendance as to the current state of their souls and to facilitate a process of corporate guidance and formation. Prolonged neglect of attendance at class was grounds for dismissal, thus the pastoral group functioned as a “disciplinary hedge around the church.”⁴³

As a young woman, Catherine Booth had found her class experience less than ideal, but she retained a vision for the possibility these groups held as a method of spiritual formation. For five years she had been a member of a class in the Wesleyan Church, Brixton. It was conducted by a circuit minister’s wife by the name of Mrs. Keary. Catherine maintained that despite her good intentions this woman had proved “unfaithful to her duty and opportunities.” The pastoral exhortation within the group had focused on spiritual generalities and vague assurances of comfort. Furthermore, Catherine was

⁴⁰Catherine Booth, “Sham Compassion and the Dying love of Christ,” Popular Christianity (London: IHQ, 1887; reprint Atlanta: The Salvation Army, 1986): 74.

⁴¹Ibid., 58.

⁴²A. G. Schneider, “The Ritual of Happy Dying Among Early American Methodists,” Church History (September 1987): 355.

⁴³Ibid., 356.

dismayed by the fact that although the teacher's personal piety and commitment to the church seemed indisputable, her daughter was "allowed to follow the fashions of the world."⁴⁴ She mused,

There can be no doubt that the class meeting, as originally intended by Wesley, was an excellent arrangement, but the mere asking of empty questions as to how a person is getting on, and the leaving them to answer by the platitudes usual on such occasions, is to daub them with untempered mortar, and to lead them forward in the way of hollow profession and uncertainty. Pointed questions should be put: Have you enjoyed private prayer during the week? How many have you spoken to about their souls? Have you practiced any self-denial in order to extend the Kingdom of Christ?⁴⁵

Catherine Booth habitually made the role of the pastor in the care of souls analogous with the role of the physician in the care of bodies. She asserted, "It is of no use coming to a spiritual doctor any more than to a physical doctor if you are not frank; you would only mislead him."⁴⁶ The pastoral need of the woman at D. L. Moody's revival was to be brought to a clear and uncompromising awareness of the seriousness of her unregenerate condition.⁴⁷ Christian revelation was a matter of "the convicting truth as well as the healing truth, the sword as well as the balm: the running in of the Divine knife as well as the pouring in of the Divine oil."⁴⁸

⁴⁴Booth-Tucker, 37.

⁴⁵Ibid., 36.

⁴⁶Catherine Booth, "Assurance of Salvation," 71.

⁴⁷See for example and amplification of this emphasis Catherine Booth, "The Perfect Heart," Godliness (London: IHQ 1881): 96. "People come to us and want to know what they are to do; they feel that they are only half-hearted in God's service; they have neither joy nor power and say, 'What must I do?' We take, as God helps us, the dissecting knife, and try to find out the difficulty ... perhaps the Lord leads us to some sore spot, and we point out the difficulty ..."

⁴⁸Catherine Booth, "Witnessing for Christ," Aggressive Christianity.

Emergency Measures

Medical or therapeutic imagery was used in a more comprehensive manner than as a guide to the personal pastoral intervention of the ministering Salvationist. Images of death and disease were utilized both to stress the urgency of the evangelistic task and to rationalize irregular religious methodologies. Victorians were ruefully familiar with the virulence of cholera.⁴⁹ Catherine's rhetoric played upon this social reality.

If your home were being decimated by the cholera, you would not be very particular about the means you used to stay it, and if anybody came with objections to the roughness of your measures, you would say, 'the people are dying, they are dying' and that would be the end of all argument.⁵⁰

Catherine also used this imagery of existential exigency to negate conventional gender limitations placed on Victorian women. The attitudes and roles assumed by Salvation Army women in the conduct of "spiritual work" were compared to the heroic nursing vision of a reformer like Florence Nightingale.

If your neighbours were sick of some devastating plague and you could go and help them, would not you do it? Would you say, 'I am only a woman and I cannot?' Oh you would say 'Let me go, like Miss Nightingale did to the sick and wounded soldiers. Let me go.' And these are not the bodies, but the souls. They are dying. They are going to an eternal death.⁵¹

In The Varieties of Religious Experience, the psychologist William James argued that religious perspectives were meaningful to a culture to the degree that the soteriological solution matched the sense of spiritual need. James identified two broad approaches to

⁴⁹See thesis, chapter 2:62-63.

⁵⁰Catherine Booth, "The World's Need," Papers on Aggressive Christianity (London: IHQ 1880): 175.

⁵¹Catherine Booth, "Witnessing for Christ", Aggressive Christianity, 141.

Christian spirituality in the late nineteenth century: the first he described as the “religion of healthy mindedness.” He contended that with the strengthening of liberalism,

we now have whole congregations whose preachers, far from magnifying our consciousness of sin, seem devoted rather to making little of it. They ignore or even deny eternal punishment and insist on the dignity rather than the depravity of man. They look at the continual preoccupation of the old-fashioned Christian with the salvation of his soul as something sickly and reprehensible rather than admirable; and a sanguine and ‘muscular’ attitude which to our forefathers would have seemed purely heathen has become in their eyes an ideal element of Christian character.⁵²

Very different from this optimistic world view were spiritualities which emphasized the “sick soul.” According to James, it was this spiritual consciousness which approximated what he termed the “core of the religious problem.

Help! Help! No prophet can claim to bring a final message unless he says things that will have a sound of reality in the ears of victims such as these. But the deliverance must come in as strong a form as the complaint, if it is to take effect; and that seems a reason why the coarser religions, revivalistic, orgiastic, with blood and miracles and supernatural operations may possibly never be displaced. Such constitutions need them too much.⁵³

What the leadership of the early Army deplored was the tendency within “respectable” Victorian culture to equate a need for the “coarser, orgiastic religion” identified by James with the poorer classes. Again it was Catherine Booth who reacted with greatest vehemence to what she described as an array of “cant phrases of modern Christianity” far more rooted in class prejudice than in Biblical behavioural standards. In the sermon, “The Sham Judgement in Contrast with the Great White Throne” she noted the way in

⁵²William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience (New York: MacMillan Publishing, 1961), 87.

⁵³Ibid.139

which the use of common phrases in the discourse of society's "shallow professors"⁵⁴ reinforced class alienation, and contributed to the self-deception of the "respectable." Descriptions of the "criminal classes" condemned the petty street thief while simultaneously disregarding the exploitive business practices of the Victorian industrialist. Collective tongue-clucking around "the brutal tastes of the lower orders" scorned elements of working-class culture such as street pugilism or the penny gaffe, but discreetly failed to address the barbarism of the weekend fox hunts on the country estates of the gentry. Well-meaning philanthropists popularized the plight of "wretched, filthy people breathing an atmosphere of moral pollution." Catherine asserted, "I say there is an atmosphere of moral pollution not a whit less dangerous and far more blameworthy in very different circles."⁵⁵ She scathingly concluded,

Alas, is it not too patent for intelligent contradiction that the most detestable and brutal thing in the judgement of popular Christianity is not brutality, cruelty or injustice, but poverty and vulgarity.⁵⁶

Early Salvationists believed that the source of any revivalist success they experienced could be linked to their studied avoidance of what they described as purely palliative approaches to Christian spirituality. Whether in the East End slums or the West End parlours,

The great secret of the success of The Salvation Army with multitudes of the openly wicked and profane is that we go straight to their consciences, attacking their sins, making no excuse or palliation.⁵⁷

⁵⁴Catherine Booth, "The Sham Judgement in Contrast with the Great White Throne," Popular Christianity (1887): 123.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 131.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 135.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 148.

Divine Healing

Religious attention to the human body gained new impetus with a broad based revival of interest in “faith healing” or “Divine cure” which swept Holiness circles on both sides of the Atlantic from the early 1880s. The diary of Florence Soper Booth includes a candid description of her reaction to a “faith healing meeting” conducted by Major William Pearson at the conclusion of a Majors’ Councils convened at Clapton on February 6, 1885. In the opinion of his wife,⁵⁸ Bramwell Booth had spoken “splendidly” on the subject in the afternoon council session. Florence went on to describe what transpired at the conclusion of the final meeting.

Mrs. Young - W. Fry, Major Cadman, Musgrave Brown, Major Keats came forward - Mrs. Young said she was better, but it seemed to pass off. Major P. brought a little bottle of oil out of his trouser pocket to anoint them. It was all so new that I suppose we were wondering rather than believing. Dear Cadman I shall never forget. He cried and prayed and was anointed, then rising with his eyes shut rose - opened his eyes, looked at the wall and saying ‘no better’ sank on his knees again. This he did four times. Then the General prayed and closed - after the others had been anointed. Musgrave Brown was released from pains in his head.⁵⁹

The dating of Florence Soper Booth’s account of The Salvation Army’s willingness to incorporate the healing ritual of anointing with oil for physical healing during an Officers’ Council meeting is coincident with the year in which the first International Conference on Divine Healing and True Holiness was convened in England. Held at the Agricultural Hall, London June 1-5, 1885, the inter-denominational conference represented an attempt to convene the world leadership of what amounted to a second wave of emphasis within nineteenth-century “Holiness” circles: what W. E. Boardman

⁵⁸Diary of Florence Soper Booth (Tuesday, 3 February 1885)

⁵⁹Ibid., (6 February 1885).

described in “The Call to the International Conference” as the insight “that in God’s thought of full salvation, the body is inseparably connected with the spirit and the soul.”⁶⁰ Over 2,000 delegates from America, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Scotland, France, Italy and Australia were in attendance. The delegate body was largely composed of clergy, “faith healers” and orthodox Christian physicians and medical students anxious to explore “body-soul” interactions “in the light of the Biblical teaching.” The highly publicized June conference was followed up in Britain by a series of smaller faith healing conventions held in Liverpool, Brighton, Blackheath, Newcastle and Edinburgh. Despite the fact that the venue for the International Conference was London, there is no record of formal Salvation Army attendance or participation in this conclave. But there is no way in which a Holiness movement such as the Army could have remained unaffected by the public interest in the subject of faith healing in the 1880s. The press, both religious and secular, provided faith healers in Europe and the Americas with what has been described as “massive publicity ... during the years 1881-85.”⁶¹ While Florence Soper Booth’s comment that within the inner circle of the Army’s leadership “it was all so new that we were wondering rather than believing” would indicate that the topic of divine healing was not a defining characteristic of Salvationist spirituality in 1885, in the mid-1880s Salvation Army periodicals such as The War Cry reflected the wider cultural fascination

⁶⁰W. E. Boardman, “The Call to the International Conference on Divine Healing and True Holiness,” Record of the International Conference on Divine Healing and True Holiness held at the Agricultural Hall, London, June 1-5, 1885. (London: J. Snow and Co. 1885), iv.

⁶¹For the most comprehensive analysis to date of this movement in America see Paul Gale Chappell, The Divine Healing Movement in America (Ph.D. diss., Drew University, Madison New Jersey, 1983), 153ff. The reaction of the British press to the International Conference was highly polarized. A scathing indictment of the event was published that summer in The Contemporary Review (vol. xlviii). The journalist, Walter Moxon, argued that “the faith of the sick is not fair game for the sport of healthy religious enthusiasm.” The entire movement, in his opinion, tended to the “cruel confusion of sickness with sin, of healing with holiness.” The Army shared Moxon’s fear of too facile of an equation of physical suffering with unresolved personal sin.

with the subject, regularly including accounts of healings occurring in meetings conducted by Army Officers.

It is not that prayer for the sick and anointing with oil for healing was in any sense alien to the practice of classical Methodist piety. Physical healing was regarded as a normative if neglected aspect of the faith-filled life. In 1860, Catherine had reminded her husband of the centrality of such petitioning in the life of the church in a letter to him from Gateshead. She wrote,

I shall bear you continually on my heart before the Lord. Do we honour Him enough in the matter of health and sickness? 'Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church and let them pray over him, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up!' Let us pray more about our health.⁶²

Both the East London Evangel and The Christian Mission Magazine regularly included accounts of "precious instances of God's saving power and grace ... given to our sick visitors."⁶³ For example, according to Mary Billups' pastoral report from Whitechapel, 1872,

One day a woman sent to the Hall for someone to go and pray with her. Sister Moore set forth, and found her apparently in a dying state. The doctor had said she could not live through the night, but Jesus our Great Physician can heal both body and soul. Our sister pleaded with and for her, pointing her to the way of salvation. At last she ventured her all on the Saviour and found peace through believing. Not only so, but in answer to prayer God graciously restored her to health again. And now, with renewed strength, she is determined to serve the Lord.⁶⁴

⁶²Letter from Catherine to William from Gateshead, 13 September, 1860 in Booth-Tucker, Life, 263.

⁶³Mary Billups, "A Cure of Body and Soul," The Christian Mission Magazine vol. iv (1872): 28.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*

But it is not until the 1880s that there is any identification of particular Officers with faith healing ministries. The most prominent of the British Salvation Army “healers” was William James Pearson. Born in Derby in 1832 and converted as a child in the Traffic Street Primitive Methodist Chapel, Pearson was another leader in the early Salvation Army who claimed to have been directly influenced by the preaching and holiness teaching of James Caughey. In response to the evangelist’s campaign, Pearson had entered into an experience of sanctification which he described as the realization that by faith he had been granted a “blood-washed heart filled with the Fire of the Holy Ghost.”⁶⁵ In 1874 William Booth, acting on the recommendation of another of his lay preachers, invited him to come to London to work with The Christian Mission where he was quickly promoted to the superintendancy of the Shoreditch circuit.

William Pearson was acknowledged in Salvation Army periodicals as a faith healer, but rarely in isolation from his other, more conventional denominational roles. Memorialized as an Officer “who never shrank from any duty, and died at his post,” Pearson’s healing ministry was carefully contextualized within his less controversial pastoral work as “Field Officer, holiness teacher, and song writer.”

James Opp, in “Faith healing, Victorian Medicine and the Role of the Healing Narrative in North America, 1880-1900” notes that

a consistent theme running through a great majority of the healing narratives was a determination to refrain from all human remedies and drugs. In the divine healing movement, refraining from the use of drugs

⁶⁵“A Christmas Tribute to Our Late Poet,” The War Cry (24 December, 1892).

was an important act as it symbolized one's faith in God rather than human efforts.⁶⁶

Opp's contention can be substantiated in a transatlantic context through the analysis of the cases of divine healing published in the British War Cry. Sufferers were described as having discarded their drugs, and ventured forth without their canes. Brother James Bonny, a miner and soldier of the Camborne Corps suffered for five weeks with "weakness of the body which almost crushed him to the ground." He had consulted with doctors in Camborne and Redruth and paid for medicines which did not seem to be bringing any relief. On the way home from the pharmacy, he met a group of Christian women to whom he "opened his case." With their spiritual guidance and encouragement, Brother Bonny

knelt down and prayed giving thanks ... believing that I was cured; although the pain had not yet gone, I believed I had been healed, and left the bottle of medicine on the table.⁶⁷

Captain Cater, interviewed by a War Cry correspondent in connection with an "outbreak" of twenty to thirty cases of divine healing at the Portland Street Barracks, Sheffield was asked "Would you have the seekers for healing dispense with all human means for effecting the cure?" The Captain responded, "Certainly. They must throw themselves wholly upon God and rely solely on His power for the healing of their body."⁶⁸

⁶⁶ James Opp, "Faith Healing, Victorian Medicine and the Role of the Healing Narrative in North America, 1880-1900." Paper presented to the Canadian Historical Association (30 May, 1998): 16.

⁶⁷ Bill Quintrell, "Marvellous Case of Faith-Healing in Camborne," The War Cry (12 March, 1884): 2.

⁶⁸ "Salvation Healing in Sheffield," The War Cry (11 March, 1885).

However, in the healing testimonies of Salvationists, a willingness to abandon conventional medical therapies was a less prominent theme as a spiritual precondition to successful healing than the willingness to totally dedicate the restored body to the cause of Christ. Army accounts stressed the idea that “the body God Almighty heals He has a right to for his service.”⁶⁹ The testimony of a woman reputedly cured of cancer in Faith Healing meetings conducted by Captain Horskins in Bristol is typical.

My faith is continually rising to God for what He has done for me. I feel that I have received life afresh at his hands, and that this body of mine so wonderfully healed by Him must be doubly His own for service until death.⁷⁰

In 1886 The Salvation Army published the first edition of Orders and Regulations for Field Officers. William Booth explained his desire for such a document in light of what he perceived as the need to preserve “unity and harmony among the people God had given” to the Army.⁷¹ The rapid expansion of operations beyond the city of London was making his own direct supervision impossible. He explained, “as it was evident that they must know my wishes, I was compelled to print such Directions and Rules as I deemed to be necessary.”⁷² Included in this document, intended to convey “the expression in general terms of what a Field Officer of The Salvation Army should be and do”⁷³ was a section entitled “Faith Healing.” It began with a clear definition of what was meant by the term:

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰“Faith Healing in Bristol: Remarkable Testimonies. Deaf and Dumb From Her Birth. A Cancer Sufferer,” The War Cry (16 May, 1885).

⁷¹George S. Railton, General Booth, 232.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid.

By faith healing is to be understood the recovery of persons afflicted with serious diseases by the power of God in answer to faith and prayer without the use of ordinary means such as doctors, medicines and the like.⁷⁴

The discussion in Orders and Regulations represents an oblique use of the Wesleyan quadrilateral for defending the authority of a particular pastoral practice. For Salvationists, rooted in a Methodist tradition, the acceptability of Faith Healing within the church could be established on the basis of a four-fold authority: experience, Scripture, tradition and reason. The section in the O.and R. began by asserting that such a practice was in “perfect harmony with the views of the Army from the beginning” and claimed that numerous instances had occurred in the context of Army meetings and assemblies. Biblically, healing had been associated with the offices of prophet, priest, teacher and apostle. The apostles were commissioned by Christ to preach and teach and heal. Rationally, it was evident that “God has been pleased to heal sickness and disease by the use of appropriate means,” both for the preservation and the restoration of health, and such means should not be disdained but gratefully received.

Consequently, Officers were instructed not to dismiss the practice because of the inevitable exaggerated or unwarranted claims they might encounter. Nor was any Officer at liberty to discourage “the faith for healing in others.”

On the contrary, he should do all he can to urge other people to faith, even if he is wanting himself in this direction... When an Officer has not light on this subject, or does not feel any power in faith healing, then some Sergeant who does should be requested to deal with those seeking healing in this way.⁷⁵

⁷⁴Supplement to Orders and Regulations for Field Officers of The Salvation Army. (London: Headquarters of The Salvation Army, 1889), Part I, Chapter IV, Section 2, 49.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 51.

However, Officers were strongly warned against expounding theological positions which in any way either directly equated sickness with personal sinfulness or implied that the body which was not physically healed indicated “a want of faith” in the petitioner. This was a view which Catherine had refuted in her preaching ministry, a decade before the wide dissemination of the writings of teachers such as A. B. Simpson and Andrew Murray.⁷⁶ Catherine claimed to be concerned because she was “so continually meeting people who will make infirmities sins.”⁷⁷ Her own arguments characteristically hinged on the Biblical passage in which the apostle Paul claimed to “glory in infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” She contended, “If these infirmities had been sins we should have the outrageous anomaly of an Apostle of Jesus Christ glorying in his sins,” suggesting that instead, affliction constituted “a divinely permitted discipline to prevent Paul from falling into sin.”

The Muting of Miracles

The nature of the relationship between godliness, suffering and prayer for divine healing became poignant and immediate for William and Catherine Booth in February of 1888.

At the height of her popularity and influence as a preacher in London, Catherine was

⁷⁶Andrew Murray, considered “the chief and most honoured teacher of the Dutch Reformed Church,” probably made the doctrine Catherine was contending most explicit. In Murray’s first major work on divine healing, Jesus the Physician of the Sick (Cape Town: 1884) he formulated a series of rules or conditions for healing. One required acknowledgement was that the one to be healed “understand that sickness is a chastisement on account of sin.” For the next four decades A. B. Simpson, founder of the Christian Missionary Alliance, would refine this theological concept, intrinsically linking it with an understanding of the received benefits of the atonement. The mature Simpson would assert, “Having borne in his body what our body deserves to bear, why should we bear it too? Why should you be stung by the devil’s fangs when He was stung to death for you? And so, our Lord is revealed to us as the atonement for sickness, as the One who took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses, and with his stripes we are healed. The Lord for the Body (New York: Christian Alliance Publishing Co., 1925), 29.

⁷⁷Catherine Booth, “Holiness,” Papers on Godliness (1881): 144.

diagnosed with breast cancer. She was advised by both the respected surgeon Sir James Paget and a second surgeon, Mr. Jonathan Hutchinson, of the need for immediate and radical surgery. Catherine vehemently resisted this approach to the management of the disease. Booth- Tucker claims that this was on the basis of her contention that “in all her long experience she had never met one case in which the use of the knife had not apparently increased the suffering of the patient, even where life may have been prolonged for a few months.”⁷⁸ After what they described as “anxious and careful inquiries as to the results of operation in cases of cancer” the extended Booth family were themselves convinced of the wisdom of Catherine’s decision. But the extensive accounts in Salvation Army historiography of Catherine’s suffering with the disease until her death in October of 1890 are as “harrowing” as was the reputed effect upon her adoring husband and family. Catherine was averse to the use of narcotics for pain management. She feared both the blunting of her intellectual capacities and the possible deadening of her spiritual responsiveness through any dependence on “morphia.” To refuse it was her way of remaining available for the ongoing nurture of her husband and the still chaotic denomination they had birthed together. Throughout the years of Catherine’s illness, William’s diary graphically exposed the depth of his wife’s physical trauma and his own psychological torment.

A large part of the breast has fallen off, and Carr has cut it away and left the gaping wound which is still one mass of cancer.

⁷⁸F.de.L. Booth-Tucker, The Life of Catherine Booth, 414. Catherine’s reservations were not unfounded. Roy Porter documents a study of the outcomes of radical mastectomies performed on the cancer unit, the Middlesex Hospital, London in 1879. Of 143 women who underwent surgery, only 35 were described as surviving for “any length of time.” Roy Porter, The Greatest Benefit to Mankind (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1997), 603.

My darling had a night of agony. When I went into her room at 2 a.m. she had not closed her eyes. The breast was in an awful condition. They were endeavouring to staunch a fresh haemorrhage. Everything was saturated with the blood.

I am 60 years old, and for the first time during all these long years, so far as memory serves me, has God, in infinite mercy, allowed me to have any sorrow that I could not cast on Him.⁷⁹

During this period, Army periodicals such as The War Cry published a terse appeal from William, requesting any information on cancer treatments which subscribers might have tried and found helpful. Catherine herself sought out doctors prepared to experiment with what was known as the Mattei treatment, a therapy she had read about in the British Journal of Medicine and which she claimed was of some value in controlling her pain.⁸⁰

How much of the diminished emphasis on faith healing within Army periodicals by the late 1880s was linked with the very public terminal illness of the “Army Mother” is difficult to ascertain. The biography written by her son-in-law, Booth- Tucker alleges that Catherine Booth conveyed a message to her intimate colleague and “comrade in arms,” George Scott Railton for his brother who had obviously been in correspondence with the family.

Give my love to your brother Launcelot. Tell him I did not underestimate the faith healing question. I think I understand it now. God did not want the Army to be taken up with it. That was not his way. He wanted them to stick to the saving of souls, and to leave the bodies to Him, only doing them all the good we can.⁸¹

⁷⁹Harold Begbie, William Booth: Founder of The Salvation Army Vol.II (London: MacMillan and Co., 1926), 58,59.

⁸⁰F. de L. Booth Tucker, The Life of Catherine Booth, vol. 2, 414.

⁸¹Letter: Catherine Booth to Launcelot Railton, cited in Booth-Tucker, The Life of Catherine Booth vol.2, 450.

The comment is cryptic. Three years earlier, it had appeared that The Salvation Army, if not “taken up with it,” was at least open to healing manifestations in the meetings, and anxious to publicize representative “cases.” However, from the last years of the 1880s until a revitalization of concern during the years of the First World War few narratives of healing appeared in the Army’s periodical literature.

At the turn of the century it was another “crisis” within the Booth extended family which focused denominational attention on the subject of divine healing. The controversy surrounded the resignation from Salvation Army Officership of William Booth’s eldest daughter Kate, who had pioneered the work of the Army on the Continent, and her husband Arthur.⁸² The standard official historical explanation for their resignation and subsequent estrangement from The Salvation Army is that in 1901 Arthur “became obsessed by a fanatical conviction that John Alexander Dowie of ‘Zion City’ in the United States of America was another Elijah, the Forerunner of the Second Coming of Christ... Although Catherine did not share her husband’s views, she felt duty bound to stand by him.”⁸³

It was an explanation of motive which Arthur Booth-Clibborn deeply resented. He later acknowledged that it was true that Kate Booth had always disliked and distrusted the prominent faith healer and had accompanied him to the Zion community in Illinois only

⁸²Harold Begbie claims that the faith healing controversy erupted as early as 1892. In response to the news that “one of his children was caught up in an extreme view of faith healing, William is attested to have stated, “I can’t have doctrinal differences interfering with the work... Go and keep the regulations and save the people; keep your difficulties to yourselves.” William Booth, 85.

⁸³Arch Wiggins, The History of The Salvation Army vol. 4 1886-1904 (Edinburgh. Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1964), 367.

with the deepest reservations. But the Booth-Clibborns' dissatisfaction with decisions being made within The Salvation Army at late century were wide-ranging and complex.⁸⁴ In Arthur's opinion, The Army's official explanation of their resignation reduced "the whole of our protest and appeal of years to the question of one man, and the whole of our correspondence to one moment."⁸⁵ For example, the Booth-Clibborns were opposed to the introduction of a requirement that candidates for Salvation Army Officership take a vow of obedience to the General and of loyalty to The Salvation Army until death. Arthur, from a firm Quaker background, asserted that "The perpetual vow to an institution or a nation always has something in it of idolatry."⁸⁶ Both of the Booth-Clibborns were pacifists, and in the build-up to the Boer War, Arthur resented the fact that he was forbidden by The Salvation Army to publish material on Christian pacifism which the Army deemed to be of a "political" nature.

On Christmas Day, 1900, Arthur crafted an appeal to William Booth requesting the liberty to "preach healing, pacifism and the Second Coming of Christ."⁸⁷ Neither William Booth or Bramwell were prepared to acquiesce to Arthur's request, reasserting the

⁸⁴Much remains historically unexplored about the complex internal dynamics of the Booth-Clibborn marriage itself. For example, on Kate and Arthur's wedding day, February 8, 1887, Florence Booth wrote, "Darling Katie's wedding day - one of the most miserable days I ever remember... Katie is most terribly troubled, crying out that she has made a mistake! It is heartbreaking for us all." Fifty-five years later, Kate recollected in a letter to her younger sister Evangeline, "Oh, if I had only years ago trusted my Father with my secret unhappy life - what a deliverance for me! I dragged on thinking Arthur would change - I was wrong. I could have saved him in a sense by a decided action, saying I would not follow him into Zion and Dowie. And I was blamed by my Father - why, oh why was I such a fool?" 7: 4: 42 Booth Clibborn collection (uncatalogued, International Heritage Centre). A fuller understanding of the personalities and experience of both Arthur and Kate may emerge with the cataloguing and opening to scholars of an extensive collection of material donated to The Salvation Army by the Booth-Clibborn family.

⁸⁵Arthur Booth Clibborn, cited in Carolyn Scott, *The Heavenly Witch* (London: Hamish), 197.

⁸⁶*Ibid.*, 189.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 192.

denominational position that such matters were both secondary to the Army's evangelistic focus and potentially divisive. It was in the aftermath of this reaction that Arthur began to actively pursue a ministerial partnership of some nature with Dr. Dowie.

Paul Chappell claims that "In popularity and outreach, John Alexander Dowie was to the divine healing movement at the end of the century what Oral Roberts has been to the movement since the Second World War."⁸⁸ Dowie has been called "the father of healing revivalism"; its most "vocal and radical" representative. Donald Gee, scholar of British Pentecostalism, claimed that "it was in connection with the renowned Dr. Dowie that Divine Healing received its greatest notoriety at that time."⁸⁹

Although historically associated with the American healing revival and the founding of The Christian Catholic Church in 1896, John Alexander Dowie was born in Edinburgh in 1847. In 1860, he moved with his parents to Adelaide, South Australia, and, although he returned to Edinburgh to attend University, he was ordained in 1870 in the Alma, Australia Congregational Church. Twelve years later he established what became a large independent congregation in Melbourne. Dowie repeatedly related the story of his own "conversion" to divine healing. He had been called to the home of a dying daughter of a Moravian missionary.

The doctor, a good Christian man, was quietly walking up and down the room, sharing the mother's pain and grief. Presently he stood by my side and said, "Sir, are not God's ways mysterious?" Instantly, the sword was flashing in my hand - the Spirit's sword, the Word of God. "God's way!" I said, pointing to the scene of conflict, "How dare you, Dr. K.- call that

⁸⁸Paul Gale Chappell, The Divine Healing Movement in America, 285. For the most extensive analysis of Dowie, contemporaneous with his movement, see Rolvix Harlan, John Alexander Dowie and the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church (Evansville, Wisconsin: Robert Antes, 1906).

⁸⁹cited in Chappell, 285.

God's way of bringing his children home from earth to heaven? No sir, that is the Devil's work, and it is time we call on Him who came to 'destroy the work of the Devil' to slay that deadly foul destroyer, and to save the children."⁹⁰

Despite the intensity of Dowie's focus on divine healing, and his declared intention to eventually establish a Christian theocracy or model society under the rule of God, the constitution drawn up for the establishment of the Christian Catholic Church was remarkably nonsectarian. Potential members were required to "recognize the infallible inspiration and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures as the rule of faith and practice" and to "know in their hearts that they have truly repented and are truly trusting Christ ... all other matters are matters for opinion."⁹¹ Dr. Dowie claimed that his church was endowed with the nine gifts of the Holy Ghost, "gifts" which would become classical indicators of Pentecostal spirituality in the twentieth century: the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers kinds of tongues and interpretation of tongues.

It is easy to see why Booth-Clibborn would have seen and been attracted by affinities between the revivalism of Dr. Dowie in the late 1890s and that of William Booth two decades earlier. Dowie contended that the denomination he founded was needed because existing denominations did not readily accept converts from his campaigns into their church fellowships. This he blamed on narrow ecclesiastical resistance to new manifestations of the Spirit in their midst. Like the Booths, Dowie was a strong supporter of the temperance movement. He had been active in the social reform party in Sydney,

⁹⁰Rolvix Harlan, John Alexander Dowie and the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church, 30,31.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, 36.

Australia in the 1870s and promoted a range of philanthropic activities in connection with his revivalism. Like William Booth, he resisted accusations of sectarianism, insisting that his single aim was to expose as many people as possible to the truths of “primitive Christianity.”

Chappell’s study, focused as it is upon the theological roots of divine healing spirituality does not address the reputed “dark side” of J. A. Dowie’s eventual Zion City experiment. It would seem that Arthur Booth-Clibborn’s dread of what he perceived as a strengthening autocracy within The Salvation Army was more than matched in the community forty miles north of Chicago which he and Kate entered on July 12, 1902. Kate’s biographer claims that before they had been in Zion City a week, Kate had twice publicly defied the charismatic Dowie: the only one in a crowd of thousands refusing to rise for a testimony of their faith in the healer “as a prophet and forerunner of Christ.” Although the Booth-Clibborns, at Kate’s pleading, only lived in Zion City for four months, Arthur remained connected with Dowie’s ministry until he was dismissed in 1905. The final severing of relationship occurred, at least in part, because of Arthur’s ultimate defiance of Dowie’s authority in being willing to be seen by an orthodox physician for a severe case of gangrene which had developed in a leg injury received while street preaching in Paris. Kate’s biographer, Carolyn Scott, explains.

To call a doctor would have been to violate the strictest principle of the Catholic Church in Zion. Kate cabled Dowie, who refused to permit any medical aid whatever. After praying for a long time and watching Arthur grow steadily weaker until he was unable to speak to her, she called in a man she had known for years, one of the most influential doctors in Paris,

who said there was little that could be done because it had been left too late.⁹²

In a desperate attempt to avoid amputation, Arthur's leg was operated on four times without charge by Paris surgeons who had admired the Booth-Clibborns' pioneering work with The Salvation Army in Paris. He was bedridden for the next sixteen months, never fully recovering his former strength.

Kate and Arthur Booth-Clibborns' association with J. A. Dowie was dramatic and highly visible in revivalist circles at the turn of the century. The Salvation Army chose to explain the Booth-Clibborns' resignation by highlighting the issue of faith healing. Consequently, the Army restated its theological position on the subject in a memorandum of 1902.⁹³ In fact, faith healing was something of a red herring in the Booth-Clibborn story. Kate herself was explicit in a letter written to Officers and friends in her former command on the Continent and in England. "My leaving the Army had nothing whatever to do with Dr. Dowie."⁹⁴

Faith healing was simply one of an array of issues and the opportunity for a continued ministry within Dowie's organization the final catalyst. More essentially, the Booth-Clibborns opposed what they regarded as a deepening conservatism within The Salvation Army: they feared that the achievement of social respectability was blunting the prophetic witness of its earliest decades. Arthur wrote,

⁹²Carolyn Scott, *The Heavenly Witch*, 209.

⁹³William Booth, *Faith Healing: A Memorandum specially written for Salvation Army Officers* (London: International Headquarters, 1902).

⁹⁴*Ibid.*, 199.

I have realized that the more the Army comes into favour with the unconverted wealthy, and with statesmen and politicians, the conservatism which this entails makes it very difficult if not impossible for it to preach the whole gospel... Those who seek to replace the rigidity of the machine with the flexibility of life must necessarily sooner or later arrive at being considered by heads of the Army as holding “false and dangerous error.”⁹⁵

Even before the Booth-Clibborn debacle at the turn of the century it was evident that The Salvation Army was shifting its emphasis from supernatural to natural aspects of physical healing: from cure to care. Orders and Regulations for Soldiers divided its directives in the chapter on “Sickness and Bereavement” into “Healing the Sick” and “Helping the Sick” with the latter topic as the more extensively addressed.⁹⁶

Although it was acknowledged that well-substantiated instances of Divine healing honoured God, confirmed the faith of believers, and could be influential with the unconverted, Salvationists were advised to make use of “all legitimate means of healing” such as medical advice and prescribed medications. Particularly in the cases of children or of adults too ill to make informed decisions regarding their own care, it was deemed imperative to “call in proper medical aid.”⁹⁷

Dare Devil Whimsy

“Heroic spirituality” in The Salvation Army encompassed more than the willingness of its adherents to embrace lives of long-suffering and self-denial. In the arena of religious expression, Army “heroics” included the willingness to play dare devil with convention.

⁹⁵ Arthur Booth Clibborn, letters cited in Carolyn Scott, The Heavenly Witch, 194, 197.

⁹⁶ William Booth, “Sickness and Bereavement,” Orders and Regulations for Soldiers of The Salvation Army (London: International Headquarters, 1898): 157-160.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 158.

It was an approach to a life in the Spirit shot through with whimsy. The Army paraded in the streets, with blaring brass bands, jingling tambourines and colourful flags. Army meetings were earthy, dramatic, and often comic affairs frequently conducted in decrepit theaters or the open air. The religious genius of William Booth lay in his expanding capacity to allow that which in his ecclesiastical conservatism he did not like; to permit what he personally found distasteful. As the years progressed, and his experience broadened, Booth came to an appreciation of the communicative value of the slightly racy. There was nothing like the whiff of scandal to nab attention, whether the audience was a gang of street toughs, the secular Press, or a slightly bored Sunday morning congregation. William Booth was prepared to shock or to titillate if it would help him gain a hearing.

For example, in 1895, he wrote to Bramwell, urging him to encourage his wife Florence to get an update of the work of the Women's Social into print.

Why does she not write a book on 'How our Girls are Damned?' ... or if she does not like swearing in her title, put it blasted, blighted, ruined, only it should be a good expletive!⁹⁸

In his collection of Letters to Salvationists on Love, Marriage and the Home, a 1902 compilation of articles previously published in The Social Gazette and The War Cry, William entitled his article on courtship, "How to Make Love." It was clearly intended as a double entendre. "This letter has, at least, a very interesting heading! I am sure that I

⁹⁸Harold Begbie, William Booth: Founder of The Salvation Army, 96.

think so. But I am a little fearful as to how far I shall be able to meet the flutter of expectation it may raise in the breasts of some of my readers.”⁹⁹

Booth never lost his primary obsession: to communicate. He longed to preach with clarity and soul-convicting power. He considered it to be the task of a lifetime. As a man in his sixties, he jotted in his journal, “But I have not learnt how to preach yet. I am much down on my work today. It is not straight enough or simple enough, and I lack the tenderness that breaks the heart.”¹⁰⁰

The Salvation Army was regularly called before the bar of public opinion to defend its attitude to popular culture. In 1880, the Bishop of the Cathedral in Carlisle preached a stinging indictment of the Army which, at the time, was attracting large crowds in the area. Catherine Booth was preaching in the vicinity and she travelled to Carlisle to deliver a rebuttal. She described her husband’s keen awareness of the “chasm” which existed between the Victorian church and the poor. Emergency situations called for emergency measures. East Londoners, said Catherine,

hated ministers, hated churches, hated chapels, hated religion of all sorts. And then it flashed upon him as an inspiration from heaven, that if they were to be reached, it must be by people of their own class, who would go after them in their own resorts, who would speak to them in a language they understood and reach them by measures suited to their tastes... They have as much right to vulgar ways of expressing themselves as you and I

⁹⁹William Booth, Letters to Salvationists on Love, Marriage and the Home (London: IHQ, 1902), 49. Mariana Valverde has observed that “the language of the Army was a successful combination of old-fashioned religious imagery organized through classical rhetorical tropes with the modern techniques of yellow journalism”. The Age of Light, Soap and Water (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991), 150.

¹⁰⁰Harold Begbie, William Booth, 94.

have to more delicate ways, and if a man would rather go and hear Hallelujah Bob or Salvation Bess than the Rev. So-and-so or the Bishop, what have we to do with it? If a man would rather hear a tune on a fiddle than piped out of an organ, you may pity his taste, but it is his taste; let him have it.¹⁰¹

Tasteless, or tactless, the end justified the means.

To fight The Salvation Army's war against sin, gin and the Devil was to place oneself in the line of fire. This, for early Salvationists, was a reality they were not prepared to blunt. Soldiers would be injured. Suffering was inevitable. But victory for the armies of God seemed assured.

¹⁰¹Booth Tucker, 234, 236.

CHAPTER TWO

Sectarian Systems: The Democratization of Care

Brighton is very full of company. Many a poor invalid is here strolling about in search of that pearl of great price - health. Some, like the fortunate diver, spy the precious gem, and hugging it to their bosoms, return, rejoicing in the possession of real riches. But many, alas, find it not, and return only to bewail their misfortune.

Catherine to her mother, from Brighton, 1847¹

Nowhere were the anxieties of the Victorian age and the pragmatism of The Salvation Army more clearly demonstrated than in the new movement's approach to health management and the treatment of disease. William and Catherine Booth and their extended family responded to trends in domestic and professional medicine in a manner very similar to the approach these early Salvationists adopted to trends in popular theology. What has been described as the Army's "invariable principle of avoiding even the appearance of attacking any other association of religionists, or their ideas and practices"² extended to their attitudes to nineteenth-century movements of health reform or health "culture." The emerging denomination rejected theoretical dogmatism in a desire to avoid controversy. Salvationists rejected the professional monopolization of knowledge - in the case of physicians as surely as in the case of theologians. But while they dissociated themselves from the speculation undergirding these new gospels of health, they experimented with and promoted a range of therapeutic practices which they

¹Catherine Mumford to Sarah Mumford, Booth Papers, Mss.64806, The British Library, London.

²George S. Railton, General Booth (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1912), 39.

believed could be personally or corporately useful. Theirs was a “physical Arminianism” which emphasized the need for self-care, personal responsibility and ethical self-mastery.

The formative Salvation Army’s endorsement of alternate health systems such as hydrotherapy and homoeopathy must be considered in the context of the Booth family’s personal experience of illness, the ever present threat of disease, and the need to somehow moderate or compensate for the Army’s rigidly activist expectations. To medicalize the need for the rest which a Victorian hydro provided was to legitimate it.³

Health in the nineteenth century remained a precious and transitory commodity.

As a newly-converted teenager William Booth embarked on a program of lay evangelism and street preaching in the company of his friend, Will Sansom. Within months, Sansom was dead from consumption. Booth felt the loss bitterly, claiming that in their youthful friendship they “had been like David and Jonathan in the intensity of union ... and fellowship in work for God.”⁴ George Scott Railton, arguably the most influential Officer outside of the Booth family in the first decade of The Salvation Army’s work, was suddenly bereaved of both his parents as a boy of fifteen. Railton’s father was a Methodist minister at Peel, Isle of Man. In late 1864, he and his wife nursed their

³See, for example, Miriam Bailin, The Sickroom in Victorian Fiction (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). The author situates what she terms the Victorian “cult of ill health” within a value system which relentlessly emphasized self discipline, will power and industriousness. Bailin asserts that “Illness authorized the relaxation of the rigidly conceived behavioural code which governed both work and play within the public realm.”

⁴Railton, General Booth, 18.

parishioners through an outbreak of “fever” only to contract it themselves and die within hours of each other while their two sons were home for the Christmas holiday.⁵

As William and Catherine’s love flowered into the discussion of marriage, Catherine sought medical consultation, wanting the doctor’s “considered opinion of my state of health ... and future prospects.”⁶ For Catherine, such a course of action was an essential component of relating to “one’s intended” in good faith.⁷ During the couple’s typically prolonged Victorian betrothal, “Kate,” as Catherine was called by her husband, fretted that her dreams of marriage and family might be shattered through sickness. This had been the experience of her “dear cousin” whose “young man was taken suddenly ill on the Friday ... died on the Tuesday morning”⁸ and was buried the following week on the couple’s intended wedding day.

Catherine, the passionate and infatuated bride, agonized over her husband’s apparent disregard for his physical well-being. Writing to her mother from an early evangelistic campaign in Hunslet in 1856, her descriptions of William’s activities reveal both her pride and apprehension. She believed that her husband’s sermons exhibited “extraordinary power and influence.” She continued,

William was just in his element. But his body is not equal to it, I am sure, and I cannot but feel anxious on this point. ... I see the uncertainty of

⁵Mildred Duff, Commissioner Railton (St. Albans: The Campfield Press, 1920), 16.

⁶Catherine Mumford to William Booth, 13 May 1852, Booth Papers, Mss. 64799, letter H13442-3.

⁷Ibid. Catherine continued, “God knows my sincere desire to act toward you as I would wish you to act toward me!”

⁸F. de L. Booth-Tucker, The Life of Catherine Booth (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton and Kent Co., 1892), 1:43.

health and life and all things which I trust keeps me from being unduly elated by present prosperity.⁹

The following year, as the delighted parents of their first child, William and Catherine attempted to ground their joy in realism by consciously acknowledging to each other their awareness of the fragility of human life, especially during the years of childhood. Writing to his wife about their firstborn, the “little Sunshine,” Bramwell, born March 8, 1856, William advised,

Let us regard him as a loan from Heaven, and ever remember that it may please the Lender at some unexpected season to resume the gift - to call in the loan.¹⁰

Population Health

The seemingly obsessive nature of William and Catherine’s concern for their personal and family health was not without warrant. No one could assume effective medical or therapeutic defense against the onslaught of disease and epidemic which regularly cut a swath through a vulnerable population. Throughout the nineteenth century, one citizen in six in Great Britain was infected with tuberculosis, a disease killing more people each year than all other major infections combined. In one particularly virulent year, tuberculosis, popularly referred to as the “white plague,” claimed 59,000 lives in England and Wales.¹¹ At mid-century, 10,000 were dying annually of whooping cough; another 7,000 of measles. The Victorians recalled with horror “the cholera years” of 1832, 1849

⁹Ibid., 1:166. Three weeks later, Catherine again wrote to her mother, expressing exasperation that William had been preaching for thirteen weeks without rest and describing the fear this created within her. “January 29 William was so poorly and yet exerted himself so much that I could scarce bear it. I often think I am better away, for I picture all sorts of sad scenes in the future, and I feel as though I could not make so great a sacrifice, no, not even for souls.” Ibid., 1:168.

¹⁰Ibid., 1:192.

¹¹James Walvin, Victorian Values (London: Andre Deutsch, 1987): 28.

and 1866. During the 1849 epidemic, a wave of the disease extending from Sunderland in the north of England claimed 30,000 lives.¹²

In 1842, the influential parliamentary Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain was released. The author of the report was Edwin Chadwick who, a decade earlier, as the Secretary to the Poor Law Commission, had spearheaded changes to the Poor Law which strengthened the legislation's ability to restrict eligibility for relief. In the intervening years, confronted with the revised Poor Law's chronic inability to reduce national poverty, Chadwick shifted his emphasis in social policy. Increasingly, he came to assert a link between disease and poverty. Ill health, and not laziness or moral failing, was too often at the root of social squalor and despair. By compiling the statistics and narrative reports provided by the Poor Law medical officers, Chadwick profiled the health of the populace. He shocked the nation by asserting that

the deaths caused during one year in England and Wales by epidemic, endemic and contagious diseases ... amounting to 56,461 ... the effect is as if the whole county of Westmoreland ... or any other equivalent district, were entirely depopulated annually...¹³

The incidence of acute disease was not the only national health problem. Dental screening conducted as late as the 1890s found that of 1,000 board school-children, only 137 children had "sound dentition." Normal vision was exceptional.¹⁴

¹²George S. Railton, Twenty-one Years Salvation Army (London: The Salvation Army, 1886), 37-38. General Booth's early "right hand man," George Scott Railton claimed that William Booth's approach to ministry was profoundly affected by observing the impact of the 1866 cholera outbreak on the residents of East London. "The cholera year, 1866, will never be forgotten by those of us who lived in London at the time ... and the extremity of that East End misery had a great deal to do with many of the early arrangements in connection with the General's work.

¹³Edwin Chadwick, Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain (London: W. Clowes and Sons, 1842; reprint, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1965), 78.

¹⁴Walvin, Victorian Values, 27.

With the emergence in the nineteenth century of the discipline of social statistics came the formal acknowledgement of social class as a critical determinant of population health.

Among the poor, bereavement was both regular and expected. James Walvin writes,

For working people, few things seemed more likely than the loss of a baby or child - a fact which explains the continuing need to insure for death and burial, through Friendly Societies and Burial Clubs. The loss of babies and children, so commonplace among Victorians, is perhaps one of the greatest divides between ourselves and our ancestors.¹⁵

Infant mortality rates among the lower classes not only failed to improve throughout the nineteenth century, but actually worsened. In 1839-40 the national death rate for babies stood at 153 per thousand: by 1899, it was 163 per thousand. An extreme class differential is evidenced in statistics from mid- century Bath. There, one in two babies of the working class died before the age of five: conversely, one in eleven of the middle class.¹⁶

Expectations of Care

Many Victorian citizens lived without ever receiving professional medical attention. In completing the application form or “Candidates’ papers” for training as a Salvation Army Officer, recruits were requested to produce a medical certificate. Adelaide Cox, the 20 year-old daughter of an Anglican vicar commented on her application that this had been dispensed with in her case as she had “never needed or had a doctor.”¹⁷ This was not an

¹⁵Ibid., 26.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Adelaide Cox, “Form of Application for Appointment as an Officer of The Salvation Army - February 1888.” Personnel File at The Salvation Army International Heritage Centre Archives, London, England.

unusual claim. Cox, like the vast majority of people in nineteenth-century Britain, relied in times of illness less upon doctors or hospitals than upon manuals of domestic medicine and traditional folk remedies.

It was also common for people to distrust and avoid the conventional pharmacology.

Florence Soper Booth, whose father was an orthodox physician, contributed to a series on the theme of “family life” published by the Army periodical All the World in 1896.

Florence credited her mother-in-law, Catherine, with the major influence upon her own approach to health promotion and care.

It is to her advice we owe the fact that our children have come through life so far almost entirely without a dose of medicine of any description. The water treatment has sufficed to overcome with ease the childish ailments of whooping cough, measles, etc. and the visits of the doctor have been nil.¹⁸

The Salvation Army’s operational manuals, such as the Orders and Regulations for Field Officers warned against the unquestioning use of prescription medications. Officers were advised

to beware of physic. We do not say that all medicine is an evil, but we are certain that the F.O. (Field Officer) will be better without it, as a rule, and that a great deal of what is used will often create a worse disease than it professes to cure.¹⁹

To what degree the authors were referring to medicines prescribed by orthodox practitioners versus the indiscriminate use of patent medications is impossible to ascertain. While drugs were controlled after 1868²⁰ the access and use of patent

¹⁸Florence Soper Booth, “The Physical Training of Young Children,” All the World (1896), 231.

¹⁹Orders and Regulations for Officers Part 1, Chap.IV, Section 1, #8. (London: The Salvation Army, 1888).

²⁰F. B. Smith, The People’s Health: 1830-1910 (London: Croom Helm, 1979).

medications exploded in the latter third of the century. In 1850, the British population purchased half a million pounds worth of patent medicine; by 1900, four million pounds worth were passing over the counters of the new pharmaceutical emporia like those of Beecham and Jesse Boot. Walvin sees this as indicative “not only of the general inadequacy of existing medical facilities, but more importantly, of the degree to which minor but widespread ailments continued to afflict working class life.”²¹

The State of The Profession: Orthodox and Heterodox Medicine

The nineteenth century was a period of prolonged and intricate struggle, not only between regular medicine, domestic self-care and alternative systems, but within allopathy itself. Was the practice of medicine a science or an art? How were physicians most effectively educated and prepared for practice? One approach stressed the essentially empirical, experimental elements of the discipline. Another saw the goal of medical education as the nurturing of a gentlemanly sensibility through the pursuit of a classical education, broadly based in the liberal arts. Officially, the profession recommended an integration of scientific and humanistic methodologies. In 1848 the Lancet observed that the successful practitioner required “in point of classical and medical education, scientific tastes and acquirements, sound physiological and pathological views, and the manners and feelings of gentlemen of cultivated minds.”²² But standards of practice and education were made difficult by the heterogeneity of treatment options available to the populace. Prior to the

²¹Walvin, Victorian Values, 30.

²²The Lancet 11 (1848): 81.

passage of the Medical Act of 1858 which defined and formalized the requirements of medical education, nineteen different licensing bodies functioned in the United Kingdom.

Medical orthodoxy embraced four categories of practitioner: pure physicians, pure surgeons, apothecaries, and apothecary / surgeons who were the precursors of the contemporary general practitioner. The most prestigious of the licensing bodies was the Royal College of Physicians, chartered in 1518. This College monopolized, in a formal sense, the practice of “physic” or internal medicine, offering both a fellowship (FRCP) and a license (LRCP). Only graduates from Oxford and Cambridge universities, those educated in “morals and manners” were eligible for the Fellowships.²³ The “Fellow” of The Royal College of Physicians enjoyed considerable social privilege: he was entitled to exemption from jury duty, inquest proceedings and military service. He was the “pure physician,” examining patients, diagnosing and prescribing the medications which an apothecary dispensed. A “Fellow” was prohibited from the practice of a trade, which, in the context of the medical management of patients, meant the manual practice of the “trades” of surgery and apothecary. Conversely, the Licentiate of the College, lacking the requisite Oxbridge advantage was able to practice “generally.” In 1800 there were 179 Fellows and Licentiates in England. By 1847, the number had risen to 683, but this was still less than 5% of all medical practitioners.²⁴

²³M. Jeanne Peterson, The Medical Profession in Mid-Victorian London (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 7-8.

²⁴For statistical analysis see F. N. L. Poynter, The Evolution of Medical Education in Britain (London: Pitman Medical, 1966), 50-51.

By contrast, a surgeon's education, until the second quarter of the nineteenth century, consisted essentially of a technical apprenticeship. After the 1820s it was supplemented by instruction in private medical schools and teaching hospitals. However, throughout the first half of the century, medical education of either category has been described as "on average poor and in some respects deplorable."²⁵ Youngson comments,

The years required for this "instruction" - usually four - had to be filled in somehow, and were apt to be spent in idleness and sensual gratification; medical students had unenviable reputations for drunkenness and debauchery.²⁶

It is a fair generalization to say that a physician's elegance of manners and the alma mater he attended contributed as much to his professional authority as did any demonstrable efficacy or curative success of the treatments prescribed. Before the 1850s, physical exams were uncommon. Instead, the diagnostician concentrated on the patient's narrative description of past illnesses and upon the observation of the eyes, tongue, urine and feces. But if diagnostic interventions tended to be non-invasive, this was made up for by the rigorous nature of the treatments prescribed. Describing the treatment of a thirty-year-old patient with pneumonia, a physician's case study in the Lancet reported

The breathing on the right side was markedly noisy, tubular, wheezing; the voice somewhat increased in both sides, disposed to oegophony on left; expectoration thick, glutinous and tinged with fluid, tracheal streaks. He was ordered a large blister behind the leechbites; turpentine in front. To have three ounces of port wine, and a mixture containing as chief ingredients carbonate of ammonia and paregoric. He was subsequently brought under the influence of mercury very slightly, and when the active symptoms had subsided, put on small doses of morphia and ether, to relieve cough and irritation.²⁷

²⁵A. J. Youngson, The Scientific Revolution in Victorian Medicine (London: Croom Helm, 1979), 12.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 14. The reputation of medical students at mid-century helps to account for Catherine Booth's dismay when her son Bramwell expressed a desire to pursue a medical career. See thesis, chapter 5, p.215.

²⁷"Hospital Reports: Royal Free Hospital," The London Lancet 69 (1857): 73.

The Attraction of the Alternative

Much of the attraction of nineteenth-century sectarian medicine can be attributed to the harshness and futility of the orthodox alternative. Alternative health journals of the period invariably took as their starting point descriptions of the “horrors of allopathy.” Patient testimonials were dense with references to having been “doctored to death,” “drugged without mercy almost constantly,” “killed by inches for long years.”²⁸

Moreover, it was not uncommon for alternative practitioners to have initially received orthodox medical educations but to claim to have undergone a subsequent “conversion of approach.” The orthodox medical press erupted in controversy when The British Medical Journal ran the article, “A Homoeopathic Convert” reporting on a dinner held in honour of one Dr. Thomas, described as the “eminent surgeon to the Staffordshire County Hospital, Wolverhampton.”²⁹ Thomas’ professional colleagues were said to have experienced a “disagreeable surprise” when the guest of honour described his change of approach. Thomas

stated in his acknowledgement of the toast of the evening that he had instituted a long and careful inquiry into the nature and value of homoeopathy, and had found its principles and practice to be so unequivocally true and reliable, and above all, so extremely effective in the treatment of disease, that he had firmly resolved to devote the remainder of his life to their propagation and support. Dr. Thomas is a graduate, with honours, of the University of London, a member of the College and Hall, and a gold medalist, both in anatomy and medicine of London University, Longridge prizeman of University College also, and

²⁸ See for example “Rambling Reminiscences,” Herald of Health 3 no.2 (February 1864): 42-44.

²⁹ “A Homoeopathic Convert,” The British Medical Journal (18 February 1865).

prior to his appointment of surgeon to the Staffordshire County Hospital at Wolverhampton, was demonstrator of anatomy in the University College Medical School.³⁰

In Robert Fuller's study of nineteenth-century American movements of health reform, he observes that the popularity of a system like homoeopathy among the urban upper classes placed its practitioners in direct economic competition with orthodox medicine. Thus the debates in medical and health literature were prolonged and vociferous.³¹ The economic debate centred upon the grounds for financial reimbursement. Alternative physicians frequently argued their right to charge higher fees on the basis of the amount of time they devoted to individual patient education, notably in the areas of hygiene, diet and exercise; the irregular "teaches his patient to be independent of him, and so runs his own business down; while the drug doctor leaves his patient more ignorant and sickly than he finds him, and so works his own business up."³² Irregulars asserted that they were able to accomplish in one or two visits what the "drug doctor needed twenty, thirty, fifty or one hundred visits" to achieve. Therefore they deserved to be paid significantly more for those one or two consultations.

A sick and suffering public generally failed to understand the polarization between practitioners of orthodox and heterodox medical systems. Debates raged around the demands coming from the grass roots for an increased complementarity of approach. Much of the earlier nineteenth-century health reform literature in popular circulation

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Robert Fuller, *Alternative Medicine and American Religious Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 22. In Britain too, homoeopathy was particularly attractive among the upper classes.

³²"Medical Fees," *Herald of Health* (New York), (March 1864): 101.

posed no direct threat to any particular school of treatment, focused as it was on disease prevention and health maintenance. For example, an article published in the Water Cure Journal and Herald of Reform in 1849 asserted that

Medicine will never remedy bad habits. It is utterly futile to think of living in gluttony, intemperance and every excess and keeping the body in health by medicine. ... Make a free use of water to purify the skin and when sick take counsel of the best physician you know and follow nature.³³

What was contentious was whether there could be legitimate collaboration between regulars and sectarians in medical diagnostics. A Lancet correspondent, Dr. Cordwint of Taunton requested an editorial answer from the journal to the question, “Can a regular practitioner, either in a medical or surgical case, properly meet, for the purpose of diagnosis, a legally qualified man practising homoeopathy?”³⁴ The editorial response bluntly acknowledged the perceptions of the general public, who regarded the lack of collaboration as petty professional protectionism.

Their only notion about disease is to get rid of it as soon as possible; and they cannot understand the members of a profession whose common object is to remove disease not being ready to consult with each other to further this end in any given case. Hence the profession comes to be charged with littleness and jealousy and illiberality - charges from which we all wish to clear it.³⁵

Nonetheless, The Lancet’s position was unbending. “Consultation, whether for purposes of diagnosis or treatment ... is recognition.” And recognition could not be extended to a system orthodoxy considered a “contemptible delusion” or pseudoscience. It was conceded that both regular and irregular medicine might, in a given clinical instance, utilize a similar therapeutic practice. Turkish baths, hydrotherapy and kinesipathy were

³³“Health, How To Preserve It,” Water Cure Journal and Herald of Reform 3 no.3 (1849).

³⁴The Lancet (3 August 1872): 160.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 161.

frequently components of the rehabilitative regimens of allopathic surgeons. But the 1872 editorial was a clear restatement of the position argued a decade earlier. Medicine, as a scientific discipline, could not be divided into sects.

... to talk of sects in medicine is as nonsensical as to speak of sects in navigation, in engineering, chemical analysis, or in any other science. There are sects in politics and sects in religion. There may be sects in all matters of opinion; but not in science.³⁶

A third sphere of acrimony between regular and irregular practitioners emerged as a result of the expanded sphere of activity offered to women by the sectarians. While the orthodox medical press was quick to ridicule women as dispositionally credulous and in possession of “that spurious kind of half education so frequently bestowed on females of the middle rank in England, and, therefore, believers in homoeopathy,”³⁷ the journals of the sectarians celebrated and promoted women’s “practice of the healing arts.” As early as 1864 the student body of the New York Hygeio-Therapeutic Medical College consisted of roughly equivalent numbers of male and female students. Sectarians were quick to point out the irony of orthodoxy’s long-standing acceptance of women as the nursing “angels in the sick room” while simultaneously ensuring that only “male M.D.s were privileged to deal out all the doses, and monopolize all the fees.”³⁸

Medical Metaphysics

But the nineteenth-century cultural embrace of a remarkable range of alternative health practices was more than a pragmatic response to epidemiological precariousness, medical

³⁶“Homoeopathy and the Turkish Bath,” The Lancet (1 June 1861).

³⁷The Lancet (11 February 1860): 147.

³⁸Herald of Health 3 no.3 (March 1864): 105.

impotence and gender inequity. Sectarian medicine was the embodiment of a timely metaphysics. The world view promulgated through a variety of religio-physiological theories was one colourfully described by Catherine Albanese as expressing a conflation of the impulses of Enlightenment and Evangelical thought "swiftly going to Romantic seed."³⁹ Religious in language, expectation and zeal, health reformers rooted their bio-gospel in grand unifying theories of health and disease. They promoted popularized versions of these theories with evangelical fervour and certainty. Theirs was a religious vision which sought to orientate the believer to the past, the present and the future. Predicated upon orthodox Christian belief in a meaningful Providence, health reformers seized upon the Enlightenment emphasis on Natural Revelation, reshaping it to their purposes. Nature - stable, unchanging and orderly - was a universal and "readable" religious text. To attend to "the eternal laws of Nature" as evidenced in bodily functioning was to attend to the voice of God. Not to "attend" was to reap the consequences as disease. Sin, in the discourse of "nature religion," was any violation of nature's norm. Such was the dogma informing the historical perspective of sectarians such as the English hydrotherapist Richard Metcalfe. In The Rise and Progress of Hydrotherapy in England and Scotland, Metcalfe theorized,

Water as a remedial agent, and almost ordinary bathing (except as a haphazard thing) were forgotten, and Europe became a sort of stink pot of unwashed persons and disease. Plagues and black death ran riot in spite of prayers and medicine. They were as the Voice of God calling attention to broken law; but the people were too dense in their ignorance either to hear or take heed.⁴⁰

³⁹Catherine Albanese, Nature Religion in America (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 119.

⁴⁰Richard Metcalfe, The Rise and Progress of Hydrotherapy in England and Scotland (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton and Kent Ltd., 1912), 4.

According to a similar logic, The Homoeopathic Advocate taught that "the sick person, through ignorance, has violated some law of nature, and pain and sickness is the inevitable result."⁴¹ Sectarians claimed that the doctrines of health reform they expounded resulted in a

medical system that does honour to the character of Deity... It is a system that grows out of the relationship of men to God and nature. ... It is powerful because it works with nature not against her... It enjoins and enforces every physiological law and every moral virtue.⁴²

For many health reformers, the physical body became the primary focus of religious concern. It remained open to a perpetual possibility of transformation, renewal and perfectibility.⁴³ In sectarian medicine's religious reconfiguration, not only could believers be "saved" through hygienic reform, they could be sanctified. The perfectionist assumptions of a popular journal like the Herald of Health were clearly acknowledged.

The hygienic and hygeio-therapeutic doctrines of this journal have taught men how they may purify and sanctify this bodily organization... The purity, perfection and soundness of the body must be looked upon as a means of purifying, ennobling, exalting and sanctifying the spirit ... it matters not where we begin, whether in the physical or spiritual department of God's kingdom.⁴⁴

This rhetoric of purity went so far as to claim "the power to bring back the human race to its original physical perfection and to advance its moral purity."⁴⁵

⁴¹Quoted in Catherine Albanese, Nature Religion, 134.

⁴²W. T. Vail, "The Morals of Hygiene," Herald of Health 3 no.4 (April, 1864).

⁴³Catherine Albanese, Nature Religion, 120. Although the focus of Albanese's work is Jacksonian America, her analysis is pertinent to the haphazard urbanization of the Victorian city. She writes "As the social body was pulled at the joints and felt wear and tear from its inordinate stretching, individual Americans felt the deficiency as loss of mastery ... when the plural communities of the colonies became the pluralistic states of the nineteenth century, the individual body for many became the ground for complaint and celebration. Here was a place that conceivably could be mastered and made perfect. Here was a terrain and landscape in which perhaps deficiency could be overcome and the beauty of pure form and function could emerge."

⁴⁴W. T. Vail, "The Morals of Hygiene," 135.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*

Unlike the empiricist contributor to The Lancet who applauded “the crowds of men who labour without ceasing, all their lives through to pile little facts together for the attainment of truth,”⁴⁶ alternative practitioners and theorists claimed that such an approach splintered reality into chaotic, meaningless bits of information. Regulars, from the perspective of the sectarians were mere technicians, celebrating the acquisition of data; sectarians, by contrast, claimed insight into grand theories and ultimate truth. They were the medical idealists of the nineteenth century.

Hydrotherapy: Tolerated Concession

Of the variety of therapeutic possibilities offered to the Victorian public by alternative practitioners, Hydrotherapy was treated most sympathetically by the orthodox medical press. Hydrotherapy had been introduced to Britain in the 1840s, having enjoyed a high level of aristocratic patronage on the Continent. In Vienna, in 1839, hydropaths were granted the same state legitimacy as medical practitioners. In the same year, the therapeutic potential of what was referred to as the “water cure” was under investigation by the French War Ministry. European hydropaths based their practice upon the physiological theories of an Austrian, Vincent Priessnitz (1799-1851) of Graefenberg in Silesia. Priessnitz claimed that all disease was the result of the depletion of vital energy or life force. Physiological systems were maintained by a finite source of electrical or “nervous” energy in the cerebrum. The human body functioned in a manner analogous to an electrochemical battery cell. As vital energy ran down, resistance decreased and bodily

⁴⁶The Lancet (11 February 1860).

“systems” malfunctioned. Consequently, treatment consisted of aiding in the conservation and building up of energy through the application of water and strict regulation of lifestyle.

So attractive was the practice of hydrotherapy to the British respectable classes that by 1891, fifty years after its British debut, sixty three hydros of “respectable size and reputation” were operational in the United Kingdom.⁴⁷

Some orthodox medical practitioners believed that treatment modalities of the “water cure” could be usefully adopted without assenting to the physiological and metaphysical theories propounded in a vast popular literature on the subject. Inasmuch as hydropaths generally solicited their clients with non-invasive promises of a “change of air, alteration of diet, escape from toil, and flight from care”⁴⁸ as well as the judicious use of bathing there existed the clear possibility of a complementarity of approach. An 1862 editorial for the British Medical Journal advised an attitude of openness among regular professionals akin to John Wesley’s toleration and use of secular tunes in the evangelical hymnody of the eighteenth-century Methodist revivals. Wesley was reputed to have asked why the devil should have had all the best music? Similarly, asked the BMJ, “why

⁴⁷See Kelvin Rees, “Water as a Commodity: Hydropathy in Matlock,” in Roger Cooter, ed. Studies in the History of Alternative Medicine (Oxford: MacMillan Press, 1988) for a socio-economic analysis of the manner in which hydropathy as a commodity, reinvigorated the local economies of small, picturesque non-industrial towns threatened at mid-century by centralized commercialization and urbanization. Also Janet Browne, “Spas and Sensibilities: Darwin at Malvern at Malvern,” in Roy Porter, ed. The Medical History of Waters and Spas (London: Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 1990) for a description of the institutional proliferation of British hydros at mid-century.

⁴⁸Prospectus, Smedley’s Hydropathic Establishment.

should the sectarians have a monopoly on investigating the benefits of water in the treatment of disease?"⁴⁹ The editor argued that a spirit of obstructionism among the medical profession was alienating a desperate and suffering public, thereby creating a backlash and indirectly encouraging the proliferation of irregular medicine.

In September of the same year, the journal published a review of a book by J. C. Lory Marsh, M.D., Special Therapeutics: An Investigation into the treatment of Acute and Chronic Diseases by the Application of Water, the Hot Air Bath, and Inhalation.

Although criticising sectarian tendencies to make claims for the water cure as a "panacea for all diseases," the review argued that it was bad intellectual practice "to derive an argument against the legitimate use of a thing from its abuse."⁵⁰ Rather, orthodox practitioners were urged, on the basis of experiments conducted in the late eighteenth century by Dr. Currie of Liverpool, to establish clear criteria or clinical indicators under which water could be usefully employed. Currie had claimed success in the treatment of typhus, intermittent fevers, influenza and scarlatina by the cutaneous application of cool water. Thus a proper indicator seemed to be hot, dry skin, fever and rapid pulse.

The Lancet of 1863 was less charitable. Hydrotherapy, as practiced in Britain, was actually creating "a species of hypochondriasis." It fostered an introversion of perspective that medicalized healthy habits. "To give a medicinal character to these is to make every healthy man a patient, every meal a dose, the world a hospital and life itself one long

⁴⁹British Medical Journal (8 February 1862).

⁵⁰British Medical Journal (26 September 1863).

disease.”⁵¹ In the article, the editor developed four main arguments against orthodox tolerance for hydrotherapy as a treatment modality. In the first place, it made “every man umpire of rival doctrines of the day.” Secondly, the popularization of its theories via what the Lancet called books “meant for sale at railway stations” created the impression that medical knowledge could be gained in a quick and facile manner. Thirdly, hydrotherapy was inaccurate; both in its physiology and in its biochemistry. Finally the Lancet denounced the sectarian tendency to wilfully ignore all demonstrable progress in regular medicine. Instead, hydrotherapists routinely set up straw dogs for demolition. There was a health literature written “not for peers but for patrons.”⁵²

Smedley’s Hydropathic Establishment

The particular target of the Lancet’s invective was Smedley’s Hydropathic Establishment, the largest and most ostentatious of the British hydros and the one first visited by William Booth in September, 1860.⁵³ Situated high on an embankment overlooking the town of Matlock among the rolling hills and lush landscape of Britain’s Peak District, the prospectus for John Smedley’s hydro in 1863 promised patients a “change of air, alteration of diet, escape from toil and flight from care.”⁵⁴ But they sought more than that; patients came to Matlock hoping to be cured. Railway access to rural Derbyshire had made health pilgrimages possible for patients with a multivarious list of presenting

⁵¹“Hydropathy and Hypochondriasis,” The Lancet 80-81 (1863): 730-731.

⁵²*Ibid.*

⁵³Catherine Booth to Mumfords, 13 September 1860.

⁵⁴Prospectus, Smedley’s Hydropathic Establishment.

problems; typhus, rheumatic fever, “congestion of the liver” and the quintessentially Victorian malady, “dyspepsia.”

John Smedley, a successful Derbyshire industrialist, philanthropist and religious iconoclast, had been born at Wirksworth, June 12, 1803. He left school at fourteen years of age to work in the family hosiery and worsted spinning business. The financial stability of the family firm fluctuated dramatically throughout John's first decade as a working partner. In 1818, responding to an upswing in business, the factory was moved to a larger site at Lea Mills. Five years later, the business tottered on the brink of bankruptcy. The impact of the death of his eldest son prompted John Smedley's father to turn over control to John in 1827 and for the next twenty years the company experienced a steady increase in prosperity and a reputation for the manufacture of high quality underwear. Smedley married Caroline Ann Harward, the second daughter of the Rev. John Harward, Vicar of Wirksworth in 1847. It was during their honeymoon trip to France, Germany and Switzerland that John contracted typhus fever which resulted in a prolonged period of debilitated health and a sustained quest for cure. He initially sought allopathic intervention, but later claimed to have been healed of a “nervous disease” at a hydro in Yorkshire in 1851. Smedley retrospectively regarded his experience of illness and healing as the catalyst to a personal religious transformation. Smedley claimed,

I found no witness in my own heart that I had ever been anything but a formal professing Christian. I soon became insensible to all outward and bodily sensations; but my mind was often exquisitely alive to the whole course of my past life. I saw my character clearly, and it was that of a

hypocrite. I believed I was shut out from the presence of God forever; and felt the justice of my doom.⁵⁵

Smedley credited his employees, men he described as “good, sincere Christian workers” with an essential role in his conversion. They had pointed out to him the “simple means of gaining peace”⁵⁶ and led him to come to the “eventual peace in believing” which in turn strengthened his resolve to live that most Victorian of virtues, the “useful life.”

Smedley’s dawning sense of religious vocation was first given expression as he began to experiment with hydropathic treatments for the workers of his thriving woollen mill.⁵⁷ He hired a local missionary to visit and care for the sick in their homes. In 1853 he took over an eleven room house and converted it to a residential hydro, and by late decade construction had begun on the magnificent Hydropathic Establishment, designed largely by Smedley in consultation with the architect George Statham of Nottingham - now the Derbyshire County Record Office.

Although John Smedley handed over the medical superintendancy of the hydro to the allopathically educated Dr. William Bell Hunter, M.D. (Glasgow) in 1872, his earlier writings were harsh in their denunciation of regular medical practice. It is hardly surprising that the Lancet editor’s attack was vociferous. In his treatise, Practical

⁵⁵ John Smedley, “Preface to a Former Edition,” Practical Hydropathy (London: James Blackwood and Co. Fifteenth Edition, 1877), 349.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 349.

⁵⁷ See Susan Cayleff, Wash and Be Healed (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987). Cayleff’s work looks at the manner in which the physiological conversion narrative is conventionally structured in nineteenth-century American hydropathic literature. The elements of this genre consistently include: a description of ill health, account of unsuccessful allopathic intervention, life threatening crisis, discovery of “water cure,” utilization of hydrotherapeutics and change of hygienic habits, improved health, conversion to hydrotherapy, desire to spread the word and praise for the attending hydrotherapist. Smedley’s account illustrates the convention.

Hydropathy, Smedley described his treatment regime as a necessary salvage operation among the human wrecks created by aggressive conventional medicine. "Scientific discoveries," he claimed, "are not blessings, but terrible engines of destruction."⁵⁸ Citing the English anatomist Astley Cooper, and overlooking Cooper's irony, Smedley continued, "The science of medicine is founded on conjecture and improved by murder."⁵⁹ Both Smedley and his subsequent biographers exhibited the sectarian tendency to make a virtue of the hydro-therapist's lack of formal medical education. According to Smedley, his lay status enabled him "to study the nature and functionary action of the human organism on grounds entirely free from all professional prejudice."⁶⁰

John Smedley's physiological theory was essentially the same as that propounded by Vincent Priessnitz. The theory maintained that the critical error in allopathy lay in the presupposition that disease was "something to be subdued or driven out of the body." Rather, disease was the result of the body's inability to supply vitality. The body possessed a finite supply of life force. Health was its equitable distribution. "Vital heat is life; deficiency of it, weakness and disease; absence of it, death."⁶¹ For the hydropath, illness was best understood as "simple functionary derangement."

The desired health "rearrangement" could be achieved, in part, by a lifestyle which mimicked childhood's state of innocent dependence. Admission to the hydro meant

⁵⁸ John Smedley, Practical Hydropathy, 7.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid., introduction.

submission to the paternalistic authority of the hydropath and commitment to a rigorous care plan. Rules were posted prominently on the walls throughout the hydro.

No sea bathing, or any plunge baths, or immersing the Whole Body in Cold Water in any way.
No Turkish or Russian Baths.
Tea bad; Cocoa made from the nibs, or water, best.
No Medicine - allopathic or homoeopathic. Castor oil especially injurious.
No stimulants or Tobacco or Snuff.
Avoid Hot Water baths, except for Special occasions.
Avoid Lemonade, Pop, Soda Water or Vichy Water.⁶²

Patrons were expected to observe early bedtimes and early rising. Those in treatment agreed to abstain from a comprehensive list of substances and activities regarded as stimulants; wine, tobacco, coffee, tea, condiments and cards! Each underwent a daily regime of hot packs and baths, individually prescribed after consultation with the hydrotherapist and administered by a large staff of bath attendants.

Curative Relationality

There is something strikingly paradoxical in the relationship of patients to the nineteenth-century hydropathic practitioners. Janet Browne argues that members of London's intellectual and literary community, such as Darwin, Tennyson and Dickens were drawn to the hydrotherapeutic alternative by the autonomy it seemed to represent. Treatment was something to "be tried" and abandoned if expectations were not met. Health was commodified. Hydrotherapists offered a service that the comfortable classes were prepared to explore and pay for.⁶³ However, Susan Cayleff has noted that while these

⁶²"Rules for Hydrotherapy," Manuscript 1397 B/B 18. Derbyshire County Record Office, Matlock, England.

⁶³Janet Browne, "Spas and Sensibilities in Malvern," in The Medical History of Waters and Spas, ed. Roy Porter (London: Wellcome Institute for The History of Medicine, 1990).

therapeutic relationships were theoretically supportive of self-care, they were developed and nurtured through long-term residential care which included intense doctor / patient interaction. Cayleff has noted the manner in which the rhetoric of the movement stressed self-sufficiency, while

the lived experience ... flourished because of a tight, albeit episodic bonding ... an articulated goal of separation with a simultaneous reliance on the healing dyad - the bond of trust, faith and hope that in turn yields loyalty, and reverence for the one who has shown the way.⁶⁴

Self-sufficiency was fostered to the degree that the patient accepted the hydropath in the role of health educator, physiological mentor or guide. What the therapist offered was characteristically “consultation,” as distinct from the actual treatments given by non-professional “bath attendants” hired by the institution. The hydropathic consultation, conducted routinely upon admission and discharge, and more frequently as requested by the patient, included the detailed documentation of all past illnesses, with a particular emphasis on past hygienic behaviours and lifestyle management. These interviews offered what Cayleff has termed “cultivated attention to curative relationality” as expressed in “presence, touch, communication, arousing hope and expectation of cure, and the reinforcing of ties with the social group, thus minimizing the sense of isolation that often accompanies sickness.”⁶⁵

⁶⁴Susan Cayleff, Wash and Be Healed (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 52-53.

⁶⁵Ibid., 53. The manner in which the hydropath’s confidence “aroused hope” can be clearly demonstrated in countless cases documented by John Smedley in Practical Hydropathy. For example, his description of an “overworked London, homoeopathic M.D.” who arrived at Matlock with “legs filling with water, tongue loaded, pulse feeble, skin yellow... I told him at once there would be no difficulty in restoring him to health, as his disorder was entirely deficiency of functional action, which our local external applications would very soon put in good working order,” 8. Similarly, Smedley’s account of the “celebrated M.P. with an income of one or two thousand per annum” who was unable to rid himself of a cold which had “congested the capillaries on the surface of the body, closed the pores and deadened the skin ... I told his friend I could assure him of a perfect cure by our means at our Institution if he came and gave up all stimulants and medicine,” Ibid.

Hydropathic Establishments, like those at Matlock, Malvern and Ben Rhydding, offered both preventive and curative treatment programs. Both the “exhausted sufferer from organic disease” and “the man of business seeking no more than relaxation from toil combined with bracing influences” were welcome as patrons. The appointment of William Hunter as medical director at Matlock seems to have resulted in a broader institutional awareness of the role played by orthodox medicine, and the need to achieve a credible complementarity of approach. Dr. Hunter’s criteria for hydro admission limited the care provided to those with diseases “not unequivocally demonstrated by medical science as incurable.” While earlier rules for Smedley’s had specified “No Medicine - allopathic or homoeopathic,”⁶⁶ Hunter’s revisionism allowed for “the careful employment of medicines in those cases where their co-operation is found necessary to effect a cure.”⁶⁷

Susan Cayleff’s work on the “water cure” movement in nineteenth-century America argues that women’s utilization of the hydropathic alternative for personal and domestic health management represented a subverting of patriarchal medical orthodoxy and a rejection of the medicalization of women’s reproductive experience. But her sweeping assertion that “Hydropaths did not adhere to the notion of life-cycle periodic frailty, or to the extreme emphasis placed on women’s reproductive organs as the controlling

⁶⁶“Rules for Hydrotherapy,” Manuscript 1397 B/B 18. Derbyshire County Record Office, Matlock, England.

⁶⁷Smedley, Practical Hydropathy, 2.

physiological force”⁶⁸ cannot be substantiated in a reading of the British hydropathic literature.

Speculum Horrors

It is true that hydrotherapists were scathing in their indictment of the emerging medical specialization of gynaecology, a specialty which Canadian medical historian Wendy Mitchinson asserts was “predicated on the assumption that women’s sexual reproductive system was fragile and prone to disorders” and that “reinforced the concept that women’s bodies limited them, not society.”⁶⁹ Hydropaths warned women against placing themselves under the care of these new “Ladies Doctors.” In the literature of the water cure movement, women attended by gynaecologists were portrayed as the violated victims of “private examinations” and “speculum horrors” which not only compromised feminine modesty, delicacy and sensitivity, but were, in the opinion of hydropaths, iatrogenic: capable of causing a “shattered nervous system and its consequent hypochondriachal state of mind.”⁷⁰

It was not, however, only the sectarians who were profoundly uneasy about the “private exam.”⁷¹ In the early years of the nineteenth century, it was a rare diagnostic intervention. If a doctor believed a pelvic examination to be essential, it was often done by a nurse,

⁶⁸Susan Cayleff, Wash and Be Healed, 8.

⁶⁹Wendy Mitchinson, The Nature of Their Bodies. Women and Their Doctors in Victorian Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 232.

⁷⁰Mrs. Smedley, Ladies Manual of Practical Hydropathy for Female Diseases (London: Job Caudwell, 1862), 33.

⁷¹Mitchinson, The Nature of Their Bodies, 240-244. Mitchinson provides a cogent overview of physician attitudes to the gynaecological examination in nineteenth-century Canada. This section is heavily reliant upon her work.

who would inform him of her findings. Conventional medical opinion at mid-century, like the opinion of the hydropaths, held that the practice violated woman's "natural" modesty, encouraged an unhealthy loosening of discursive restraint about physiological functioning, and in the case of particularly neurotic women, contributed to inappropriate sexual stimulation. The limitations that this reluctance to examine placed upon physicians could lead to a compromised provision of care. Writes Mitchinson, "physicians were caught between traditional attitudes respecting behaviour and the demands of their profession, a tension which never totally disappeared."⁷²

The hydropaths' attitudes to instrumentation were also shared by many orthodox practitioners. While it was true that the use of the vaginal speculum made diagnosis faster and more accurate, by for example the visible observation of cervical changes in the pregnant woman, objections were offered on both moral and pragmatic grounds. The moral argument of the negative impact on feminine modesty is simply an extension of the thinking around the appropriateness of gynaecological examination. Pragmatically, as asepsis was inconsistently observed, the use of instruments contributed to the level of physician induced infection. Critics also pointed to a general lack of formal medical training in the use of obstetrical or gynaecological instruments, with the attendant dangers to both mother and child from a practitioner's clumsy experimentation.

⁷²Mitchinson, The Nature of Their Bodies, 241.

Conservative and Conventional

Unlike Cayleff's emancipatory American hydropaths, practitioners like those at Matlock upheld and fostered the dominant medical orthodoxy of women's innate physical frailty.

The Ladies Manual of Practical Hydropathy for Female Diseases which went through multiple editions indicates the range of restrictions recommended to women who "would be well."

Sea bathing ... is always hazardous to females, especially at all times and at all ages... During the change of life, everything of an exciting kind should be avoided, so that the nervous system should not be disturbed: even very long walks, or standing long is against nature's objections.⁷³

Female patrons of the Victorian hydros were promised a delicacy of approach befitting their feminine sensibilities. For example, the series of baths and douches offered at Smedley's for menstrual disorders were euphemistically described as "present time treatment" in order to "mask it a little from the other sex."⁷⁴ Perhaps of greater value to women was the rest and respite from domestic tasks which a course of hydrotherapeutic treatment provided and legitimized.

The Booths at the Hydro

The use of water as a therapeutic agent had played a role in Booth family history long before the summer of 1860 when William, on the advice of concerned friends, booked into Mr. Smedley's Hydropathic Establishment for a course of treatment. William's father, Samuel, had visited Ashby-de-la-Zouch in the early 1820s in order to "take the

⁷³Mrs. Smedley, Ladies Manual of Practical Hydropathy for Female Diseases, 11.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 11.

waters”⁷⁵ for the relief of “his chronic enemy, rheumatism.” While there, he met the woman he would marry, William’s mother, Mary Moss.

William’s initial visit to the famed Smedley’s Hydropathic Establishment came during the period of his tenure at Gateshead while he was still a clergyman within the Methodist New Connection. William had assumed the superintendancy of the Gateshead circuit with a measure of reluctance, feeling increasingly called to an itinerant ministry but unable to obtain denominational authorization. Despite the ambivalence of Booth’s feelings, the work in Gateshead prospered with attendances increasing so dramatically that the congregation became known as the “converting shop.” In late summer of 1860, the congregation was concerned enough about William’s health status to recommend that he take a leave of absence. Booth was suffering from what Booth-Tucker described as a “complete breakdown.” Evidently, at this juncture, Catherine, who would later so strongly influence the family’s domestic health practices, was not entirely convinced of the efficacy of hydrotherapy, or at least of its suitability for her activist husband. During a period of post-discharge convalescence, she wrote to William, expressing both her reservations and her determination that financial constraints should not limit the treatment alternatives explored. Catherine wrote,

I have let you proceed with the hydropathic treatment quietly and trustingly, although I have many fears about it suiting you. And now that you have left Mr. Smedley’s I shall have some jurisdiction over you ... no human means must be left untried to bring about your restoration and if

⁷⁵George S. Railton, General Booth (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1912), 3. “Balneology” from the Latin word *balneum* (bath) was the term used for spa therapy with mineral waters. See Porter, Medical History.

our money fails, I must try and get some more... I shall bear you continually before the Lord.⁷⁶

Like John Wesley, Catherine believed that healing occurred through both natural and supernatural means. Neither should be disdained.

Her teasing of William in a subsequent letter implies a degree of skepticism with hydrotherapy's obsession with the role played by the pores in the regulation of physiological equilibrium.⁷⁷ "I perceive the water treatment has not yet brought out all your weaknesses, metaphorically, I mean."⁷⁸ However, even at this stage Catherine was prepared to incorporate practices associated with the "water cure" into her care for her children. Nursing them through a bout of whooping cough with William still away on sick leave, Catherine updated her parents. "Katie and baby have it the worst. I am giving them the appropriate homoeopathic remedies, with their feet in hot water and mustard at night, and water bandages on their chests."⁷⁹

Catherine's broader "conversion" to the practice of hydrotherapy did not come until three years later, when through the financial generosity of supporters she was able to accompany her husband to the Matlock hydro. William had submitted his resignation from the Methodist New Connexion in 1861 and, with Catherine, embarked on a ministry

⁷⁶Catherine Booth to William Booth, 13 September 1860, cited in Booth-Tucker, F. de L., The Life of Catherine Booth (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton and Kent Co., 1892), 262.

⁷⁷Smedley, Practical Hydropathy, 19. Smedley maintained that his prescribed baths resulted in "the poisonous matter being withdrawn through the pores in the skin" ... and argued that in conventional medicine "the grand depurative agent - the skin, with its eight millions of pores to let out the morbid matter - is totally neglected, never soaped over, never bathed."

⁷⁸Catherine Booth to William Booth, n.d., cited in Booth-Tucker, F. de L., 266.

⁷⁹Catherine Booth to John and Sarah Mumford, 1860, cited in Booth-Tucker F. de L., 264.

of independent itinerant revivalism. In the final weeks of the Booths' campaign at Walsall, William stumbled and put his foot through a hole made in the chapel floor by workmen in the process of adjusting the gas fittings. The resulting severe ankle sprain confined William to his room for two weeks; there Catherine experimented with the water treatments she knew. At the conclusion of the eight week campaign, with William described as suffering from a "severely ulcerated throat" and a "run-down constitution," both husband and wife booked into Smedley's and Catherine used the interlude to familiarize herself with the theoretical elements of hydrotherapeutic practice.⁸⁰

Throughout the years of William and Catherine Booth's active ministry, the perceived need for "complete rest" was often addressed by admission to a hydropathic establishment. Three years after her husband's ankle injury, Catherine became ill and was taken to Tunbridge Wells for a period of extended rest and hydrotherapy. It was intended that she "live for a while the life of a tree."⁸¹ Her symptoms have been variously described by biographers - chronic diarrhoea, extreme sensitivity to noise, insomnia. Allopathic treatment had been tried without success. In a popular periodical Catherine read of a charcoal remedy. She tried it, claimed to have experienced immediate relief and thereafter recommended its use to others. Booth-Tucker's editorializing on Catherine's experience illustrates the common Victorian criteria for therapeutic experimentation.

⁸⁰Booth-Tucker, F. de L. claims, "The opportunity for further studying of hydropathic treatment was taken advantage of by Mrs. Booth, who became a thorough convert to the system, practicing and advocating it to the end of her life." 375.

⁸¹Booth-Tucker, 408.

"The theory advanced by the writer was intelligent, and the cases he adduced of persons who had been cured were so striking that Mrs. Booth resolved at once to give it a trial."⁸²

From March until October of 1872, William was again on sick leave suffering from "nervous exhaustion, dyspeptic in origin."⁸³ A letter from the philanthropist Samuel Morley M.P. who served as a member of a "council of gentlemen" who acted in an advisory capacity to The Christian Mission⁸⁴ admonished Booth:

I beg to press you ,now you are trying the water treatment, to give it a fair chance, and not to allow work, or engagements, or even wife and children, to tempt you back to London until you have had entire rest. My eldest son is just now visiting Mr. Smedley, whom I have known for many years.⁸⁵

In 1875 both William and Catherine had another lengthy period of convalescence.

Catherine had collapsed after the annual general conference of the same year and was diagnosed as suffering from angina. She insisted upon being treated hydrotherapeutically, but was too ill to make the journey to Smedley's in Derbyshire. Consequently she was referred to Mr. Richard Metcalfe at Paddington Green. This signalled the beginning of a relationship between the Booth family and Metcalfe which spanned three decades. After

⁸²Ibid., 411.

⁸³Dyspepsia was the word originally used for indigestion. By mid-century the term "had come to include ideas of physical weakness, loss of appetite, and most particularly, a depression of spirits, morbid despondency and gloom." See Janet Browne, "Spas and Sensibilities: Darwin at Malvern," 108.

⁸⁴Ibid., 442.

⁸⁵Ibid., 403. It was during William's stay at Smedley's in 1872 that he met Launcelot Railton, a Wesleyan Methodist minister, also in a "state of nervous exhaustion." Subsequently Launcelot introduced his younger brother, George Scott, to Booth. George, already a zealous evangelist, joined William's mission and was arguably the movement's most influential shaper of denominational identity in the first two decades. See Bernard Watson, *Soldier Saint* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970). William evidently received treatment at more than one institution during these months. A Whitsuntide letter of encouragement to the missionaries, included in *The Christian Mission Magazine*, vol.IV (1872) was written from Hydropathic Establishment, Limpley, Stoke, Bath, May 18th, 1872.

“some weeks” at Metcalfe’s, Catherine went to Hardres, near Canterbury. It was while visiting his wife there that William sustained injuries in a carriage accident that necessitated a five month period of recovery. Catherine applied her knowledge of domestic hydrotherapy in the treatment of William’s leg.

Women as Healers

It was not only the prominence of her public role which prompted early Salvationists to refer to Catherine Booth as the “Mother” of The Salvation Army. Catherine, and in later years her daughter Emma, and daughter-in-law Florence, laid considerable stress on the nurturant, healing or “mothering” role of the woman in ministry. Salvationists, while insisting upon the spiritual equality of the sexes and the right of women to preach, held conventional Victorian middle-class views concerning women’s “natural” aptitudes. They extended this domestic ideology to argue that a woman’s nature made her, in fact, more suitable for pastoral work than her male counterpart. Emma Booth-Tucker, writing to her sister-in-law, Florence, on the birth of her fifth daughter, wrote,

Without undue boasting it seems to me that where woman has had a chance she has shone superior to man. She is humbler, tenderer and far more self-sacrificing by nature and after all are these not the great essentials for spiritual warfare?⁸⁶

Lectures given to Army Cadets on the relationship between the sexes in the matter of each helping the other in the cultivation of their natural gifts asserted that “woman is undoubtedly placed in advance of man” with respect to what was termed “the power of sympathy.”

⁸⁶Emma Booth-Tucker to Florence Soper Booth, from Brighton, 1 July 1893. Emma Booth file, The Salvation Army International Heritage Centre Archives, London, England.

Whichever way we turn in life, if we want those things done which require human sympathy, we look instantly to the woman for it, e.g., the training of children, nursing the sick. In all matters which affect human suffering and grief we say there is the woman's place. This applies equally to spiritual things.⁸⁷

This perception of Army women was strengthened by stories told and popularized about them as healers within their families and the broader denominational community.

Conventionally, these healing narratives emphasized the "woman as healer's" rejection of the aggressive interventions of orthodox medicine, choosing rather to soothe, comfort and thereby cure.

Florence, a physician's daughter, was introduced to hydrotherapy when Catherine nursed her through a severe cold at 114 Clapton Common prior to her departure for pioneering work in France in 1881. On this occasion Catherine used a lamp bath, which consisted of a wooden box over a chair with a sloped lid which closed around the patient's neck. A spirit lamp was lighted under the chair and the patient's feet soaked in a basin of hot water. Steam would build up within the box and Florence recalled having fainted during her own initial hydro treatment. But Florence contended that she had seen cases of serious illness where hydrotherapy was able to "work a miracle, and life be spared when doctors had given up hope."⁸⁸

⁸⁷Bramwell Booth, "Outline of Lecture to Cadets on The Equality of Men and Women and Their Distinctive Gifts," November 1874.

⁸⁸Florence Soper Booth, "Florence Booth's Life Story," The Sunday Circle (18 February 1933).

Healing by Hydro

Another of Catherine Booth's celebrated healing interventions involved the case of Harriet Lawrence, one of the first women accepted for training as a Cadet at the Training Garrison, Clapton. Lawrence's knee had been injured during a street meeting by a member of one of the gangs of roughs who regularly attempted to disrupt the Army's street processions through notorious East End neighbourhoods. Initially, Catherine Booth insisted upon orthodox medical consultation for the young woman. Upon learning that the physicians were recommending amputation, Catherine was reputed to have responded, "Now, Lawrence, the doctors think your leg ought to come off, but I don't believe in the knife. Will you leave your leg to me?"⁸⁹ Catherine's treatment consisted of alternating applications of heat and cold: daily intervals in a hot bath and the application of cold packs. Catherine personally administered much of the therapy. The result of Catherine's hydrotherapy was that "the leg was saved."⁹⁰

A very similar story of treatment success was attributed to Florence Soper Booth during her long tenure as Officer in charge of the Women's Social Services. A girl working in one of the Rescue Homes had been injured in the laundry. Florence's first approach was to seek professional orthodox medical consultation. When the regular physicians recommended "amputation," Florence requested the opportunity to at least attempt a domestic alternative. As treatment, she

soaked the leg, with the sore covered by a cloth, in hot soapy water, with pure soap, at least twice a day. The leg was covered with a clean rag before

⁸⁹Catherine Bramwell Booth, Catherine Booth: The Story of Her Loves (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970), 135.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*

it came out of the water - that way it never came in contact with the air and no infection reached it. Then it was wrapped round. The leg was saved.”⁹¹

Seventy years after Catherine had immersed herself in the study of hydrotherapy at Mr. Smedley’s Hydropathic Establishment, her daughter-in-law lamented the fact that the practice had not advanced within the Army as Catherine had hoped.⁹² Florence Soper Booth contended that a culturally fostered parental laziness combined with the ready availability of drugs were to blame. It was easier and quicker to medicate a sick child than to “pack” one. Her retrospective analysis stressed the pragmatic nature of the introduction of hydrotherapy within the Army. In the late nineteenth century orthodox medical care was frequently unavailable and prohibitively expensive: Dr. Hunter, at Smedley’s, had been willing to treat Salvation Army Officers without payment.⁹³ Prominent early Officers, such as Staff-Captain Fry had studied “health Culture seriously, and afterwards wrote a treatise on the subject.”⁹⁴ Both William and Catherine Booth believed that The Salvation Army had a role to play in the domestic education of the poor, which included rudimentary instruction in health “hygiene.”

⁹¹Florence Soper Booth’s extant diaries contain frequent references to her use of hydrotherapy with her husband Bramwell and their children. For example, January 3, 1887 “Baby not so well, and we are taking great care of her. She is very drowsy, just as Cath was as if sickening for something feverish. Gave her first pack.” January 5, 1887 “Baby very ill last night and today. Serious chest infection... We put hot fomentations to baby’s back and front about every 3 hours. B. and I got up in the night to do it. He is so lovely with the sick and so clever with the treatment.” January 7, 1887 “Darling B. came home very poorly - indeed frightened me - had pain in his body and sickness - looked dreadful - but sitz and bottle and warm enema brought him round. I think the anxiety about baby brought dysentery and caught cold on top of it.”

⁹²“Florence Booth’s Life Story,” The Sunday Circle (18 February 1933).

⁹³The War Cry, 8 November 1884.

⁹⁴Henry Edmond’s Diary re: Scotland Command, 1879. The Salvation Army International Heritage Centre Archives, London, England.

But despite the influence of William and Catherine Booth and the extended Booth family, there was never a homogeneity of acceptance of hydrotherapy within the Army. Although George Scott Railton was nursed through a virulent case of smallpox by Mrs. Booth in 1876 with the help of hydrotherapy, he remained personally unconvinced, and chided Florence upon learning that she was using it with her children. "I am so horrified at the idea of that precious little Catherine the third being put into packs that I cannot refrain from remonstrating... What can come of a system whose one idea is to force everything right by the pores?"⁹⁵

William himself seems to have remained ambivalent, although a proposal for a 100-bed Salvation Army hospital described in The Deliverer by the Army's medical advisor indicated that "In his approval of the idea, the General suggested the addition of a Hydro for such diseases as are better cured by water treatment."⁹⁶ William Booth frequently referred others to hydropaths like Richard Metcalfe for treatment. He recommended that the Officer, Thomas McCallum, receive training in hydrotherapy at Matlock and be utilized as the Army's therapist. But his correspondence reveals a degree of personal scepticism.

I have a comfortable room here, and everything is quiet. I have had a bit of a Turkish and a Galvanic operation, both of which I suppose are intended to be useful, but I cannot say that I have much faith if any... The Turkish is good for you and for other people. I never derived any benefit from it.⁹⁷

⁹⁵Florence Soper Booth, "Florence Booth's Life Story," The Sunday Circle (18 February 1933).

⁹⁶"The Grey Angel of Success," The Deliverer (September 1895).

⁹⁷William Booth to Bramwell Booth, from Dr. Metcalfe's Hydro, Richmond, Surrey, 14 August 1899. The Salvation Army International Heritage Centre Archives, London, England.

The “Humbug of Homoeopathy”

Considerably more controversial in the Victorian period would have been the Booth family’s adoption and promotion of the system of medicine known as homoeopathy. Prominent medical journals of the period such as The Lancet and The British Medical Journal railed against the popularization of a theory they characterized as a “plague spot”⁹⁸ on the profession of medicine or the choice of “old women, male and female, and of weak-headed clergymen.”⁹⁹

Homoeopathy had been the subject of controversy in the United Kingdom from the 1840’s when the work of Samuel Christian Hahnemann (1755-1843) was first translated into English and popularized among the British public. Born in Meissen ,Saxony, Hahnemann was a capable linguist who supported himself through his medical studies by translating scientific texts. It was while translating the text of Cullen’s Materia Medica¹⁰⁰ into German that Hahnemann became both intrigued and sceptical of Cullen’s theory of the effect of cinchona bark or quinine on “fever.” Hahnemann took quinine himself and claimed to have developed other symptoms of the “fever” without the pyrexia. Here, he believed, was “a remedy that was effective for disease which when given to a healthy person, induced the symptoms of the disease.”¹⁰¹ Furthermore, he asserted that ancient physicians such as Hippocrates and Paracelsus had documented similar reactions and incorporated their findings into their pharmacology. Hahnemann attempted to substantiate

⁹⁸“Homoeopathy,” The Lancet (15 May 1875): 709.

⁹⁹“Homoeopathy,” The Lancet (28 January 1860): 97.

¹⁰⁰Edward Meryon, “On Homoeopathy,” The Lancet (10 February 1866).

¹⁰¹Boyd, Introduction to Homoeopathic Medicine, 6.

his claims through a series of what he called “provings.” By this he meant the accumulated observations of a group of healthy subjects who were given daily “remedies” and asked to record their reactions. His own materia medica consisted of the collection of these findings.

Samuel Hahnemann’s theories received broad attention during at least three significant nineteenth-century epidemics. In 1812, Napoleon’s troops, retreating from Moscow, brought in their wake an epidemic of typhus. Hahnemann was reputed to have treated 180 of these post-war cases with only a single fatality. In the European cholera epidemic of 1829-1830, a student of Hahnemann’s reported only six deaths per 154 patients treated for the disease homoeopathically, compared to a rate of 55% of 1500 dying under orthodox medical intervention. At the conclusion of a cholera epidemic in England twenty-five years later, Parliament called for a comparison of treatment outcomes from various hospitals. Initially, no homoeopathic hospitals were included in the survey. However when, in response to public pressure, they were tallied in, the homoeopathic institutions reported death rates in the range of 16.4% compared with orthodox rates of 51.8%. For homoeopaths, such results validated the truth of their theoretical claims. But, as Robert Fuller points out, this is only one possible explanation for the system’s success. He writes,

The infinitesimal doses used by homoeopathic physicians proved far more beneficial in cases where the bleeding and purgings of regular physicians so weakened patients that they failed to overcome illnesses that if left alone, would have run their natural course and receded. Thus, for example,

in cholera epidemics, homoeopathic advocates could point to demonstrably better results among their patients.¹⁰²

Hahnemann and his homoeopathic followers maintained that through close attention to scientific method they had arrived at general and universal laws of healing. Later homoeopaths would stress their founder's commitment to empiricism.

His assertions were grounded upon facts, the result of patiently and oft-repeated investigation. For several years he kept his discovery to himself; at the same time that he was arranging and accumulating evidence founded upon facts, which were diligently collected and closely scrutinized.¹⁰³

According to Hahnemann, there is within the human person a balancing mechanism or vital force which seeks to maintain the equilibrium which manifests itself as health.

Diseases were "purely dynamic disturbances of the spirit like vital force."¹⁰⁴ The goal of homoeopathy is not to remove or suppress symptoms but to bring the organism back to a state of total balance.¹⁰⁵ According to these practitioners, each person has a unique pattern of symptoms when they become ill. By matching these experienced symptoms with the remedy most likely to induce these same symptoms when given in large dosages to

¹⁰²Robert Fuller, Alternative Medicine and American Religious Life (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 24.

¹⁰³E. H. Ruddock, The Stepping Stone to Homoeopathy and Health (Chicago: Halsey Brothers Publishers, 1885), 18.

¹⁰⁴Samuel Hahnemann, Organon of the Art of Healing, 5th American ed., trans. from the 5th German ed. C. Wesselhoeft, M.D. (New York, Philadelphia: Boericke and Tatel, 1879), v.

¹⁰⁵A contemporary physician who incorporates homoeopathic remedies as a compliment to orthodox treatments observes, "The idea that the body itself might be aided and abetted in its endeavours to cure the disorder and disharmony responsible for disease may have seemed ridiculous and scarcely worthy of attention to the men of Hahnemann's generation. It is by no means so absurd today, with our knowledge of immunology, allergy, molecular biology and even sub-molecular physics." Hamish Boyd, Introduction to Homoeopathic Medicine, 8. While nineteenth-century homoeopaths wrote of restoring balance, current literature states "Homoeopathy thinks of disease symptoms as a weakness in the natural defense mechanisms of the body and tries to stimulate these defense mechanisms to allow the body to heal itself." "Ask Your Pharmacist" newsletter prepared and reviewed by pharmacists for the Canadian Pharmaceutical Journal.

healthy people, the person can be cured. This is what Hahnemann called the principle of “Similia similibus curentur”; let like be treated by like.

The reaction of the orthodox medical press to Homoeopathy was consistent and scathing throughout the nineteenth century. As has already been discussed, the fact of homoeopathy’s aristocratic patronage, initially on the Continent, and then in Britain, positioned it as a significant economic threat to the practice of “regulars.”

From mid-century, the criticism of homoeopathy published in The Lancet or The British Medical Journal echoed the cultural analysis of a work like John Stuart Mill’s The Spirit of the Age. Mill had lamented what he perceived as a kind of shallow democratization of English intellectual discourse. The nineteenth century was a time in which

Every dabbler ... thinks his opinion as good as another’s. It is rather the person who has studied the system systematically that is regarded as disqualified... People pride themselves upon taking a ‘plain, matter of fact view of a subject.’¹⁰⁶

Orthodox physicians felt that this was particularly problematic in the domain of medical and therapeutic knowledge: the vulnerability of ill people needing and seeking relief made them unusually susceptible to the rhetorical excesses of those whom regulars regarded as charlatans. Homoeopathy, they asserted, flourished in an “age of credulity,” and in the “favourable soil of dense ignorance, extreme self-conceit.” Patients were hearing “nonsense, clothed in pretentious jargon which sounds like science.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ John Stuart Mill, The Spirit of the Age, ed. F. A. von Hayek, Chicago, 1942. Articles reprinted from The Examiner (January - May 1831).

¹⁰⁷ The Lancet (28 January 1860): 96.

Ironically, a considerable aspect of homoeopathy's popular appeal lay in the approach it took to the compilation of a patient's medical history - a methodology scorned by the orthodox practitioner. What were regarded by The Lancet as "the absolutely absurd directions given as to diagnosis; how everything is to be written down in the patient's words, however garrulous, without interpretation and each symptom on a separate line"¹⁰⁸ were considered by homoeopaths to be the critical factor in facilitating healing. They asserted that the focus of health intervention should not be the disease but the sick individual.

It is the symptoms of the patient, not necessarily the symptoms of the disease for which the patient consults ... what you need to discover is the remedy needed by the patient himself; the remedy that corresponds to him, body and soul, and more especially soul. You need his individual remedy; the remedy for which the symptoms inherent in himself - not those dependent on his pathological lesions - cry out.¹⁰⁹

Although Catherine Booth was aware of the Homoeopathic system as early as 1852,¹¹⁰ she became a convinced advocate for its practice during the first year of her marriage. Writing to her mother, Catherine advised Mrs. Mumford to "Go at once to the homoeopathic dispensary of Dr. Crownings. I believe in it more than ever... William has given sixteen shillings for a book for me to study on the subject."¹¹¹ As had been the case with hydropathy, Catherine is credited with having convinced others in the extended family of the value of homoeopathic alternative treatment modalities and promoting it as

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 97.

¹⁰⁹ Margaret Tyler, "A Study of Kent's Repertory," in Boyd, Introduction to Homoeopathic Medicine, Appendix, 268.

¹¹⁰ Booth Tucker. The Life of Catherine Booth. 1:153

¹¹¹ Catherine Bramwell Booth, Catherine Booth: The Story of Her Loves (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970), 152.

a system within the broader denominational “family.” Florence Soper Booth’s diary contains references to the treatment of her baby with a “serious chest infection”¹¹² through the use of aconite and antimonium tart in addition to the fomentations and hot packs of hydrotherapy. Aconite and Antimonium Tartaricum were two of the most common homoeopathic remedies used for respiratory infections. The first was generally given at the onset of symptoms, for example, to a child with a sudden fever, very red throat, dry mouth and extreme thirst. The latter, antimonium, was reserved for “extreme cases of pneumonia and particularly for the rattling of mucus up and down the bronchial tubes.”¹¹³ Florence also wrote of referring members of Salvationist families to Homoeopathic institutions in London.

Miss Ward came up before lunch to say that the nurse Mrs. Railton had to take care of the baby while she was in Amsterdam was ill with rheumatic fever. She did not know what to do with her. I could only suggest a letter for the Homoeopathic hospital. Heard in the evening they had got her in comfortably.¹¹⁴

As in the case of the use of hydrotherapy, William Booth seems to have remained cautious with respect to the personal endorsement of homoeopathy. Although Booth’s correspondence makes frequent reference to his utilization of homoeopathic remedies, he was repelled by the theoretical dogmatism which often accompanied its practice. General Booth, describing himself as “very ill” with diarrhoea on a tour of South Australia in 1899 wrote home to his son and “Chief,” Bramwell,

I consented to have a doctor. All I asked was that he should be a good one, but I suppose the people with whom I am staying are Homoeopaths, so I

¹¹²Florence Soper Booth, *Personal Diary*, 5 January 1887. The Salvation Army International Heritage Centre Archives, London, England.

¹¹³Hamish Boyd, *Introduction to Homoeopathic Medicine* (Beaconsfield, Bucks, England: Beaconsfield Publishers, 1989), 97.

¹¹⁴Florence Soper Booth, *Personal Diary*, 13 May 1887.

fell into the hands of a Homoeopath. He has a diploma for both Homoeopathy and Allopathy and talks about practising both, but he prefers the former and like a great many other people he hardly likes any other remedies than those which are in harmony with his own principles to effect any benefit. He gave aconite and (word removed) which acted favourably and threw me into a fine perspiration. He has been most attentive, has called sometimes two or three times a day, been fetched up at three o'clock in the morning and altogether has been most anxious to help me. I said I thought there had better be a consultation, as I wanted a man of another school.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵William Booth to Bramwell Booth, 13 March 1899, from Adelaide, South Australia. The Salvation Army International Heritage Centre Archives, London, England.

CHAPTER THREE

The Regulated Life: the medicalization of morality

You are all right if you never see another mutton chop in this world - and I am quite sure you will get none in the next.¹

The “tongue in cheek” nature of William Booth’s endorsement of the vegetarian cause in The Field Officer magazine, January 1902, was congruent with his attitude to alternative medical systems. As a component of the role assumed by a military general in insuring the physical well being of the troops, Booth was prepared, even eager, to recommend particular health practices and regimens. He authorized much of this advice by its inclusion in manuals such as the Orders and Regulations for Officers. But as in the case of the choices made for the treatment of disease, the founder of The Salvation Army’s personal theories of health maintenance remained tentative, exploratory, and open to revision.

Dietary management as an expression of spiritual asceticism and the regulation of desire is a historically recurring theme in Christian spirituality, and has received sustained theoretical attention in the work of the sociologist, Bryan Turner.² Turner traces the etymology of the English word “diet” to its Greek precursor, “diaita,” meaning a mode of life, especially that lived in accordance with rules. A formal “dietary” is a statement of

¹William Booth, The Field Officer (January 1902): 45.

²See for example, B. S. Turner, “The Government of the Body: Medical Regimens and the Rationalization of Diet,” British Journal of Sociology 33 (1982): 254-69, or “The Discourse of Diet,” Theory, Culture and Society 1:23-32, as well as Turner’s expanded treatment of the subject in The Body and Society: Explorations in Social Theory (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984).

rule, regulating the consumption of food. In The Body and Society Turner traces the discourse of diet in modern Europe, arguing with Weber that the exploration of dietary reform by nineteenth-century health reformers, and its incorporation into the discourse of mainstream medicine by late century represents a process of “rationalization and secularization.” Turner argues that a shift can be demonstrated in dietary discourse from an emphasis on the moral role of food choices in the suppression of desire or personal self-control to an efficiency language concerned with the role played by diet in maximizing the capacity of the body for labour. “Iatromathematical” somatic understandings,³ which regarded the body as a machine requiring regulated, calculable energy input for optimum functioning, reclaimed the dietary debate from the mystics and placed it, by the late nineteenth century, within the regulatory authority of a strengthening medical profession.

The earliest Salvation Army pronouncements on diet and the promotion of vegetarianism reflect this “secularized” emphasis on improving the physiological functioning of the human body for the achievement of a task. The task was world evangelization. The problem, for a small if passionate fighting force, was limited human resources and physical energy for the grandness of the religious vision. As was the case with the Army’s utilization and promotion of alternative medical systems, the earliest impetus for “food reform” came from the Booth family, catalyzed by the toll exacted on their health by a lifestyle of exhausting, chaotic activism. Very quickly, their personal health

³Bryan Turner, “The government of the body: medical regimens and the rationalization of diet,” The British Journal of Sociology vol.33 no.2 (June 1982): 259.

experimentation was applied to a burgeoning philanthropic enterprise, both in the understanding and treatment of alcoholism and as a helpful health strategy for those working in “foreign fields.” The type of religio-behavioural discourse of vegetarianism adopted by the Army leadership in the 1880s was profoundly legitimized in popular culture by the claim that it was undergirded by advances in scientific physiology. Only at late century, when the movement was settling into a denomination concerned for the nurture of a second generation of saints, was the medicalized morality of the language of “food reform” resacralized as a spiritual discipline and explicitly related to impulse control and “holiness” teaching. For example, Salvationist leaders came to see vegetarianism as a useful adjunct in the struggle against the “dread disease” and soul destruction of masturbation.

The Family

The most prominent advocates of the vegetarian cause within and on behalf of the Army were Florence and Bramwell Booth. Married in 1882, they embraced “dietary reform” late in 1887 out of what they termed “anxious concern” for the health of their family.⁴ This concern for the physical health of her husband and children emerges repeatedly in Florence’s extant diaries. Bramwell, William Booth’s eldest son and second-in-command or “Chief,” was The Salvation Army’s primary administrative Officer. His wife agonized over the pace he kept, and his inattention to his personal health, asserting a year before they began to experiment with vegetarianism that he “literally eats nothing worth eating.”⁵

⁴Florence Soper Booth, *The Officer* (January 1893).

⁵Florence Soper Booth, *Personal Diary*, 6 March 1886. The Salvation Army International Heritage Centre Archives, London, England.

Associates of the Booth family in the mid-80s observed the toll placed upon their family life by the demands of administering the new Army. One contemporary observer described 1 Rookwood Road, Stamford Hill, the home in Clapton to which William and Catherine moved in 1885, as a “railway station.”

Everything had to give way to the Army. Family life ... vanished at one gulp into the mouth of the Army. Meals were served when they could be served, and were bolted rather than eaten... There was little attention to meals. It was bad for the rest of the family, and poor Mrs. Booth knew it, and grieved over it.⁶

Against such a domestic backdrop, Florence was quite prepared to experiment with the diet proposed in a book forwarded to her by her mother-in-law, Catherine. The manual was an American publication, written by C. E. Page and entitled The Natural Cure of Consumption, Constipation, Bright’s Disease, Neuralgia, Rheumatism, “Colds” (Fevers), etc.⁷

Readers of The Natural Cure made strange bedfellows. Because Dr. Page’s writing was so ideologically eclectic, his self-proclaimed Health Manual for the People appealed to the sentiments of a colourful if disparate range of late nineteenth-century reformers. Page claimed that the regimen he promoted - a diet consisting entirely of uncooked cereals, fruit and nuts, was the most clean, natural, simple and “emancipatory” possible. The manual, in effect, offered a synthesis of strands of nineteenth-century vegetarian theory. Page’s work served up a buffet of metaphysical, physiological and practical arguments for

⁶Harold Begbie, Life of William Booth, vol. 2 (London: MacMillan and Co., 1926), 31.

⁷C. E. Page, The Natural Cure of Consumption, Constipation, Bright’s Disease, Neuralgia, Rheumatism, “Colds” (Fevers) Etc. (New York: Fowler and Wells Co., n.d.).

the elimination of “flesh” from the human diet. It was permeated with the notions of disease as the “manifestations of a deeper social malaise“ which Turner sees as so representative of the period.⁸

Vegetarians conventionally made much of the contrast between the “clean” diet they promoted and the “filth of flesh.” Page’s dietary reflects the Victorian horror of “putrefaction”: the image of a cesspool of rot in which disease breeds and from which it emanates. For the food reformers, the human alimentary track was envisioned as physiologically analogous to the clogged, corrupting sewers of the urban Victorian city.⁹ Sanitary reformers from the time of Southwood Smith¹⁰ had identified the inadequacies of the English sewage system and postulated a correlation between poor sanitation and the spread of epidemics such as cholera and typhoid. For a theorist such as Page, vegetarianism made possible a kind of personalized sanitary reform. On the basis of the observation that cooked foods tended to spoil more quickly than raw ones, Page asserted that the diet he recommended would pass through the digestive system without putrefaction. It was not an unorthodox medical view. In 1890 the BMJ reported on a lecture given in Paris by the French physician, Dujardin-Beaumetz entitled “Vegetable Diet as a Therapeutic Option.” The physiological thesis was the same: “Vegetable tissues

⁸Turner, The Body and Society, 167.

⁹This image also figured prominently in the literature of the water cure movement. See for example, “Cure for Inebriates,” Herald of Health 6 no.4 (October 1865). The human body is described as “a multitude of little sewers which nature has provided to carry away the impurities of the system.”

¹⁰Heywood Smith, “That Damning Drink: Sin and Disease,” The Deliverer (November 1892).

undergo less change than animal tissues; the latter become quickly decomposed and produce numerous toxic substances.”¹¹

It cannot be disputed that a concern for pure, unadulterated food lay appropriately within the disciplinary gaze of the strengthening health professions. An 1863 Privy Council report estimated that as much as one third of all meat sold in Britain came from diseased animals. Bread was regularly whitened by the addition of alum. The first pure food act was passed through Parliament in 1860, but its passage was not backed up by an infrastructure of compulsory inspection. Consequently, Haley contends that

throughout most of the nineteenth century, Britons had little protection against unwholesome food and drink. We can only guess at how many tons of adulterated tea, rancid butter and polluted meat were sold and consumed monthly throughout the kingdom.¹²

Scientific Sanctification

However, the images of decomposition, toxicity and impurity which characterized the late nineteenth-century vegetarian debate was a language in use far beyond discussions of sanitation standards: it permeated the discourse of perfectionist or holiness sectarianism at mid-century. In publications such as the Herald of Health¹³ vegetarianism was promoted as an expression of the doctrine of sanctification “come of age.” According to

¹¹“Special Correspondence - Paris- Vegetable Diet as a Therapeutic Agent,” British Medical Journal (7 June 1890).

¹²Bruce Haley, The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1987), 12.

¹³See James C. Whorton, Crusaders for Fitness. The History of American Health Reformers (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), 139-140 for a description of the evolution of this periodical. Initially launched as the Water Cure Journal to promote hydrotherapy, the journal went through multiple name changes under the editorship of two ‘regularly’ educated physicians who ‘converted’ to alternative practice, Russell Thacher Trall and Martin Luther Holbrook.

this religious systematization, the human body required a physiological cleansing or purification in order that it might be a fit receptacle for man's "immortal spirit." St. Paul's injunction to present one's body as a "living sacrifice" could be scientifically heeded through dietary reform. Sanctification could be scientifically pursued! W. T. Vail, an American hygienic reformer asserted,

Christianity itself, it is true, recognizes and enjoins the necessity of the purification and sanctification of the body; but until the advent of Hygiene or hygeio-therapeutics, mankind had no science, no regular system, no pretended plan, even through which they might hope to achieve this great and glorious result.¹⁴

In a similar manner, Page assumed a relationship between a body "purified" through the ingestion of vegetable foods and fibre and a purified "soul." He was convinced that the interior cleanliness achieved through vegetarianism would "increase the spiritual perceptions greatly." Here, the reformer was essentially expressing an argument for vegetarianism which antedated the Christian tradition but which exerted a strong enough influence in modern Europe for vegetarians to be commonly referred to as the Pythagoreans. In the sixth century B. C., the Greek philosopher Pythagoras had contended that eating vegetable foods reinforced the higher and more rational elements in human nature. Human life was understood as a precarious balancing between two poles - the Divine and the bestial. The character and existential destiny of each individual was determined by which pole was most closely approached. The act of killing and eating an animal was brutalizing, inclining the person to the bestial polarity. Vegetarianism,

¹⁴W. T. Vail, M.D. "The Morals of Hygiene," Herald of Health 3 No.4 (April 1864): 132.

conversely, tilted the balance towards the divine.¹⁵ This was the kind of rhetoric used by London vegetarians such as Lady Augustus Paget, wife of the British ambassador to Vienna. Paget, a prominent advocate of the vegetarian cause in the 1880s asserted that the diet worked by “dematerializing the mind and refining the lower instincts ... rendering people gentle, docile, more spirituelle.”¹⁶ Her conviction that there was a link between the consumption of meat and social violence was a further manifestation of Pythagorean influence. Because of the stimulating properties attributed to “flesh,” meat was believed to heighten natural aggression. It was argued that this physiological effect upon the human body, in combination with the desensitization required to butcher animals and prepare meat for the market, was ethically “brutalizing.” Lady Paget went so far as to assert that murderers and mercenaries had frequently learned their trade and perfected their technique in the local butcher shop!¹⁷

Not only was a vegetarian diet “clean”: it was “simple.” Vegetarian publications such as The Natural Cure tantalized readers with a millennial vision of a restored Eden on earth, brought about through dietary reform. To subsist on food “plucked from the trees” or gathered from the ground was to enter a peaceable kingdom, cleansed of the corruption of civilization. To exchange the over-processed, adulterated foodstuffs of society for raw fruit and nuts was to honour the Creator’s intent and cooperate in a renewing of the world. Vegetarianism was “powerful because it works with nature, not against her.”

¹⁵See Stephen Nissenbaum, “Vegetarianism,” in Sex, Diet and Debility in Jacksonian America (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1980) for a helpful discussion of eighteenth-century sources which influenced both America and Continental nineteenth-century vegetarian movements.

¹⁶Charles W. Forward, Fifty Years of Food Reform: A History of the Vegetarian Movement in England (London: The Ideal Publishing Union, 1898), 114.

¹⁷Ibid.

Correct dietary choice could “bring back the human race to its original physical perfection and advance its moral purity.”¹⁸

As well as being clean and simple, the adoption of a vegetarian diet was emancipatory. Vegetarianism, it was argued, could play a liberating role in women’s experience. It would affect the domestic well-being of both children and their mothers. Because of the nutritional value of each allowed dietary item, children could be afforded the liberty of unrestricted food choice. This self-determination of selection and amount would result in a “harmonious and happy” home environment.

The liberation promised to women by Dr. Page’s Natural Cure was more ambiguous. Dietary reform would radically reduce the time women spent in food preparation. Less physical drudgery would make them “more fit” for their “natural” reproductive functioning. Because it was not recommended that foods be cooked, Page claimed that mothers “would be released from the serfdom of the kitchen where she now exhausts herself to the injury of her family, her incessant labours tending to make her unfit for the production of robust children.”¹⁹

¹⁸Vail, “The Morals of Hygiene,” 135.

¹⁹Page, The Natural Cure, 233. “Healthy reproduction” was the subject of endless public debate in the Victorian era, and the theme of a stream of popular advice manuals directed primarily to women of the middle classes. This national “breeding anxiety” has been helpfully analyzed by Sally Shuttleworth in “Demonic Mothers: Ideologies of Bourgeois Motherhood in the mid-Victorian era” in Linda Shires, ed. Rewriting the Victorians: Theory, History and the Politics of Gender (New York and London: Routledge, 1992).

Orthodox reaction

By the time the Booth family began to experiment with vegetarianism, the debate had entered the Victorian middle-class mainstream. A perusal of professional literature like The British Medical Journal and The Lancet indicate that prior to the mid-1870s vegetarianism was regarded within the medical community as the fad and folly of contemplatives and quacks. An awareness of the Pythagorean theory of a physiological link between a meatless diet and passive piety, even longevity, can be nonetheless inferred from a sarcastic review of vegetarian literature in the January 1861 edition of the BMJ. Reporting on the publication of the “illogical vegetarians’ new culinary pharmacopoeia, The Principles and Practice of Vegetarian Cookery,” the author conceded that research had been conducted on a community of vegetarian monks near Naples whose life span was considerably longer than the norm. However, he argued that the case was exceptional, and the life-style represented by the monks antithetical to the needs of an expanding, industrializing Empire.

Vegetarians must remember that the earth must be peopled, that underground railways must be burrowed out, steel clad Warriors launched, and doctors travel many a mile between sunrise and sunset.²⁰

Two years later, the same journal published eight arguments against the vegetarians from a periodical entitled the Family Herald, half of which were drawn from accepted “scientific” physiology and half from what it termed “natural law” or Biblical narrative. The article claimed that human teeth were structurally carnivorous, as was the human digestive tract. Apparently oblivious to the Eurocentricity of perspective, it claimed that the fact that man’s diet “universally” included meat had resulted in “the most beautiful forms

²⁰“The Week,” British Medical Journal (5 January 1861): 16.

and highest class brain.” Moreover, it was argued that the Christian tradition sanctioned a carnivorous diet through such stories as Peter’s vision of the creatures lowered from Heaven, and the instruction given to him to “kill and eat.”²¹

It was not until the mid-1870s that vegetarianism was afforded serious debate in the orthodox medical press. In September 1875, The Lancet included a review of a paper presented in the previous week claiming that a vegetarian diet was useful in the treatment of “intemperance” or alcoholism. Although the reporter felt that the paper had contained too much that sounded like “love potions or beauty powders” and remained unconvinced of the role “vegetable feeding” could play in the rehabilitation of the “genuine drunkard,” he evidently accepted as scientifically legitimate the proposition that meat acted as a physiological “stimulant.” “Meat is a stimulating diet, and in excess, it is well known to elevate the pitch of organic life to a point of high tension.”²² It was further asserted as a scientific datum that vegetarians consumed large amounts of food such as dry grains which promoted water absorption, thereby reducing thirst. However, in the opinion of The Lancet there was little to suggest that the reason the alcoholic consumed high levels of alcohol was to satisfy thirst! Although journals like The Lancet and BMJ occasionally reported on the proceedings of vegetarian and temperance congresses convened in the United Kingdom, regular medicine continued to adopt a highly sceptical stance as to any demonstrable health benefits from either cause. The editorial bias was clearly spelled out.

There will be no isms in the future of scientific enlightenment - no teetotalism, no vegetarianism, no antitobaccoism - in short, nothing of specialism in the ordering of a moderate life on natural principles.

²¹“A Word with the Vegetarians,” British Medical Journal (6 June 1863): 606.

²²“Vegetarianism - A Cure for Intemperance,” The Lancet (4 September 1875): 358.

Obviously, man was made to eat a mixed diet, including both animal and vegetable food. Food is more a matter of climate than anything else. Climate determines development, both as regards demand and supply... We have no sort of sympathy with the fads of the day. Our standpoint is the strictly and severely rational.²³

If The Lancet was determined to avoid medical sectarianism, The Salvation Army was no less determined to avoid polarizing religious or metaphysical perspectives. Prior to the turn of the century, Army attitudes to food reform stuck to what they regarded as the “strictly and severely rational.” Once again in evidence is the young movement’s studied avoidance of the speculatively controversial. That they held at best a tentative link with vegetarian “holiness” rhetoric is evident from the fact Booth’s Army was completely unwilling to legislate vegetarian practice, although they insisted that every Salvationist was called to live and preach a “holy life.”

Such detachment was not always easy to maintain, as the Vegetarian Societies actively cultivated relationships with the clergy, and routinely courted invitations to speak to church women’s groups and parish auxiliaries. In the mid-1880s, Charles Spurgeon, a prominent London clergyman with whom the Army had prior working association, spoke out on behalf of the vegetarian cause. An account of Charles Spurgeon’s “conversion” to food reform was published in the Temperance Record of October 1, 1885.²⁴ In 1886 The Reverend Dean Farrar addressed a gathering at The Orange Grove Vegetarian Restaurant and described the work of the London Vegetarian Society as “a great public service” to a culture where the pursuit of and increase in luxury and the evidences of starvation

²³“Vegetarianism,” The British Medical Journal (21 January 1885): 188.

²⁴Forward, Fifty years of Food Reform, 116.

appeared to be simultaneous developments.²⁵ Vegetarians frequently asserted that their strongest ideological support came from the clergy, particularly those representing Dissent.

In October 1887 Florence Soper Booth began to experiment with the new food regime. The sketchy jottings in her diary indicate her primary influences, her initial reservations and the reaction of family associates.

Monday, October 3, 1887. Mama sent us a book by C. E. Page, M.D., The Natural Cure - Fowler and Wells and Co. 753 Broadway, New York City. Very conclusive as all these books are. This hobby - uncooked food (little of it) and fresh air - We shall get some good hints from it which we shall be able to turn to good advantage for the children's sake.

Tuesday, October 18, 1887. Elizabeth met me at the station. We went to Headquarters and from there to the stores - bought a lot of nuts. I do hope this new diet is the right thing. It seems ... and it is certainly very little trouble in the house.

Thursday, October 27, 1887. Down to 259 leaving dear babes at home - felt very poorly - throat sore - and strange to say no milk hardly for baby - this will be a terrible calamity if it goes - I must drink more. I cannot think that it is the new diet as what is so evidently good for me must be best as a nursing mother.

Monday, October 31, 1887. ... over to see Mrs. Read - talked about the new diet - her mother vouchsafed one remark, "Well, Mrs. Booth, I am quite certain that none of Mrs. Read's children would ever be well without meat!"²⁶

Evidently, Florence and Bramwell were quickly convinced. Within a year of Florence's tentative domestic dietary reform, The Salvation Army's directive manual, Orders and Regulations for Field Officers was recommending vegetarian practice. A range of reasons

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Florence Soper Booth, *Personal Diary*, (1887). The Salvation Army International Heritage Centre Archives, London, England.

were suggested. The first reason given was physiological. It was “a great delusion to suppose that flesh meat of any kind is essential to health.”²⁷ This, according to the Orders and Regulations could be culturally demonstrated. “Considerably more than three parts of the work in the world is done by men who never touch anything but vegetables and farinaceous food, and that of the simplest kind.”²⁸ Already, The Salvation Army was envisioning an international mission thrust in asserting that Officers would do well to cultivate a taste for those “plainer” foods which could be obtained world- wide. A second reason given was the economic benefit which could accrue to the organization. Through dietary reform, a Salvationist would have

a means of saving a substantial amount of money to help forward the Kingdom of God. A pound of as good and strengthening, nourishing vegetable food can be obtained for twopence as in animal food will cost a shilling.²⁹

Additionally, it was argued that there was a correlation between the discipline expressed in lifestyle choices and the spiritual disciplines required in ministry. Eating habits could be an indicator of the state of the Officer’s soul. “People who are always preaching self-denial to others must practice it themselves, or their precepts will be hollow and worthless, and their labours will be in vain.”³⁰ Here, formally expressed in Salvation Army regulation, was an operative imaging of the human body as terrain for mastery and

²⁷Supplement to Orders and Regulations for Field Officers of The Salvation Army (London: Headquarters of The Salvation Army, 1889), 41. A year later the first Orders and Regulations for Salvation Soldiers was issued. It did not go as far as to recommend the elimination of meat from the diet, stating simply, “With brown bread and good vegetables, milk, eggs and fruit, there is very little need for meat,” 19.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 42.

²⁹*Ibid.*

³⁰*Ibid.*

conquest. Those Salvationists with adequate “patience and perseverance” in vegetarian habits would “soon find that their bodies will become their servants.”³¹

Most essentially, Salvationists were quick to adopt the logic of an equation between vegetarianism and “simplicity.” A further intrinsic relationship was assumed between reduced desire and human freedom.

The F.O. should be continually aiming at the greatest simplicity in life, reducing his wants to the smallest number consistent with health, and so making himself more and more independent of men and earthly things.³²

After the public stir created in 1890 by the publication of William Booth’s social scheme, In Darkest England and the Way Out, vegetarian reformers intensified their attempts to cultivate a relationship with General Booth in order to secure a Salvation Army endorsement of the cause of food reform. In January 1891, while Booth was conducting a two-day mission campaign in Manchester, executive members of the Vegetarian Society met with him, “urging the claims of vegetarianism ... and pointed out to him the economic advantages that could accrue if the system could be adopted in the industrial homes that were contemplated ... for dealing with the destitute classes.”³³ In discussion, it became apparent to them that although Booth was willing to “concede the advantages” of vegetarianism and described himself as “favourably disposed” in a personal sense, he was not prepared to make any formal statement on behalf of his Army. The issue was, he perceived, potentially divisive and therefore best left to the conscience of the individual Salvationist.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

³³Forward, Fifty Years of Food Reform, 119.

Three years later, the Society was able to secure a vegetarian “testimonial” from Florence Soper Booth, but the statement she made was submitted as a private citizen, not as the representative voice of The Salvation Army. Great care was taken in the Army’s internal periodical literature to stress the non-legislative nature of any vegetarian recommendations made. For example, in a series of articles written by Florence Soper Booth on “Health” for The Officer magazine, she presented a strong argument for vegetarian practice, but also a clear denominational disclaimer. Hers, she stressed, was not “an authoritative pen.” Rather, she was venturing “a few hints from practical experience.”³⁴

I am a vegetarian, and I believe it would be good for everybody to be the same. But I am not going to talk about that now. The Chief says the subject is too “strong meat.” I fully understand that you prefer such food as is commonly used, and I want to say a few words about that.³⁵

Three years later, this non-legislative principle was reaffirmed in the Army’s international journal All The World. In an article urging the international readership to promote breastfeeding and resist the pressures brought to bear upon mothers by advertisers for infant formulas, Florence reaffirmed her preference for the “Natural Diet.” But, she stated,

I do not for a moment expect the readers of All The World to follow our example in abstaining from meat, but I do most certainly affirm that it is quite possible to live healthily and happily without it, and what is important to many Salvationists and others, more economically.

The Army’s approach was to educate the denominational membership about vegetarianism and, where possible, make it an alternative. At Bramwell Booth’s

³⁴Florence Soper Booth, “Health-I,” The Officer (January 1893): 18.

³⁵Florence Soper Booth, “Health-II,” The Officer (February 1893): 50.

insistence, a vegetarian “bill of fare“ was provided for Cadets in the school which trained Officers at Clapton.³⁶ Advertisements ran in publications such as The War Cry and The Deliverer informing the readership that grains such as maize-meal, barley and semolina could be purchased through the Army’s Trade Headquarters in London.³⁷

Bramwell Booth’s own position was finally formally articulated in the form of nineteen assertions in a two-part series for The Local Officer in 1902, later reprinted in a journal known as The Herald of the Golden Age, and republished yet again by The London Vegetarian Society. Although Booth had been preaching his “gospel of porridge” in gatherings such as Officers’ Councils, this was the first time in the Army’s popular literature that religious and ethical arguments were developed in addition to the pragmatic or experiential arguments of the preceding decade. “According to the Bible,” wrote Booth,

God originally intended the food of man to be vegetarian. “God said, behold I have given you every herb-bearing seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree-yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.” Gen.1:29³⁸

Vegetarianism was favourable to “chastity and to a perfect control of the passions and appetites.” Considerable attention was given in this document to the cruelty to animals which attended their slaughter for human consumption. “God,” wrote Bramwell, “disapproves of all cruelty - whether to man or beast ... the occupation of slaughtering animals is brutalizing to those required to do this work.”

³⁶Catherine Booth, Bramwell Booth (London: Rich & Cowan, 1933), 137.

³⁷Florence Soper Booth, “Life at Home,” All the World (1896): 378.

³⁸Bramwell Booth, The Advantages of Vegetarian Diet (London: The London Vegetarian Society, n.d.).

Vegetarianism and Alcohol

Bramwell Booth's treatise also argued that vegetarianism protected people from drunkenness. This was a key point of congruence between The Salvation Army's reforming impulses and the claims made by the vegetarian movement at late century.

The Army's contention that alcoholism crucially impeded effective evangelization of the urban poor made Officers within the "reform" branch of Army work particularly receptive to the claim that a vegetarian diet helped individuals achieve sobriety in cases where religious exhortation and pastoral intervention had failed. Both Commissioner Frank Smith and Major Cooke, the Officer in charge of the Slum Work in Manchester in the 1890s were identified as vegetarians in Charles Forward's History of Food Reform in England.³⁹

With a logic akin to that of Salvationists who argued that women's conventional domestic competencies equipped them, in a public sense, to "mother society," vegetarians like Harriet Fowler promoted intervention with the alcoholic as a gendered enterprise.

Women, knowledgeable in dietary reform, could play a socially critical role.

Hitherto their efforts have been directed to the hearts and minds of their erring brothers; now let them attend to their stomachs. Let the womanly tact, the love, the sympathy, the self-sacrifice that have been so freely expended in moral and religious directions be turned into a dietetic channel, and, if I mistake not, many poor inebriates, who have been considered hopelessly incurable will be saved and become useful and respected members of society.⁴⁰

³⁹Forward, Fifty Years of Food Reform, 117.

⁴⁰Harriet P. Fowler, Vegetarianism: The radical Cure for Intemperance (New York: M. L. Holbrook and Co., 1879).

Although the Army regularly reported cases of men and women miraculously delivered from the desire for drink - stories like that of "Jane Johnson, Champion Drunkard of the world,"⁴¹ Salvationists recognized that this was not always the case. Army rehabilitative experience did not contradict Harriet Fowler's claim that "with the great majority of reformed inebriates, the appetite was simply overmastered, but not removed."⁴² Fowler, for whom dietetics seemed the application of scientific insight to salvific ends, elaborated her position.

This doctrine of complete eradication of appetite by conversion, besides being untrue, is also, under the disguise of cheer, a doctrine of profound discouragement. Many a true Christian, struggling with his appetite, may well say, if these calculations are correct: "Alas! Where is my conversion? I cannot be a converted man."⁴³

For those vegetarian reformers anxious to further a temperance agenda, alcoholism called for intervention on the physiological level. Meat was a "stimulant." This, they claimed, had been demonstrated in animal experiments. Fowler referenced a bizarre study reported in The Lancet in 1869: a bear in captivity exhibited gentle, quiet behaviour while it was fed exclusively on bread. When meat was introduced to the animal's diet, it became "vicious and even quite dangerous." Furthermore, domestic swine fed "flesh food" would become vicious. "Watch dogs" would only be useful to an estate if they were fed large amounts of meat.⁴⁴

⁴¹See "The Life of Jane Johnson, The Champion Drunkard of the World (Captured by The Salvation Army) As Related By Herself," (Leeds: Pinder and Howes, Printers and Publishers, 1883).

⁴²Fowler, 41.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid., 25.

The standard physiological argument propounded by vegetarians in the popular literature ran thus:

Meat, by its irritating effect upon the mucous membrane of a diseased stomach, increases gastritis (inflammation of the stomach) which disease almost always exists in drunkards. By increasing gastritis, it increases thirst, its accompaniment. Thirst calls imperatively for liquor. Therefore meat perpetuates intemperance.⁴⁵

Intemperance

There was no social issue more important to William Booth and early Salvation Army Officers than “intemperance” or alcoholism. It was Booth’s conviction that “the drink difficulty lies at the root of everything.”⁴⁶ In his estimation, alcoholism was the cause of 90% of all the “squalor, vice and crime” which the Army encountered. A. E. Dingle, in an otherwise fine economic analysis of the levels and nature of alcohol consumption at late century in Britain,⁴⁷ wrongly argues that no-one but the British socialists recognized the degree to which alcoholism was a response to rather than a cause of squalid urban environments. In fact, a religious reformer like Booth struggled both personally and as a strategist for his Army to understand and account for factors contributing to the abuse of alcohol. Salvationists ruefully recognized that the gin palace was “the natural outgrowth of social conditions.” The tap room was “in many cases the poor man’s only parlour.”⁴⁸ “Many a man takes to beer,” claimed Booth, “from a natural craving for the light, warmth, company and comfort which is thrown in along with the beer.” While alcohol

⁴⁵Ibid., 36.

⁴⁶William Booth, In Darkest England and The Way Out (London: The Salvation Army, 1890), 55.

⁴⁷A. E. Dingle, “Drink and Working Class Standards in Britain, 1870-1914,” The Economic History Review 25 no. 4 (November 1972): 622..

⁴⁸William Booth, In Darkest England, 56.

was indisputably the cause of significant social breakdown, Salvationists maintained that among the poor it was also fundamentally an escape from despair. Booth enjoined, "Let us never forget that the temptation to drink is strongest when want is sharpest and misery the most acute."⁴⁹

Like other Victorian temperance reformers, Salvation Army writers believed that the orthodox medical profession had contributed to the high national rates of alcohol and drug abuse. They warned their readers about the injudicious use of alcohol and narcotics such as morphine with the consequent possibility of addiction.⁵⁰ The Herald of Health, ever inflammatory on the subject of regular medicine, went so far as to assert that as a cause of alcoholism "in nine cases out of ten, the blame can be traced to the doors of the physician who has taught the people that alcoholic liquor is necessary as a medicine."⁵¹ It is certainly true that alcohol was one of the major elements in the conventional nineteenth-century pharmacopoeia. The physiological logic for its use was the concept of debilitation. Ill people were weak and had lost strength. Alcohol was a stimulant and therefore acted as a restorative tonic.

The writing of both William and Catherine Booth laid thoughtful emphasis on the social conditions which could predispose to alcoholic behaviour. But while they regarded intemperance as a result of social inequity, and even at times as an outcome of bad

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰See for example Thomas Peacock, "Freed from the Drug Devil," The Local Officer (December 1899). "... a doctor friend of mine gave me a hypodermic injection of morphine, to steady my nerves, and it worked so well that I became a slave of the habit almost immediately."

⁵¹The Herald of Health (1 January 1867).

professional practice, they also saw it as a devilish cause of social malady. The Salvation Army's periodical literature in the 1880s and 1890s popularized conventional understandings of the cultural and physiological outcomes of excessive drinking. In the first place, alcohol was asserted to be a major contributor to the incidence of crime. This, according to the Army periodical The Deliverer had been abundantly confirmed in the experience of professionals working within the legal system - magistrates and prison chaplains.⁵² Secondly, it was claimed that "the drink traffic is the greatest cause of poverty in England." Ensign Sowden, the author of the article, compared the annual national expenditure on alcohol, £130 million, with the amount spent on the food staples; bread, butter, milk and cheese - £10 million.⁵³ Salvationist writing expressed the popular belief that "drunkenness causes insanity ... the records of the various lunatic asylums leave us no doubt on this point."⁵⁴

Furthermore, they assumed that a "bad habit" such as excessive alcohol consumption could physiologically transmute into an acquired characteristic. "...the drink crave becomes a hereditary disease." Here, Army literature was popularizing the widespread medical theory that "evolutionary energy" could be dissipated by the "undue strain on brain tissue" caused by the stimulating properties of alcohol, and this loss of energy would result in "defective offspring."⁵⁵ Articles by Salvationist physicians described the "fatally diseased condition of moral and spiritual health ... transmitted to their offspring,

⁵²Ensign Sowden, "Temperance Legislation as it Affects Women," The Deliverer (May 1896).

⁵³See Dingle for a comprehensive economic analysis of the "drink trade" in Britain.

⁵⁴Ensign Sowden, The Deliverer (May 1896).

⁵⁵Ibid. For theoretical amplification, see Amy A. Pruitt, "Approaches to Alcoholism in Mid-Victorian Britain," Clio Medica 9 no.2 (1974): 95.

thus handing down from generation to generation the fateful and fearful love of strong drink.”⁵⁶ These they asserted to be the saddest cases encountered by early missionaries.

Intervention: The Christian Mission

Both William and Catherine Booth believed that they had been led of God to the inauguration of a ministry within that stratum of Victorian society where “want was sharpest” and “misery most acute.” In February 1874 Catherine challenged her readers to participation in what she regarded as the mission’s central task. “Let us go to the extreme of excessive care and effort for the hopeless cases.”⁵⁷ For Catherine, any attempted reclamation of the alcoholic was an expression of the movement’s primary emphasis. Missioners were enjoined to remain “true to our first principles - that the worse a man is, the more he needs our help, and the less others care for him, the more we must care.”⁵⁸ Mrs. Booth noted that despite the flood of Victorian philanthropy, there existed “no direct Christian organization for rescuing these armies of perishing souls within the English church.”

For both ideological and personal reasons Catherine Booth had a long history of concern for the social and familial impact of alcoholism. Her father, John Mumford, a carriage builder by trade, was at the time of his marriage an accredited Methodist lay preacher committed to the Temperance cause. In 1834 the Mumford family moved back to John’s

⁵⁶H. Williams, M.D. “The Need for Improved Legislation for Inebriates,” The Deliverer (January 1893). See also Heywood Smith, “That Damning Drink: Sin and Disease,” The Deliverer (November 1892).

⁵⁷Catherine Booth, “To the Rescue; or What Shall We Do in 1874?,” The Christian Mission Magazine (February 1874).

⁵⁸Catherine Booth, The Christian Mission Magazine (March 1874).

home town of Boston in Lincolnshire where he assumed a kind of unofficial leadership of the movement. In combination with his local political involvements, their home became a hub of regional Temperance activity. Catherine, as a twelve year old, was the prolific secretary of The Juvenile Temperance Society.⁵⁹ It seems, however, that John Mumford developed a drinking problem which seriously strained his marriage and ended his lay ministry.⁶⁰ Perhaps as a consequence Catherine adamantly insisted that she would never marry anyone who was not convinced of the necessity of total abstinence. At the time of William and Catherine's courtship, William felt that this position was extreme, prompting impassioned letters from Catherine in an attempt to convince him of the wisdom of her convictions. William evidently believed that there were medical or therapeutic indications for the judicious use of alcohol, a position which Catherine was unwilling to concede. She wrote,

I abominate that hackneyed but monstrously inconsistent tale - a teetotaller in principle, but obliged to take a little for my 'stomach's sake!' Such teetotallers aid the progress of intemperance more than all the drunkards in the land! And there are sadly too many of them among ministers ... my dear William will steadfastly resist such foolish advisers. I dare take the responsibility (and I have more reason to feel its weight than any other being). I have far more hope for your health because you abstain from stimulating drinks than I should if you took them. Flee the detestable thing as you would a serpent.⁶¹

⁵⁹F.de L. Booth Tucker, The Life of Catherine Booth, 16.

⁶⁰L. Shiman's assertion about the Mumford family is overstated. "Quickly descending from comfortable working class respectability into drunken squalor, the family was soon destitute." Crusade Against Drink in Victorian England (London: The Macmillan Press, 1988), 131. While it is true that there were grave financial implications for Sarah and Catherine Mumford, Sarah was too much the moral rigorist and protective matriarch to allow her home to descend into "drunken squalor."

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 81.

From the earliest days of the Booths' independent revivalism, Catherine used her preaching engagements to advance the Temperance cause. Their invitation to St. Ives in 1861 was at the behest of the Cornish Teetotal Methodist Church, a group which had severed its ties with the Wesleyan Conference because that Conference had passed a general order prohibiting the use of chapels for Temperance meetings. Most Methodist bodies of the period had "adopted a policy of non-committal on the liquor question."⁶² Catherine was determined that the issue be aggressively highlighted in her own ongoing ministry. She began by calling on the people of St. Ives to "Hoist the flag of death over the breweries and dramshops."⁶³

From the time of the establishment of The Christian Mission, Catherine identified a number of factors which she believed contributed to its effectiveness with the "drunkard." In the first place, many of the mission's converts were former alcoholics. Consequently, their testimonies of deliverance and healing were uniquely able to create a sense of the hope which was deemed essential to "cure." Secondly, a commitment to structural "adaptability" made the evangelists willing to conduct meetings and preach in secular premises or on the street, environments where it was easier for those not accustomed to church attendance to comfortably assemble. Additionally, Catherine claimed that The Christian Mission offered converts a new lifestyle and companions: it provided "a place of resort every night of the week in our various meetings ... filling up the vacuum created by his first abandonment of the public house, and finding him cheerful society."⁶⁴

⁶²Ibid., 318.

⁶³Ibid., 319.

⁶⁴Catherine Booth, The Christian Mission Magazine (February 1874).

The Salvation Army established its first formal institutional work for women “inebriates” in 1886 in Toronto, Canada. Prior to this, women with addiction problems had been accepted and treated within the parameters of the work going on for “fallen women” in the Rescue homes.⁶⁵ The Army was quickly perceived as pursuing an alternate approach to the treatment of the “drunkard”; less rigid, less moralistic than many other late-century agencies. Despite the Army’s fierce moral rhetoric and stern denunciation of the drink “trade,” in the work with individual alcoholics, it “softened the code.” According to one observer, the movement rejected “imposing edifices,” “cast iron regulations” or pretentious titles such as the “Asylum for Inebriates” or the “Dipsomania Institute.”⁶⁶ Instead, The Salvation Army housed its “drunkards” in “small whitewashed cottages” with “snowy steps,” residences intended to convey a sense of “perfect cleanliness and freshness.”⁶⁷ Consistently, the Army stressed the desirability of working with the inebriate in intimate, homelike environments, located if at all possible in the immediate vicinity of an expression of the movement’s evangelistic work or “Corps.”

Admission to an Army treatment home was intended to be uncomplicated and unconditional. “We take them in without question or comment at any time and under any circumstance.”⁶⁸ Relapse, although regrettable, was not to be a barrier to consequent

⁶⁵ See thesis, chapter 4:174ff.

⁶⁶ Faith Fenton, “Drunken Women’s Home,” The Toronto Empire (6 April 1889) reprinted in Rescue Notes and Anniversary Songs (Toronto: The Salvation Army, 1889), 2.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

attempts at sobriety. "It was hoped that alcoholics would come to realize that no matter how often they fail, there is always a home here."⁶⁹

William Booth and his medical advisors did believe that there were situations which called for the compulsory and involuntary confinement and treatment of the habitual drunkard. It was argued that "compulsory detention" might "have a deterrent effect upon the passions" of this kind of "perambulating pest."⁷⁰ Too often, an "alcoholically diseased husband" became the "oppressor and mortal terror" of his wife and children. Salvationists compared the desirability of compulsory treatment legislation in order to protect such "suffering little ones," with Public Health policies already in effect intended to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. The abuse of alcohol, it was argued, was "by far more ruinous and disastrous to the well-being of the community at large, and to the souls of men and women, than fever is fatal to their bodies."⁷¹

For Booth, such a strategy was as theologically sound as it was socially desirable. Because of the characteristic Wesleyan cast to his thinking with its emphasis on the holy life as the intrinsically happy life, Booth was unable to countenance the concept that an individual could knowingly preference sin. He asked,

What is it that leads people to do wrong - people of all classes, rich as well as poor? Not the desire to sin. They do not want to sin; many of them do not know what sin is, but they have certain appetites or natural likings, the indulgence of which is pleasant to them, and when the desire for their unlawful gratification is aroused, regardless of the claims of God, their

⁶⁹Ibid., 6.

⁷⁰See H. Williams, M.D. "The Need for Improved Legislation for Inebriates," The Deliverer (January 1893).

⁷¹Ibid.

own highest interest or the well-being of their fellows, they are carried away by them; and all the good resolutions they have made in the past come to grief.⁷²

To Booth's way of thinking, compulsory confinement was not only in society's best interest, but was also what the alcoholic most authentically longed for. Only compulsion could enable them to resist the onslaught of temptation which acted against their best interest.

Despite this belief in the desirability, at times, of involuntary detention of the alcoholic, The Salvation Army emphasized the need for approaches to intervention which honoured the needs and personality of the individual seeking help. Officers were encouraged to "be on the guard against applying any cast-iron treatment for all the women. What will please and help one woman may displease and discourage another."⁷³ "Within reasonable limits" there was "no objection to the women keeping pets" in an inebriates' home.⁷⁴

If at all possible, it was recommended that relatives be challenged to participate in the rehabilitative process by maintaining hopeful attitudes and by protecting the alcoholic from temptation after "they have passed out from the Army's care."⁷⁵ Additionally, the Army stressed the value of a signed contractual agreement between the applicant to a home and the Officer responsible for intake. This, it was maintained, was important

⁷²William Booth, In Darkest England and The Way Out, 263.

⁷³Orders and Regulations for Officers of the Women's Social Work (London: The Salvation Army, 1916), 308.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 309.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 299.

because “There is an instinct in the mind that unconsciously inclines an individual to fulfil any self-imposed task.”⁷⁶

A fee was levied for treatment in a Salvation Army Inebriates program. Financial arrangements were negotiated in terms of the individual’s ability to pay. Those unable to contribute financially would be treated free of charge as long as they were willing to work. Well-to-do clients were required to pay higher fees to assist the Home in providing for the classes unable to pay for their own maintenance and care.

By the end of the nineteenth century, The Salvation Army claimed to have learned through the experience of working with alcoholics that “in most cases it requires at least six months for women to recover physically and mentally”⁷⁷ from an addiction. Consequently, they recommended a lengthy period of residential care: cases of individuals wanting to be admitted for less than twelve months were to be reviewed with the Commissioner responsible for the Women’s Social Services.⁷⁸

A range of therapeutic practices were employed in the treatment of the alcoholic. Policies were established for detoxification which as often as not occurred in the local “barracks” or Salvation Army Corps. The Local Officer published a clear protocol to be used with drunkards who turned up in Army meetings. These “hints ... from a medical friend” provided Salvationists with recipes for domestic emetics and purgatives, made

⁷⁶Ibid., 301.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Ibid.

dietary recommendations for after-care and advised on the use of homoeopathic tonics during convalescence to treat “morning sickness, depression and the craving for stimulants.”⁷⁹

In those Homes where alcoholics were being cared for, Florence Soper Booth mandated the introduction of a vegetarian diet. Army reports claimed that the elimination of meat from the menus increased their rehabilitative success rates by 20-30%. “Even in the worst cases, women are pulled together by the vegetarian diet in less than a fortnight, while under the old regime of a stimulating diet, several weeks were required.”⁸⁰

However, Salvation Army workers maintained that the most critical components in any lasting treatment of the alcoholic were psychological and spiritual factors - not physiological ones. Drunks were cured by hope and faith in God. For Salvationists, this assumption was foundational and absolute. Other treatments, while helpful, were not healing. They claimed to have never observed a deliverance from addiction without a conversion of the heart.⁸¹ A spiritual transformation was maintained to be paramount. “The great point is to switch off their minds from morphia and whisky, and to switch them on to God.”⁸²

⁷⁹“The medical treatment of the drunks,” The Local Officer (April 1899):297.

⁸⁰Arnold White, “Inebriates’ Home for Women to be Opened in Toronto,” The War Cry (Toronto: n.d.)

⁸¹See thesis, chapter 4:154-155 for Catherine Booth’s assessment of the temperance movement.

⁸²“Inebriates Home to be Opened in Toronto,” The War Cry Toronto (n.d.).

Nothing was considered more essential for those engaged in work with inebriates than the ability to consistently foster and communicate an attitude of unwavering hope and expectation of change. Salvation Army Orders and Regulations legislated that Officers “must never under any circumstances allow a word to escape them which indicates a doubt concerning the woman’s ultimate victory.”⁸³ “A lively faith for the recovery of the most hopeless victims” was considered to be the most important qualification required of the Officer appointed to an Inebriates Home.

The Pressure to Politicize

Politicians in the 1890s recognized the potential value of Booth’s Army as a political ally. On March 15, 1893, Bramwell Booth wrote to his father, informing him of a meeting between a Salvation Army representative and W. S. Caine at the House of Commons. Caine was a teetotal M. P. who had been inaugurated as the first president of the National Temperance Federation in February 1884. He was requesting that William Booth make a formal statement in support of the Liquor Traffic (Local Control) Bill, soon up for debate in Parliament. Introduced by William V. Harcourt, the Liberal Chancellor of the Exchequer, this Bill called for two phases within each municipal process. If one tenth of the municipal electors approved, a poll was to be taken on the granting of liquor licenses. Then, if a two-thirds majority favoured prohibition, no new licenses were to be issued after a three year period had elapsed. Inns, hotels, restaurants and railway refreshment rooms were to be exempted from this new prohibitory legislation. Despite an avalanche of national temperance agitation, the Bill would come up against an impasse in

⁸³Orders and Regulations for Officers of the Women’s Social Work, 307.

the Commons with every introduction.⁸⁴ Bramwell communicated Caine's appeal to his father,

They all urged very strongly that you should make a pronouncement of some kind. They seem to feel that what is wanted is some rattling good start and the Bill will be passed... Caine is also very anxious that you should yourself address a petition to the House, signed on behalf of the Army, setting forth the evils of the Drink, and the Army's position to the subject. Not too long but as forcible as you like... He says he believes it would have a great impression, and do the Army a lot of good. He seems to think that the religious people are shamefully silent on the Drink Matter.⁸⁵

General Booth refused. In the years following The Salvation Army's involvement in the dramatic exposé of child prostitution in England and continental Europe and the ensuing legislative campaign to raise the age of consent known as "The Maiden Tribute Affair,"⁸⁶ William developed an intense aversion to the arena of political lobbying. After receiving a letter from Josephine Butler urging him to greater political involvement, he attempted to explain his feelings to Bramwell.

I have read Mrs. Butler's letter. My dear boy, I cannot go in for any more 'campaigns' against evils. My hands and heart are full enough. And moreover, these reformers of Society have no sympathy with the S. A. nor with Salvation from worldliness and sin. Our campaign is against Sin!⁸⁷

William Booth saw such involvement as an undesirable diversion or siphoning off of passion from The Salvation Army's central task of soul-saving. He knew his own power as a public speaker, but did not want it "squandered" on matters which he regarded as important but secondary. Booth feared that his Army and his own personal charisma

⁸⁴See L. Shiman, Crusade Against Drink in Victorian England, 222.

⁸⁵Bramwell Booth to William Booth, 15 March 1893. The Salvation Army International Heritage Centre Archives, London, England. Folder # 9 February 1893-December 1893.

⁸⁶See Frederick Coutts, Bread for My Neighbour: The Social Influence of William Booth (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1978), 45ff.

⁸⁷H. Begbie, William Booth, 95.

might be "used" by political opportunists. Furthermore, he recognized the hopelessly divisive nature of the Bill up for debate. L. L. Shiman sketches the political landscape of the early 1890s: "The socialists portrayed the temperance reformers as allies of the industrialists, while the teetotallers attempted to show that the socialists were defenders of the liquor trade."⁸⁸ Booth resisted identification with either camp. Bramwell, as second-in-command, was frustrated by his father's unwillingness to take a political stand and communicated his disagreement, arguing the intrinsic connection between the Parliamentary end sought and The Salvation Army's evangelistic mission.

What I feel is that this is the one thing which probably has more to do with our Salvation work than anything else there is on the carpet, or likely to be for the next five years outside ourselves, and if we could have given it a push we ought to have done. We take the platform to denounce drinking as well as the other sins. Why shouldn't we help to (?) the temptation to drink?⁸⁹

But William Booth feared partisan identification. He preferred to influence attitudes outside of formal political mechanisms. He was quite willing for the Army's periodical literature to voice opinions on social policy. Two months earlier, an article in The Deliverer had appealed for "Parliament to give us the power to put our drunken neighbours under lock and key till reformation takes place."⁹⁰ Army periodicals called for the Sunday closing of public houses, the abolition of grocers' licenses, a reduction in the number of public houses in each neighbourhood, the regulation of drinking premises and the interdiction against selling liquor to children. This was considered defensible, because

⁸⁸Lilian Lewis Shiman, Crusade Against Drink in Victorian England (London: The MacMillan Press, 1988), 210.

⁸⁹Bramwell Booth to William Booth, 17 March 1893.

⁹⁰"The Need for Improved Legislation for Inebriates," The Deliverer (January 1893).

the Salvationist writers were only expressing a broad interdenominational consensus, not an identifiable party platform.⁹¹

Vegetarianism: And ‘The Terrible Tide of Vice’

Outside of The Salvation Army’s work with “Inebriates,” the only situation in which the denomination explicitly mandated a Vegetarian diet was in the attempt, within its membership, to “stem the terrible tide of vice and impurity sweeping the land,” a phrase by which the Salvationists, reflecting normative Victorian assumptions, meant masturbation. Although the language describing the dreaded “tide” was frequently religious or moral, the critical concern by late- century was medical. A “private and confidential” Salvation Army Memorandum on the subject, circulated to all Commanding and Local Officers in 1903, reveals a tacit acceptance of the dominant physiological theories of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁹² Masturbation was generally perceived as a serious threat to the health of the nation. It was believed to result in certain debility, and to cause the deaths “of countless numbers before they reach adulthood.” According to the Army document, “thousands of young women die today from no other cause. Thousands are today in the lunatic asylum; young yet hopeless idiots, just because of this one vice.”⁹³ Here, as in the rhetoric surrounding the consumption of meat, nineteenth-century health teaching was dense with images of pollution and

⁹¹Shiman, *Crusade Against Drink in Victorian England*, 226.

⁹²*Memorandum of Guidance to Commanding and Local Officers* (St. Albans: The Salvation Army, 1903). The history of such a medical understanding has been traced by Robert H. Macdonald to an anonymous pamphlet, the earliest copy in the British Library dating from 1710, entitled *Onania: or The Heinous Sin of Self Pollution and All its Frightful Consequences, in both Sexes Considered*. See “The Frightful Consequences of Onanism: Notes on the History of a Delusion,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 28 (1967): 423-31.

⁹³*Ibid.*, 5.

contamination. Reinforcing this fear of the “solitary vice” were descriptions of the masturbatory act in the male as wasteful, uneconomical and unproductive - a valuation abhorrent to the activist Victorian Imperial psyche. Masturbation was a contributor to the national “degeneration.” It resulted, through seminal emission, in the loss of the “vital force” necessary for both personal health and the production of robust offspring. One medical theorist went so far as to suggest that the loss of a single ounce of semen was the biological equivalent of the loss of forty ounces of blood.⁹⁴

The leadership of The Salvation Army believed that Officers and Local Officers had a moral responsibility to warn and protect Salvationist youth against masturbation’s “terrible consequences.” The memorandum advised Corps leaders to look out for the indicative symptoms that a young person was in danger: a pale, listless appearance, nervousness which almost amounts to twitching, heavy eyes, love for being alone. The pamphlet offered an explicit physiological explanation: years before a child should even be aware of their existence, nerve centres were excited:

The brain is robbed by this shock, and if it is repeated the victim begins to lose sense and memory. The digestive organs are weakened, and the food taken no longer nourishes properly. Indeed, sooner or later, if this habit is allowed to continue, the whole body languishes and fades from exhaustion - exhaustion of the brain which brings idiocy and madness; exhaustion of the nerves, which brings hysteria, convulsions and paralysis; or exhaustion of the whole system, which brings death by consumption of the lungs or of other organs.⁹⁵

Morally, Salvationists asserted that young people lost self-control and freedom by prematurely “meddling” with parts of their bodies, “intended for the most sacred and

⁹⁴Susan Cayleff, Wash and Be Healed, 54-55.

⁹⁵Memorandum of Guidance to Commanding and Local Officers, 5.

important duties.”⁹⁶ Treatment consequently involved a combination of the moral and the mechanical; spiritual and physical disciplines. In the first place, there was the need for confession and prayer because of the manner in which the practice corrupted the soul.

”The thoughts become impure, the mind dwelling upon unclean subjects, and the whole moral tone is lowered and debased.”⁹⁷ Officers were encouraged to manifest a spirit of forgiveness which would support the young person’s deliverance from their “guilty secret.”

Physical care was a matter of eliminating all stimulating influences, “abstaining from everything that is exciting and stimulating to the blood.” From a dietary standpoint, this meant first and foremost the elimination of “flesh meat.” Also prohibited were any hot beverages, all condiments, spices and sauces. Hard mattresses, cold baths and a series of typical Victorian mechanical devices were also recommended in the Army manual.

“A practical bent of mind, deep respect for facts, pragmatic skill in the adaptation of means to ends, a ready appeal to common sense”: such characteristics were quintessential attributes of the age.⁹⁸ They were certainly attributes which shaped the sensibility of the early Salvation Army. In a culture which commonly defined success as “energetic action for their own and the world’s good”⁹⁹ the quest for a diet which would maximize efficiency was regarded as an important and rational preoccupation. In a

⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷Ibid., 6.

⁹⁸Walter Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), 110.

⁹⁹Samuel Smiles, Self Help (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1874), 27.

culture, deeply dismayed by the “filth” and pollution of the vastly expanding urban cities, when “the romantic love of nature passed into a new phase” issuing in a “nostalgia for a lost world of peace and companionship, of healthy bodies and quiet minds,”¹⁰⁰ vegetarian claims to foster simplicity and naturalness were compelling. For an Empire which idealized strength as “force and firmness” and defined character as “the mastery of the passions, patience and resolution, the controlled energy focused on work,”¹⁰¹ the debate around wasteful, self-indulgence sexuality was as predictable as it now seems odd.

In his diary William Booth made note of an interview he had in Turin a few years earlier with a criminologist by the name of Lombroso. The professor had impressed him with his story of a visit with another late-Victorian religious revolutionary, Count Leo Tolstoy. Booth believed that Tolstoy had attained something which he himself was seeking - adequate strength for a grand vision, adequate vigour to complete his work.

What astonished Professor Lombroso the most, he says, was Tolstoy’s marvellous physical vigour. During the morning he played tennis two hours with his daughters, then he jumped on his horse and rode to a lake nearby, where his guest rejoined him. The Italian savant is a good swimmer, but when he and his host had been in the water for a quarter of an hour, Lombroso had to confess himself beaten. Next Tolstoy, in order to show that he was not exhausted, put his strong arms around Lombroso’s and lifted him up as if he were but a feather weight. After a vegetarian luncheon, during which he ate enormous quantities of green stuff, the two went for a walk and filled the rest of the afternoon with scientific discussions.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰Houghton, 79.

¹⁰¹*ibid.*, 198.

¹⁰²H. Begbie, William Booth, 152.

CHAPTER FOUR

Between the Classes and the Masses: Philanthropic Care and the Missioning Community

Benevolence has come somewhat into fashion of late. It has become the correct thing to do the slums, since the Prince of Wales did them; and this general idea of caring in some way or degree for the poor and wretched has extended itself even into the region of creeds, so that we have now many schemes for the salvation of mankind without a real Saviour.¹

In the autumn of 1884 in the Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, Catherine Booth delivered a series of lectures which have been described as the "most powerful and heart searching" of her preaching ministry.² One of the addresses, "Sham Compassion and the Dying Love of Christ," was a scathing attack on prevalent ideological trends in English philanthropy. At 55 years of age, Catherine was a popular and respected presence in the pulpits of London's West End. With a rhetorical style both articulate and measured, she denounced what she regarded as secularized versions of Christian compassion or "benevolence." By the term Catherine meant a wide range of philanthropic initiatives which had captured the imagination, the energy, and the pocketbooks of responsible Victorian citizens. She was correct. In the 1880s benevolence did seem to be "in fashion." More correctly, the 1880s represented a cresting of a current which had sought channels of entry into Britain's rapidly expanding industrial cities for most of the century. In such a social climate, Catherine Booth attempted to demarcate a Salvationist understanding of charitable

¹Catherine Booth, "Sham Compassion and The Dying Love of Christ," Popular Christianity (London: The Salvation Army, 1887), 57.

²F. de L. Booth-Tucker, The Life of Catherine Booth (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton and Kent Co., 1892), 338.

endeavour on behalf of “poor suffering humanity”³ from what she regarded as a deficient “Popular Christianity,” inclined to substitute social schemes for soul salvation. It was Catherine’s conviction that these “religions of bodily compassion” only managed to insure “a more eternal weight of misery at the cost of a little present relief.”⁴

In its earliest days The Salvation Army was obsessed with the hereafter, not the here and now. Fueled by a passion to keep people from a vividly expounded Hell of unending duration, it was deemed expedient to do something about the hellish conditions of Victorian urban poverty. Paradoxically, a studied disregard for temporal well-being freed up early Salvation Army workers to accomplish a great deal of socially-applauded work. Regarding society as both disordered and diseased, pioneering Officers saw themselves as divinely commissioned proclaimers of a cure. Their revivalist focus on the necessity of interior transformation, or the conversion of the individual to effect sustainable behavioural change, made them relentlessly critical of the flood of philanthropy sweeping England in the last quarter of the century - even as they swam in a common cultural stream.

The 1880s saw the emergence of what became an abiding denominational tension between a commitment to “aggressive” strategies of evangelization and the structuring of a comprehensive network of social services. The latter enhanced the Army’s image and achieved for Salvationists a level of public legitimacy. Salvation Army rhetoric insisted

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., 64.

that the movement was motivated by one central concern; the salvation of the world. Precisely what was meant by such a phrase became and has remained a matter of ambivalent interpretation. William Booth was a preacher and an evangelist, not a theologian. Because he did not systematize his theological opinions they must be construed from published texts of his sermons, his prolific regular writing for Army periodicals such as The War Cry and The Officer, the hymns he composed and what remains extant of an extensive personal correspondence. Historian Roger Green contends that the soteriology implicit in the writing of William Booth broadened beyond a concern for the conversion of individuals to embrace concepts of structural or social salvation.⁵ What Green's work in historical theology does not address is William Booth's sustained uneasiness over the public perception that his Army had undergone a change in emphasis.⁶ It was unsettling for Booth to find himself at the helm of an organization with a growing reputation for credal latitudinarianism, even if one lauded for an admirable spirituality and ethic.

⁵Roger Green, War on Two Fronts: The Redemptive Theology of William Booth (Atlanta: The Salvation Army, 1989).

⁶William Booth's ambivalence on this issue is most in evidence in his private correspondence with his oldest son Bramwell, who, throughout William's life-long "Generalship" remained as second in command of The Salvation Army and its highest-level administrator. Bramwell held the rank of Chief of the Staff and was affectionately addressed as "The Chief" in his father's almost daily letters. The novel by the American, Charles Sheldon, In His Steps was a best seller at late-century. The Christian life idealized in the book was the life focused on the imitation of Christ. In each encounter of daily living the believer was admonished to seek to discern the appropriate Christly action: "What would Jesus do?" Booth appears to have found Sheldon's book superficial. He wrote to Bramwell, "We don't want Payron to give this book In His Steps to our Officers. I don't think it will do them any good." Earlier in the same letter Booth had mused, "Are we not in danger of creating a lot of leading men who are little more than business men. No-body around these parts has impressed me with having a burning zeal for the salvation of souls." William Booth to Bramwell Booth, 16 September 1899. The Salvation Army International Heritage Centre archives, London, England.

The contours of a Salvation Army ethos or “code” of care were drawn in the final two decades of the nineteenth century. This chapter will investigate the manner in which the early Salvation Army leadership and early “social” Officers understood the linkage between bodily and spiritual intervention and the nature of philanthropy’s contribution to optimal human well-being. Publicly, Salvation Army pronouncement emphasized the role “deeds of compassion” should play in creating an environment favourable to the reception of the word of salvation. Philanthropic endeavour was, in effect, a means of pre-evangelization. It was a means to an end. Army leaders acknowledged with strategic frustration the existence of a social “stratum still untouched.” Mission workers were challenged to demonstrate a Christ-like willingness to “go lower”⁷ by which the Army was expressing a hope or an expectation that through missional activities like the Rescue Work among fallen women, slum nursing, or the Medical Department, a thorough penetration of the poorest sectors of society might ultimately be achieved.

A more private, intimate discourse expressed in the testimonies, letters and diaries of early “social” Officers indicate that they embraced practical ministries of service for a variety of reasons. Paradoxically, The Salvation Army’s deliberate attempt to infiltrate the lowest classes of society proved spiritually and vocationally attractive, not to the

⁷See for example, “Cellar, Gutter and Garret,” *All the World* 1 (July 1884). “God for the cellar, the gutter and the garret. That is what The Salvation Army has meant from the first day that that tall dark stranger took his stand on Mile End Waste ‘to talk to the unchurched multitudes.’ Every year it has sought to ‘go lower,’ every year it has pondered ways and means of coming closer to the great unwashed, whom most people prefer to keep at a respectful distance. Painfully conscious it grew that there was, below the saved prize fighters and thieves and drunkards, whom it counted by thousands in its ranks, a stratum still untouched...”

movement's working class converts, but among the middle and upper classes, including the aristocracy.

Philanthropy at Late Century

Philanthropy was a pervasive factor in English life in the nineteenth century. New benevolent organizations were founded at a rate of six per year in the first half of the century.⁸ By the 1890s almost a thousand registered charities were operational in the city of London, collecting in excess of five million pounds annually, not including donations from the private sector or church collections.⁹ F. K. Prochaska cites one study of forty-two middle class Victorian families which demonstrated that a larger portion of these families' budgets went to charitable appeals than to any other single item excepting food.¹⁰ Benevolent endeavour was much more comprehensive than the generous donation of financial resources by many of the middle class. Philanthropy meant "any organization devoting money, time, thought or energy to relieving the miseries of the poor, the neglected or the oppressed."¹¹ The number of people engaged in such activity is as impressive as the amount of money given. Based on census statistics for England and Wales, 1891, the total female population over ten years of age was 11,461,890.¹² A statistical survey of women's work published in 1893 conducted by Louisa Hubbard, editor of The English Woman's Yearbook, estimated that around 500,000 women worked on a continual, voluntary, semi-professional basis with a philanthropic agency; another

⁸D. W. Bebbington, Evangelicalism in Modern Britain (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 122.

⁹Brian Harrison, "Philanthropy and the Victorians," Victorian Studies 9 (June 1966): 353.

¹⁰F. K. Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 21.

¹¹Brian Harrison, "Philanthropy and the Victorians," 356.

¹²Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy, 225.

20,000 worked as paid officials in charitable societies.¹³ Hubbard excluded the vast number of women engaged in part-time charitable enterprise, as well as those working for ostensibly religious organizations such as Bible Societies, or the 200,000 mothers associated with the Mothers' Union.¹⁴

Why were the Victorians so philanthropically orientated? What can account for the astonishing level of public activism ? Harrison queries,

What strange mixture of idealism, humanity and *arrière pensée* inspired so many Victorians to lavish such sums on distributing Bibles among the uncomprehending natives? What combination of guilt and compassion sent Catherine Gladstone into the hospital in 1866, and Oxford undergraduates hurrying off to the East End in the 1880s?¹⁵

To Harrison's question there is no single answer. Attention must be paid to the internal dynamics of each voluntary association, but certain cultural contours can be identified as the backdrop for the benevolent initiatives of a spectrum of agencies or Societies.

The Victorian preoccupation with philanthropic work was an expression of a profound sense of cultural "dis-ease." Philanthropy seemed to offer a way of healing the disjunction between the culture's worries and its aspirations. The obsessive promotion of benevolent work indicated a clear recognition that much was awry in a century of iconoclastic change. Philanthropy represented a way to acknowledge social stress while simultaneously clinging to conservative solutions. It was a way of bypassing the need for

¹³Ibid., 224.

¹⁴See Edward Bristow, Vice and Vigilance: Purity Movements in Britain since 1700 (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1977), 133ff. for a description of these "Mothers' Unions." Women committed to pray daily for their children, to avoid bad language, to ensure separate sleeping quarters for boys and girls, and to keep their girls at home at night!

¹⁵Brian Harrison, "Philanthropy and the Victorians," 356.

a revolutionary critique of the social and economic structure. Philanthropy seemed to be a necessary corrective to the disturbing economic realities occasioned by industrialization and rapid urbanization. But it was a palliating strategy; a way of redistributing national income without disrupting existing institutions.

The Philanthropic Visitor

By way of example, one can consider the popular charitable practice of home visitation, common practice from the earliest days of the East London Revival Society. In the country parishes of agricultural England in the early decades of the nineteenth century, the vicar's wife, sisters and daughters would routinely visit in village homes. They conducted cottage meetings, advised on the care and training of children, and often provided practical relief. Anne Summers links the emergence of this philanthropic expectation of church women to the gentrification of the Established Church clergy after 1759. As Churchmen "established their residences further away from their hungry sheep,"¹⁶ pastoral reformers responded by attempting to bridge the resulting relational gap through house-to-house visitation. The mass movement of people from rural regions to the expanding cities accentuated people's sense of alienation from the support provided by Church and Chapel. A breach had opened which it was believed could be narrowed by women's voluntary parish visiting.

¹⁶Anne Summers, "A Home from Home: Women's Philanthropic Work in the Nineteenth Century," in Sandra Burman, ed. Fit Work for Women (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), 45.

Social space was also being “redrawn” in employer/employee relations. By the early nineteenth century, employers who had traditionally lived in homes alongside or above the workshops were relocating their families to residential, suburban neighbourhoods. This reconfigured social space emphasized a widening class gulf in British culture, which, particularly in the aftermath of the French Revolution, seemed fraught with the threat of social upheaval and class anarchy.¹⁷ Summers contends that the house-to-house visitation of the poor by women of leisure was viewed as a “practical exercise in social conciliation... If problems really could be solved on a house-to-house basis, and by voluntary workers, then disturbing thought of structural change or expensive reform could be conveniently shelved.”¹⁸

For many of these early philanthropic home visitors, the harshly punitive nature of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act reinforced a sense of the need to make these interactions both careful and discerning. Prior to this Act, which abolished the supplemental income support for the poor in their own homes known either as “outrelief” or “outdoor relief,” parochial poor rates had funded both “outrelief” for widows, orphans and the elderly, and workhouse placements for the unemployed or unemployable. Poor Law reformers were determined to check what they perceived as sentimental and “pauperizing” leniency with new policies of ruthless deterrence. After the legislation had passed, compassionate

¹⁷See William Rathbone, Social Duties Considered With Reference to the Organization of Effort in Works of Benevolence and Public Utility (London and Cambridge: MacMillan and Co., 1867), 1-17 for a business man's perspective on changes in employment practices which had accentuated class distance.

¹⁸Anne Summers, “A Home from Home,” 45.

visitors remained highly motivated by the personalism of their prior interactions to protect “their people” from the implications of the revised law.

Considerable scholarly attention within Women’s Studies and feminist history has been paid to the role philanthropic activities like home visitation played in women’s emancipation in late nineteenth-century Britain. Deborah Nord’s fine study, Walking the Victorian Streets examines the manner in which women entered this field of “social investigation” in the 1880s. For them, the historic parish practice of pastoral visitation was reconfigured in “a new mode, scientific and empirical, focused on individual towns or urban neighbourhoods, based on personal observation and often directed at specific social reforms.”¹⁹ Often the daughters of professional men, clergy or physicians, these visitors added to their philanthropic arsenal the methods of a maturing public health movement and the emerging social sciences. Many were familiar with Florence Nightingale and Olivia Hills’ standards for social scrutiny; an insistence on the need for “careful observation.” Women philanthropists visited on the basis of a right that Medical Officers of Health had assumed in working-class neighbourhoods from the 1830s - the right to enter the homes of the poor for the amassing and compilation of social statistics. They were drawn to fresh fields for social exploration, in part, through a popular press which increasingly recognized the marketability of sensational and tragic stories of moral degradation, transgression of convention, and despair.

¹⁹Deborah Nord, Walking the Victorian Streets: Women, Representation and the City (London: Cornell University Press, 1995), 209.

Nord argues that “scientific visitation” offered women a “means of participating in civic life without apparently transgressing the appropriate bounds of gender.”²⁰ After all, home life and the scrutiny of domestic interaction fell well within women’s “analytic centre.”²¹ Who better to elevate the moral tone of the homes of the poor, who better to influence towns “in which should be shaped all the highest, loftiest and truest end of man’s moral nature” than the cultivated Victorian woman who embodied these ideals?”²² Prochaska develops a similar argument in Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England. Traits which were considered to be highly developed in women or expressions of her “true nature” - modesty, compassion, capacity for self-sacrifice, religiosity, practicality, were characteristics deemed admirably suited to benevolent work. The tacit acceptance of such stereotyping by women enabled them to escape the confines of the domestic sphere. Charitable work broadened the boundaries of women’s physical existence. As a socially sanctioned way of getting out of the house, it met women’s needs for self-actualization. The benevolent woman was informed and diverted, useful and admired. And all of this could be had without unsettling society’s idealization of domesticity.²³

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 207.

²² A. S. Wohl, The Eternal Slum. Housing and Social Policy in Victorian London (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), 175.

²³ See Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy, 11 on the confinement many women felt in conventional roles, “The endless round of entertaining and being entertained, of stitching and serving could be so restrictive that it impelled imaginative and energetic girls to seek a wider field for the expression of their talents... Charitable work, free from chaperones and prying relatives, represented their deliverance from the stitch, stitch, church, stitch routines of female existence. It was adventure.”

Philanthropy and Social Policy

The most successful philanthropic ventures in the late nineteenth century were those which resonated with widely-held assumptions pertaining to local and national social policy. The critical nature of such private/public ideological linkage had been demonstrated a century earlier in a cultural climate which prompted the establishment of charities for poor women such as the Lying In Hospital and Charity.

In 1740 the British Lying In Hospital for Poor Married Women was opened as the first institute specifically designated for the delivery of children in London. Nationally, population growth was seen as desirable, indeed necessary for political strength and economic prosperity. Philanthropists hoped that hospital birthing might contribute to the physical “conservation” of women. Furthermore, it was hoped that safer birthing would maximize the productivity of the labouring classes. “Women, helped through their greatest exigencies, redouble their labour, will work more cheerfully and return to labour with better health.”²⁴

The establishment in 1758 of the Lying In Charity was an extension of this concern for population growth. This charitable organization, which provided trained midwifery services, was also intended to support safer birthing, but this time through home delivery. Again, the emphasis was on the attendant social benefit of intervention. The reasoning of the founders was explicit: a woman’s “uninterrupted presence at home was absolutely

²⁴Donna Andrew, “Two Medical Charities in Eighteenth-Century London,” in J. Barry and Colin Jones, ed. Medicine and Charity Before the Welfare State (London: Routledge, 1991), 85.

essential for family stability. It was the mother who was the guardian of public morals, whose watchful eye kept her husband working and her daughters chaste.”²⁵

A century later the nation was again preoccupied with population numbers. The birth rate was falling. There was a high rate of infant mortality. It was rhetorically asserted that the security and destiny of the Empire depended on the health of the family and the care and breeding of Britain’s children.²⁶ It was widely asserted that the Empire itself was threatened with economic and political weakness resulting from “physical and moral degeneracy.” Healthy babies with adequately instructed mothers were essential to the stability of the nation.²⁷

Schemes Without A Saviour

Within The Salvation Army leadership, Catherine Booth regarded this tidal wave of philanthropic concern with measured scepticism. The most succinct formulation of her critique of what she called “religions of bodily compassion” is contained in the aforementioned sermon, delivered in 1884 and published in 1887, “Sham Compassion and The Dying Love of Christ.”²⁸ Her rejection of a broad spectrum of approaches to philanthropic intervention provides a tidy summation of dominant trends in nineteenth-century social policy. The Salvation Army, according to Catherine, was diametrically

²⁵Ibid., 88.

²⁶See thesis, chapter 2, p.64.

²⁷Deborah Nord, Walking The Victorian Streets, 214.

²⁸Catherine Booth, “Sham Compassion and the Dying Love of Christ,” 57.

opposed to “all theories of natural salvation that will practically get rid of all serious soul need.”²⁹

The first “religion of bodily compassion” discussed in this sermon hinted at salvation through what Catherine called the “educationalist solution.” In Britain at mid-century, 1,049,000 out of a total of 2,109,000 children attending day schools were enrolled in parochial institutions. Sunday Schools were increasingly associated with parishes, concentrating primarily on religious education and secondarily on programs of mechanical training.³⁰ Catherine maintained that far too much was being vested in the educational process as a guarantor of social improvement. She argued that educationalists abandoned the present generation and were able to make exaggerated claims, their “results being conveniently remote.”³¹ Insistence on the necessity for the radical subordination of educational goals to what the Booths considered “spiritual” aspirations would persist in Salvation Army publications and culture. Both William and Catherine advised on the education of children and a quote from a pastoral letter reprinted in 1902 summarized their position:

The great end of most unconverted parents is for their children to get on in the world. They want them to be rich, or happy, or to secure position in society: in short to do well for themselves - and their parents also if there is a chance. But your purpose is altogether different. You want your children to be good, and to grow up like Jesus Christ, to be saviours of men and champions for God.³²

²⁹Ibid., 58.

³⁰See D. W. Bebbington, Evangelicalism in Modern Britain, 123-125 for a discussion of the nineteenth-century Sunday School movement.

³¹Catherine Booth, “Sham Compassion,” 58.

³²William Booth, Letters to Salvationists on Love, Marriage and Home (London: The Salvation Army International Headquarters, 1902), 183.

A second school of philanthropic thought or “religion of bodily compassion” rejected by Catherine was that of the “home builders.” Here Catherine dismissed what could more generally be termed environmentalist theories of human behaviour. She wrote,

Philanthropists are afflicted, and rightly so, with the overcrowded condition of working-class dwellings and consider that all will be well when the people are better housed, shutting their eyes to the condition of multitudes who may be seen today living in the greatest sin and misery in well-built modern dwellings.³³

Although applauding legislative initiatives to compel landlords to maintain minimum housing standards, and welcoming suggestions for the provision of comfortable housing for the poor, Catherine challenged environmentalist cures for social malady because she believed it undermined the nature of moral responsibility; the solutions put forth were attempts at human betterment “on the same principles as if they were cattle.”³⁴

Similar scepticism was directed to a third, extremely vigorous, benevolent concern of Victorian Christians, including members of The Salvation Army - The Temperance Movement. As a visible sign of cultural maladjustment “drunkenness” became a preoccupation of social reformers. Catherine Booth was in agreement with the journalist for The Contemporary Review who contended that teetotalism was “at this moment the common ethical ground of all the sects from that of General Booth to that of Cardinal Manning.”³⁵ Conceding that “drink has more than anything else contributed to the degradation of the people,” once again, for Catherine, revivalism remained paramount.

³³Catherine Booth, “Sham Compassion,” 59.

³⁴Ibid., 60.

³⁵F. P. Cobbe, “The Last Revival,” The Contemporary Review (1 August 1882): 184 cited in K. S. Inglis, Churches and The Working Classes in Victorian England (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), 330.

To soberize without saving can only be compared to the action of a set of people who should with heroic effort drag drowning men ashore, and then leave them lying all unconscious within reach of the waves.³⁶

“Rescue Work” was a branch of philanthropy particularly popular with women reformers.

At mid-century, estimates of the number of prostitutes active in London ranged from 10,000 to 80,000. Christian women, regarding themselves as the rightful and dispositionally equipped custodians of family values, laid siege to the city streets in an attempt to address this social malady, often by attempting to intervene between prostitutes and their clients. By the end of the century The Salvation Army would claim to have rescued as many as 3,000 of these “women of the night in England.”³⁷ Prochaska makes the claim that

No other society was in closer touch with the class of women being assisted; no other society which had men attached to it was more conscious of the importance of female volunteers, more egalitarian in approach or more closely knit by a sense of Christian purpose.³⁸

Again, Catherine’s essential concern lay with the depth of the interior transformation.

It seems to me unaccountable that intelligent beings should look upon any form of human ruin without realizing that something must be done within as well as without in order to produce any lasting change for the better.³⁹

Of all “material systems of salvation,” Catherine Booth considered what she called the “feeding system” to be the most trivial. Seasonal banquets for the poor, hosted by the well-to-do, were ruthlessly criticized by this Christian reformer.

Now I think you will all believe me when I say that I rejoice in every bite provided for the needy, but I cannot help seeing how monstrously all this

³⁶Catherine Booth, “Sham Compassion,” 60.

³⁷William Booth, In Darkest England and the Way Out (London: The Salvation Army International Headquarters, 1890), 196.

³⁸Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy, 190.

³⁹Catherine Booth, “Sham Compassion,” 61.

exhibits the recklessness of the Christian world as to the greater needs of the perishing.⁴⁰

Radical Christian movements generally claim to model their actions upon the life of Jesus and the experience of the primitive church. The Salvation Army was no exception. In “Sham Compassion,” Catherine argued that a study of the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth offered the only sound basis for philanthropic intervention which could rightly be labelled “Christian.” Jesus, wrote Catherine, was under no illusion as to humanity’s most basic need.

To him, the sorrowful, troubled crowd were not merely oppressed by unjust laws, and crowded into badly constructed dwellings - not merely hungry, hard-worked and comfortless; these were incidents which he sometimes alleviated, and more often shared, but the crowning peril, the absolutely certain woe which eclipsed in his sight every other was the loss of the soul. He flings contemptuously aside the thought that living well in this world was a real benefit.⁴¹

Christ’s intervention with people was always characterized by what Catherine called “plain, cutting, personal dealing.”⁴² Jesus did not allow anyone or any class to persist in delusory behaviours. “He mercilessly prescribed. He inflicted the painful wounds of a friend in order that he might awaken them to their danger, and lead them to seek the only remedy.”⁴³ Catherine argued further that authentically Christian philanthropy would involve a participation in the suffering of the poor, rather than the bestowing of favours from a position of power. Again, the model appealed to was the life of Jesus. “He did not visit the poor, he shared his life with them in holy comradeship.”⁴⁴ Most vitally, this early

⁴⁰Ibid., 63.

⁴¹Ibid., 72.

⁴²Ibid., 75.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid., 76.

Salvation Army preacher maintained that benevolent work should not be associated with the Christian cause unless it was permeated with hope. Only an unflinching belief in the redemption of character possible through conversion would ensure success over the long haul.

Catherine's indictment of benevolence as conventionally palliative rather than curative was unrelenting. Her diagnosis was sure; "moral cancer, the spring of all this wickedness and misery."⁴⁵ Society needed new birth more urgently than new conditions.

The Challenge of Poverty

K. S. Inglis claims that the notion that poverty presented a peculiar challenge to the evangelistic mission of The Salvation Army, and that urban slums might require alternate ministry strategies, began to appear in the primary periodical, the War Cry only after 1885. Even a cursory reading of the earliest mission literature casts doubt on such an assertion. According to The Christian Mission Magazine, there was an urgent need for workers "specially adapted for and drawn ... to go down to the lowest stratum of society." Missioners were required who would remain "true to first principles ... that the worse a man is, the more he needs our help, and the less others care for him, the more we must care."⁴⁶

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Catherine Booth, "To the Rescue; or What Shall We Do in 1874?" The Christian Mission Magazine (March 1874): 67.

It is true that the formal implementation of a “slum strategy” took another decade. In January 1884 the social experiment referred to by the Army as the “Cellar, Gutter and Garrett Brigade” was launched. Although the Army literature credits the concept to William Booth’s youngest daughter, Eva,⁴⁷ a similar model was being concurrently explored by teams of student missionaries from Oxford University.⁴⁸ The model envisioned by the Salvationists was of three or four Cadets establishing a common residence in one of London’s urban slums, “dressing like the people, living among them, mixing among them as part of the same world, helping them, sympathizing with them, loving them.”⁴⁹ The experiment was initially attempted at Hackney Wick, and led by Miss Maude Charlesworth, who later married another Booth son, Ballington Booth. Two months into the scheme, it had to be aborted due to “certain Training Home exigencies,” but it was resumed again in July of 1884, this time in Seven Dials and supervised by Eva Booth.

The Cellar, Gutter and Garret Brigade was rationalized as an attempt to more authentically express the Army’s central passion. Army rhetoric increasingly echoed Catherine’s 1874 awareness of the “stratum still untouched.” The Army had an evangelical responsibility to “go lower.” This phrase, “going lower,” would receive broad use as a clarion call to Salvationist workers in the ensuing two decades of more formalized approaches to work among the poor. The Army claimed a uniquely authentic social spectatorship.

⁴⁷ All the World 1 (1884-5).

⁴⁸ See K. S. Inglis, Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), 143ff for a discussion of the Oxford models put in place by students of Oxford.

⁴⁹ All the World.

As this rescue work has gone lower and lower, as its workers have seen deeper and deeper into the very heart of sin and misery, such as can only be understood by those who live in its midst...⁵⁰

But the repeated use of the challenge to “aspire to go lower” was a tacit acknowledgement of the limits of The Salvation Army’s cultural permeation; its inability to bridge social space.

Social Officers

The testimonies of Salvation Army Officers and soldiers in the 1880s reveal multiple motivational impulses at work in their willingness to minister in a variety of philanthropic settings which the Army grouped under the umbrella term “social schemes.” For many, social ministry represented a philanthropic perpetuation of the heroic code embodied by the flamboyant “girl preachers” or Hallelujah lasses.

Florence Soper Booth, William’s daughter-in-law who assumed oversight of the Army’s newly formed Women’s Social Services wing in 1884, referred to the Officers she supervised as “warrior women ... who rejoice to fight where it is hardest and blackest and are ever ready to climb up higher or go down lower, if only ‘by any means’ they can save some.”⁵¹ Vocational responsiveness was expressed in the language of self-sacrifice, martyrdom and death. One rescue Officer claimed to have had her eyes “first opened to the awful state of these poor girls” through William Stead’s sensational journalistic

⁵⁰Ibid. See also, for example, the description of the Army’s intentions vis-à-vis nursing work in Mrs. Florence Soper Booth, “Personal Notes,” The Deliverer (May 1893). “We are most anxious that it should be made not only a financial aid to help forward the work in our maternity Homes, but that it should be a means of spreading the news of Salvation amongst a class which perhaps otherwise we should not be likely to reach.”

⁵¹Florence Soper Booth, “Warrior Women,” The Deliverer (15 September 1889).

series, "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon" which ran in the Pall Mall Gazette in 1885. In response to Stead's exposé of the trafficking of English girls for prostitution, she declared, "I offer myself ... to die at my post, helping to bring the world to his dear feet."⁵² "I offer my body, strength and talents, and all that God has given me to do and die for him."⁵³

At twelve years of age, Alice Sutton Barker began attending the meetings of The Christian Mission conducted at the Mission House, Harts Lane, Bethnal Green. She also described her youthful impressionability to narratives of martyrdom.

I always turned in my Bible to Stephen, and Peter and Paul, so that I got to think it would be a grand thing to die for Christ... I lived on to know that Christ required me to honour Him by laying down my life daily, and not by one tragic act.⁵⁴

Barker's opportunity to do so was interpreted in the context of a "call" to begin Rescue Work.

Never, never shall I forget the meeting held with these poor girls. I had never seen such a sight in my young life - for I was only twenty-four - and the responsibility overpowered me, until I wished I might disappear from the earth altogether. How I cried to God, and wept and agonized for strength to do my duty.⁵⁵

An editorial statement printed in The Local Officer after Alice Barker's testimony concludes with a prayer, evidently seen as expressive of the tenor of her narrative. "For

⁵²Liesden Nicolls, "Candidates Chat," The Deliverer (15 September 1889).

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴"Early Experiences of our Leading Women Warriors," The Local Officer (September 1899): 70.

⁵⁵Ibid.

ever blessed be Thou, oh God of Truth, Who hast nailed me to the Cross with Thy Son!"⁵⁶

The testimony of Anna von Wattenwyl similarly stressed the nature of her personal attraction to a movement that offered "no cheap Christianity." But she contextualized her willingness to be appointed to social work as the outcome of a Holiness or Sanctification experience. von Wattenwyl's mother was an Englishwoman who had been educated in Switzerland and subsequently married into the Swiss aristocracy. When Anna was twelve, her father retired from a parish ministry and bought an estate at the head of the Guzelen valley which he made available to an international missionary community as a retreat centre. Converted as a young woman, Anna von Wattenwyl participated in parish life through the conventional opportunities available to evangelical women of her class background; teaching Sunday School, visiting the sick, nursing soldiers in 1870 in the Franco-Prussian War. There is a discrepancy in the historical sources as to whether Anna initially heard of The Salvation Army from a travelling evangelist identified as Mrs. Baxter or from the Anglican reformer Mrs. Josephine Butler. Both were guests in the von Wattenwyl home in the mid-1870s, years in which the Swiss church was described as being influenced by "a wave of Holiness teaching." In 1882, while on family business in London, Anna attended a Salvation Army meeting, accompanied by Josephine Butler. She later recounted the impact of the first exposure to Army literature and teaching.

I spent much time in prayer, read Mrs. Booth's books, prayed over them, went to Mr. Bramwell Booth's blessed Holiness Meetings, consecrated myself as fully as I knew how to do, and held back nothing.⁵⁷

⁵⁶Ibid., 71.

⁵⁷Anna von Wattenwyl, The Field Officer (April 1910).

Throughout her career Anna von Wattenwyl's writing emphasized her desire to live a Christian life which demanded what she termed her "all for all... No cheap or easy way, but the way of Christ."⁵⁸ Doubly compelling for Anna was The Salvation Army's gender inclusiveness. "... all might help in this soul saving work - women as well as men."⁵⁹ von Wattenwyl commenced a full-time ministry as an Army Officer in mid-life. Upon her parents' deaths she donated the family estate to the movement, drawing in exchange a minimal life annuity and adopting a rigorously ascetic lifestyle which she believed best expressed her chosen "life of holiness."

Captain Fannie Howard also linked her willingness to participate in Rescue Work with an experience of sanctification or full commitment. "One Friday evening I was led to go into a Salvation Army holiness meeting ... and there God's spirit made me see such grand possibilities in Himself."⁶⁰ Howard had been converted in revival meetings at a local Methodist Chapel. With her conversion came a desire for usefulness. "I longed to do something for God with all my heart, but knew not how to begin."⁶¹ She was already aware of opportunities within her church to work with girls "reclaimed from their life of sin." Nonetheless, it was an advertisement placed in The War Cry by Mrs. Bramwell Booth that brought about her decision to join the Army. What the Army was requesting by way of qualifications were individuals living lives "fully consecrated to God ... and ordinary common sense." Apparently Fannie Howard believed herself to possess both.

⁵⁸Ibid. See also Staff Review (October 1924).

⁵⁹Anna von Wattenwyl, "Memories," Army Books in Foreign Languages (April 1929).

⁶⁰Fannie Howard, "Some Leaves from my Life Book," The Deliverer (15 November 1889).

⁶¹Ibid.

A third motivational impulse identified by early Salvation Army Social Officers was a strong attraction to the expanded roles and opportunities afforded to women. Frequently they attested to having first been made aware of this through direct contact with a member of the Booth family.

Mary Bennett was an exhibited sculptor who had studied under Poynter and Dalou at the University School of Art. Although she was not able to secure family support for her desire to study law, her father was prepared for her to enter what he deemed a more femininely appropriate professional life. Her story is quite typical of recruits in the 1880s from non-working-class backgrounds.

Bennett was taken by her brother to hear Catherine Booth preach in St. James and Steinway Halls. The experience led her to the commencement of a correspondence with Mrs. General Booth and to the “conviction that God wanted her in The Salvation Army.”⁶²

Born into a Quaker home in Plymouth, Ensign Blackwell described herself as “surrounded by Christian influences” from her childhood. She was converted at the age of fourteen, and heard a call to “greater Christian usefulness” when Catherine Booth billeted in the family home while conducting meetings in Plymouth.⁶³

⁶²“Women of all sorts of Conditions,” All The World: 303.

⁶³Ibid.

Ensign Martin was saved as a thirteen-year-old in the village of Beverly, Yorkshire. The sense of being beckoned to ministry in a broader sphere was catalyzed by a conversation between her father and General Booth, who was staying in the Martin home while conducting a campaign. "The General said to my father, "Three daughters! Which is for God and the Army?"⁶⁴ Martin saw her own responsiveness as the answer to Booth's query.

The descriptions of a vocational "call" to ministry recounted by these early Social Officers frequently contain elements of the subjectivity described by Martin: a challenge, initial responsiveness, resistance and surrender. She testified to being given "a clean heart in a Salvation Holiness meeting and called to the Army... For a year I didn't obey. Being a soldier suited me too well to want an Officer's life."⁶⁵

Adelaide Cox, who retired in 1927 as the Commissioner in charge of the Women's Social Work, was born in 1860 into an Evangelical Church of England vicarage. Her form of application for Salvation Army Officership is a remarkably candid document revealing the manner in which the twenty-year-old "candidate" sought to mediate the demands of family and home with those of the autocratic Salvation Army. In the document, Cox states that she was converted in 1875 while on a visit to Oxford with her father. She had never been a member of the Army, but was a confirmed member of the Church of

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid.

England. She had not been a total abstainer. She was not prepared to provide an unqualified “yes” to General Booth’s question, “Do you pledge yourself never to marry anyone, marriage with whom would take you out of the Army altogether?” She did agree to notify the General in the event of the commencement of any courtship, but clarified her understanding of appropriate accountability: “... in the event of such possibility, I should first consult my father.” At this early stage of Adelaide Cox’s involvement with the Army, she was explicit as to the limits of her willing participation.

The General asked me if I would be agreeable to promise to go to Paris for two years in the service of the Army and I replied that I would, subject of course to being lovingly cared for as a young lady, and subject to recall by my Father or Friends should illness or some other unavoidable necessity require it.⁶⁶

Cox accompanied William Booth’s daughter, Kate, to Paris early in 1881 to commence the work of The Salvation Army on the Continent. She wrote an expanded account of her “calling” for the series, “God’s Way With Me,” carried in All the World in October 1888. A few years earlier, she had visited Oxford with her anti-tractarian Father in order to attend a series of Holiness meetings being conducted during the student vacation. She described her conversion:

A lady did ask me once if I were saved, and made me, thereby, so uncomfortable that whenever I saw her afterwards, I would avoid her, or rush unceremoniously out of her way... But about this time God stopped me. I was walking down a street ... about seven o’clock one morning feeling utterly hard and cold, my soul bereft of anything like love to God, when suddenly the question flashed across my mind, coming straight from heaven, I believe, “Why don’t you love me?” and almost immediately a strange power took possession of me, and light flooded my soul, while a voice, still and soft, seemed to murmur, “We love Him because He first loved us.” I looked about bewildered. The street was quite still. There was

⁶⁶Adelaide Cox, Form of Application for Appointment as an Officer of The Salvation Army, February 1881. Personnel File, The Salvation Army International Heritage Centre Archives, London, England.

not even a milkman to disturb the quiet. A strange transformation had taken place in my heart, that was sure, for I was no more cold and hard as before, but felt literally illuminated with love and light. Yes, I knew what it was to love God, really and truly, for the first time.⁶⁷

At seventeen years of age Adelaide had her first encounter with The Salvation Army. By this time, her family had relocated to London, and Cox observed the street processions of the Hallelujah lasses. But as in the case of Mary Bennett, it was direct exposure to the active ministry participation of the Booth women which expanded the horizon of vocational possibility for the young woman. She writes,

I went to hear La Marechale at a West End drawing room meeting. In her I found my ideal, and as her words sank into my hungry soul I said to myself, "Here is a saint." I wanted to become one myself but it seemed an impossibility.⁶⁸

Cox described her attendance at the series of Friday evening Holiness Meetings conducted by Bramwell Booth in Whitechapel. She described herself as seeking a "clean heart ... a Holy life." This, she claimed, occurred in a remembered, datable moment.

I attended about four of these meetings, when one night I received this great treasure after which my heart was craving. Again, as at conversion in the open air, the light of God shone into my soul, and as I was getting into the tram, homeward bound, I was filled with the love of Jesus... My whole life was changed. I was a free woman, and felt that I must work for souls.⁶⁹

The result of this experience was the young woman's decision to offer herself for Army service. By 1889, having followed up her pioneering experience with appointments in the rapidly expanding Rescue Work, Adelaide Cox was appealing to others to volunteer for

⁶⁷ Adelaide Cox, "God's Way with Me," *All The World* (October 1888): 345.

⁶⁸ Ibid. William and Catherine Booth's children were given distinctive military titles, e.g. The Chief - Bramwell Booth, The Consul - Emma: La Marechale was the title given by The Salvation Army to daughter Kate.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

this kind of work through which they could participate in a “wonderful, soul stirring time... The Army of Salvation holds out to you a door of opportunity and usefulness that you dare not neglect.”⁷⁰

Another early Officer who entered the Army in the early 1880s from a similar class background was Blanche B. Cox. She was sixteen and “going in for her Cambridge examinations” when she first accompanied her mother to hear Catherine Booth preach at St. James Hall. They were responding to an ad carried in the religion section of one of the London dailies. The War Cry, 30 July 1887, states that mother and daughter were in the habit of perusing the papers and choosing “the service or two which looked most novel or exciting as a sort of harmless dissipation to be enjoyed together.” Cox is described as having “had all the eagerness of sixteen years of budding womanhood, to know what women really could do in the world of business and intellect and philanthropy and even religion.”⁷¹ The young woman was impressed and moved by Catherine’s sermon and returned with her mother for another service. This time Catherine was assisted in the concluding “prayer meeting” by her charismatic daughter Kate, and although Blanche was dissuaded by her mother from making a public response to the appeal for conversion, she later claimed to have been “saved” on that evening.

The following year the Regent Hall Corps was opened and Blanche became a member who “wore uniform to classes, gloried in her SS and spent her Saturdays in War Cry

⁷⁰Adelaide Cox, “Why?” The Deliverer (1 July 1889).

⁷¹“Staff-Captain Blanche Cox for India,” The War Cry (30 July 1887).

selling.”⁷² Her father, a chapel deacon, considered Salvation Army religious practice to be fanatical and therefore a threat to his daughter’s well-being. He insisted that Blanche remain in school, hoping that she would “finish” in Germany, as had been the projected educational plan prior to her association with the Army. Instead, she requested permission to enter the Clapton Training Home. The decision was reluctantly accepted by the Cox family, although only on the condition that their daughter wait a year after the completion of her schooling.

As in the religious narratives of Anna von Wattenwyl and Adelaide Cox, a sanctification experience figures prominently in Blanche Cox’s explanation of her attraction to philanthropic service.

It was while I was at Clapton that the promised gift of the Holy Spirit’s fullness came to me. We had learned of the terrible moral darkness of London’s midnight streets; we had read W. T. Stead’s revelations in The Pall Mall Gazette. We had gathered around the Consul (Emma Booth) when she told us of her passionate desire to do something... A little party of us went out for the first time to Piccadilly... I had discovered that I lacked power to deal with sinners, because they were so full of evil. I must be equally full of good; and I was not. When my secretarial duties for that day were accomplished at about five o’clock, I knelt in my little room and declared: “I will not let Thee go, except thou bless me.” It was after midnight when I rose, but the gift of God’s Spirit was mine. I was equipped. Next night I was on the streets again, but oh, with what different results!⁷³

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Lieut.-Colonel Blanche Cox, “Reminiscences of Early Day Fighting. Salvation Army History Viewed From a Personal Angle,” The Officers’ Review (July 1932): 334.

Angels of the Slums

These women were representative of the well-educated daughters of the professional and clerical classes. In their Evangelical activism, focused on the less fortunate, they epitomized the Victorian image of useful, productive womanliness. Comments in early Salvation Army periodicals indicate that the new denomination was not immune from either the awareness of class distinctions among their recruits, or protected from the ensuing class tensions. Reference was made to the potential for misunderstanding among the Cadets accepted for common training at Clapton.

It is certainly a fact that afraid as we are in the Army of having “gentlemen and ladies” - people who do not truly feel that all class distinctions are levelled by spiritual rank - among us, yet in the majority of cases where such come into our ranks, the trouble, at first, is not so much that they are not willing to “come down” as that their new comrades cannot believe they are.⁷⁴

Another image that reinforced the acceptability of a vocational choice for philanthropic ministry was that of the “angel of the slums” who stood in stark contradistinction to her “fallen sisters.” A description of an Officer by the name of Lizzie Graham illustrates this stream of appeal in The Salvation Army’s behavioural code.

She had none of the dash and go which carries some Officers over hard times, never a flash of brilliance or cleverness. “Then what was it struck you so much about her?” She was an angel! he exclaimed, eyes softening at some blessed recollection; she knew God - oh, knew Him well.⁷⁵

Writers of this approach to the philanthropic appeal for workers stressed the grace given to Officers to overcome a natural and expected revulsion and loathing: to go out from “her happy sheltered life” and to “work among the vile and poor.”⁷⁶ In such a woman

⁷⁴“Staff Captain Blanche Cox for India,” The War Cry (30 July 1887).

⁷⁵“A Sacrifice to Love: A Study for Officers and Candidates,” The Deliverer (October 1895).

⁷⁶*Ibid.*

Officer, it was asserted that the “sinner” would be confronted with “one glimpse of purity - she saw it now as she gazed into the dark - a womanly face under the shadow of an Army bonnet, a face which had smiled upon her, yet sorrowed of her sin.”⁷⁷

The contrast between pure and fallen women, between the lady and the prostitute was a prominent convention in Salvation Army periodicals such as The War Cry and The Deliverer. Especially popular were dramatic poems, often graphically illustrated such as “The Bitter Cry of a Daughter of Despair.”

Gather your skirts my lady fair,
Hold them aside when I appear,
I'm a -----, hush, do not speak it,
Good breeding forbids it,
And yet, like the plague - I'm here.

Great God! What have I become?
I'm a woman only in name!
I have sacrificed ALL
But more bitter than gall
Is my life of unspeakable shame.

I am lost! lost! lost!
By the fiend I'm tossed,
And it's woe! woe! woe!
Where I straight must go -
But by God - I adjure
Every woman that's pure
To pity my sort!!!⁷⁸

⁷⁷Margaret Allen, “On the King's Business,” The Deliverer (January 1892).

⁷⁸Brigadier John Complin, “The Bitter Cry of Daughter of Despair,” The War Cry (December 1897).

Earliest Ventures

Although the 1880s saw social service ministries formalized and encouraged as a way of infiltrating the lower classes and creating receptivity for the gospel, this was not a novel practice for the Army, but in direct continuity with the movement's own mission history and that of a wider evangelical mission understanding. There is considerable emphasis in the Victorian period on the role played by philanthropy as a catalyst to heightened religious consciousness.

Sickness was expected to create a climate of receptivity to repentance and faith. Sick Visitation was a consequent duty and spiritually productive privilege afforded to the Christian community. Mission periodicals reporting on the Booths' work in the East End in the early years of their work include descriptions of this aspect of mission activity. For example, The East London Evangelist contains a report of a visit made by M. C. Billups at the request of Brother Flawn to a dying woman "in great distress of mind" and "backslidden."

God, seeing fit in mercy to lay His hand upon her, visited her with a dreadful disease. Unable to get about, in the extremest suffering, she now woke up to the true state of her soul.⁷⁹

Billups was accompanied on the visit to the home by a small coterie of missionaries, who prayed and sang old familiar hymns at the woman's bedside. The reported outcome of the visit from the perspective of the society's members was that "with an unclouded sky she calmly awaits the call that shall summon her ransomed spirit."⁸⁰

⁷⁹"Saved Through Suffering," The East London Evangelist (1 November 1869).

⁸⁰Ibid.

Six months later, the renamed journal The Christian Mission Magazine included the testimony of a man healed of an unspecified “epidemic” in a Whitechapel workhouse infirmary, through “earnest fervent prayer, for whilst I was praying here, my brethren were praying in another place.”⁸¹ The narrative illustrates the manner in which unanticipated illness could alter social status. “I have moved in a high sphere, sat at the table of the epicure, had everything at my bidding and now in the workhouse without a single penny.” Once again the religious pre-supposition of the mission journal is that of there being redemptive, soteriological purpose in physical suffering. “... sickness and pain is the time to test the value of true religion. It has been indeed stormy, but I have heard the Saviour’s voice in the storm saying, ‘It is I.’”⁸²

Not only did the mission magazine regularly describe sick-bed conversions and attribute to God a direct, intervening providence. “The Lord, who doeth all things well, has chosen yet further to lay his afflicting hand upon her, doubtless to draw her to himself.”⁸³ The Christian Mission appealed for workers, with “time and wealth at their disposal to help this work among the sick and needy.”

Relief work, or mission-sponsored feeding programs were also promoted in the belief that such initiatives increased the level of receptivity to the Gospel among the poor.

One of the means employed to relieve has been that of inviting the poorest in the neighbourhood of our mission halls to a good wholesome meal.

⁸¹“From a Workhouse,” The Christian Mission Magazine (1 April 1870).

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³“Our Sick Poor,” The Christian Mission Magazine 5 (1873): 57.

Then, after having partaken freely of the food prepared, the poor creatures, comforted and gladdened by the care thus shown, have willingly stayed while the gospel has been told forth to them. We believe that many have thus received the truth with joy and are now feeding upon spiritual food.⁸⁴

Even at this early stage the missionaries were acutely aware of class barriers impeding effective evangelization; their own prior ignorance of the challenges faced by the poor, a religious formation in which they described themselves as having been “cradled in the lap of comfort” and having “only dreamt of distress.” Already, a more promising alternative seemed to be that of working-class to working-class exhortation. “The service this morning is very interesting. Men from the working-classes address the listeners, one of them himself converted through a free breakfast two years ago at the theatre.”⁸⁵

Mothers’ Meetings were another vital component of Christian Mission philanthropy. Popularized as an “effort to cheer the sorrowing and comfort and relieve the destitute,” these women’s groups met weekly, usually with thirty or forty women in attendance. The meetings included the management of a thrift fund through which mothers could save towards needed articles of clothing and household goods: flannel petticoats, Sunday School outfits for children, bedsheets for an invalid husband. In addition to this practical support, women attending Mothers’ Meetings participated in hymn singing, prayer, Bible instruction and the mutual support nurtured by the “testimony” meeting. The stories

⁸⁴“Feeding the Hungry and Preaching the Word of Life,” The Christian Mission Magazine 3 (1871). See also “Opening of a new Station at Globe Road, Bethnal Green,” 27. “It is surrounded by very poor people and is likely to become a very precious hospital for sin-sick souls. On Monday morning the Lord graciously opened the way for giving one hundred poor people a free tea; and never in my opinion was money better spent, for the poor people seem to listen to the exhortations given with profound attention.”

⁸⁵Ibid.

shared were conventionally stories of “trouble,” “hardship,” and occasionally, of “deliverance.”

A dear woman speaks of her trials, which have been very severe during the past week, but she has found God a very present help in time of trouble, and urged every unsaved mother to seek a friend in Jesus; she tells them everything will be so different: “Why, if even you did not get food, you would not grumble about it!”

A widow tells another tale of trouble and deliverance. “Last week,” she says, “I had no work and did not know what to do to get bread for my poor little children; but we all knelt together, and asked the Lord to appear for us, and He did. Some one brought me work directly after.”

Rescue Homes and National Scheme

The Salvation Army traditionally traces the commencement of its Rescue Work to 1881 and the home of Mrs. Cottrill, a mother of five who soldiered at the Whitechapel Corps, East London. She made two basement bedrooms in her home at 102 Christian Street available for the “young, friendless, penniless girls”⁸⁶ who were regularly turning up at The Salvation Army meetings in her neighbourhood. Mrs. Cottrill’s husband, not a Salvationist, eventually balked at this informal arrangement,⁸⁷ at least in part because he feared a possible negative moral influence on their own children. Alternate premises for Mrs. Cottrill’s “girls” were secured in Hanbury Street in the Spring of 1884, and Florence Soper Booth was asked to provide oversight to the expanding venture. She would hold this responsibility for the next thirty years, and see the work become what has been described as “the largest, most successful and to some extent the most innovative rescue

⁸⁶Madge Unsworth, Maiden Tribute: A Study in Voluntary Social Service (St. Albans: Campfield Press, 1949), 4.

⁸⁷See Jenty Fairbank, Booth's Boots (St. Albans: The Campfield Press, 1983), 12ff for a discussion of the difficulty in definitively dating the earliest Rescue ventures. From the early years of the work of The Christian Mission, missionaries had opened their homes to women in “difficulty.”

organization in Britain.”⁸⁸ William Booth contextualized the establishment of Rescue Work within what he described as the Army’s “New National Scheme for the Deliverance of Unprotected Girls and the Rescue of the Fallen.”⁸⁹ Three groups of women were the particular focus of the scheme: prostitutes, young women living and working alone in the city and therefore perceived as living at risk, and unmarried mothers who wanted to avoid a life of immorality. This new national agenda included the establishment of a formal central office of “help and inquiry” in London and a commitment by the Army to the ongoing establishment on an “extensive scale of homes of refuge for fallen girls.” This residential work was to be supplemented by the organization of Rescue brigades to engage in crisis intervention, both in the slums and in the West End areas where the sex trade was flourishing.⁹⁰

Perceptions of the “Rescued”

Perceptions of the women coming into the Rescue Homes had direct implications for the models of reformation and treatment adopted by The Salvation Army. Like philanthropists connected with other agencies, Army workers tended to stress the “child-like” temperaments and “flightiness” of the women received into care. They were “as a class ... friendless and homeless.”⁹¹ They were described frequently as women lacking

⁸⁸ Ann Higginbotham, “Respectable Sinners: Salvation Army Rescue Work with Unmarried Mothers, 1884-1914,” in Gail Malmgreen, ed. Religion in the Lives of English Women, 1760-1930 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 218.

⁸⁹ Robert Sandall, The History of the Salvation Army, vol. 3 (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1955), 49.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Adelaide Cox, “Methods of the Women’s Social Work in Relation to Permanent Results,” International Staff Councils, Addresses (London: The Salvation Army, 1904).

willpower, “domineered over and moved by their emotions and feelings.”⁹² They were “poor disordered creatures” like “a complicated machine out of order.” Consequently, Booth advised the Officers,

It is no use being in a passion with it - that will not help. You must have patience and get it repaired and cleaned. Just so with these poor girls. Their machinery is out of order and you must understand how to repair it or you will never make a good Rescue Officer.⁹³

Those women not yet “disordered” were often portrayed as easily duped or sexually gullible. Proscriptive stories “for girls” with tragic endings appeared regularly in Army periodicals such as The Deliverer, the implication being that young women were vulnerable to flattery and therefore in need of warning. These stories frequently played upon images of an innocent rural existence versus the corruption of the English city: the innocent fresh-faced country girl seduced by the “real Londoner ... which of itself made most of the villagers look up to him as something far superior to themselves,” lured from home and family with the promise of marriage but ultimately abandoned.⁹⁴

There does seem to have been some discrepancy, however, between how “rescued” women were portrayed and who they in fact were. Ann Higginbotham’s careful analysis of case-records from the Women’s Social Services indicates that “very few, if any ... resembled the heroines of Salvation Army rescue stories.”

The putative fathers of their children were labourers, carpenters, butchers and policemen, not idle aristocrats or even lecherous householders. Fewer

⁹²William Booth, “What Should a Rescue Officer Be? Notes of an Address by the General at the Rescue Council in London,” The Deliverer (15 August 1889).

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴“Leah’s own Way - A Story for Girls,” The Deliverer (March 1896).

than seven per cent claimed to have been seduced by their masters or by gentlemen.⁹⁵

Instead, almost twenty per cent were prostitutes. Many had other illegitimate children. Frequently, women admitted to relationships with more than one man, or were cohabiting with a partner outside of marriage.

Army writing did indicate an awareness of the potential impact of non-consensual sexual “violation” on the life of the Victorian woman, particularly if she was outside of a supportive social structure. William Booth amplified. “What fraud fails to accomplish, a little force succeeds in effecting; and a girl who has been guilty of nothing but imprudence finds herself an outcast for life.”⁹⁶ And, for early Army reformers, the possibility of sex by force was grossly magnified by “drink” as “nine-tenths of our poverty, squalor, vice and crime spring from this poisonous tap root.”⁹⁷

William Booth’s most systematic portrayal of the women assisted by the Rescue Work appears in In Darkest England and the Way Out. In endeavouring to stress the desirability of a single standard or code of sexual behaviour for both men and women, Booth rejected the term “prostitution.” What should be attacked was “fornication ... prostitution being a word applied to only one half of the vice.”⁹⁸ This Salvation Army insistence on a non-gendered code of sexual morality was broadly admired by other Victorian social reformers. It had earned the commendation, for example, of Josephine Butler five years

⁹⁵ Ann Higginbotham, “Respectable Sinners,” 227.

⁹⁶ William Booth, In Darkest England, 61.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 54.

earlier. In a letter to Florence Soper Booth she had remarked on the congruence of her own thinking with that of The Salvation Army Rescue work.⁹⁹ William Booth saw it as an addition to “infamy” that the consequences of sexual transgression were “borne almost exclusively by women.” He also rejected on theological grounds the hereditary theories which suggested that promiscuity was an inborn inclination. For William Booth, these “popular, pseudo-scientific doctrines” came perilously near re-establishing on a scientific basis “the awful dogma of Reprobation which has cast so terrible a shadow over the Christian church.”¹⁰⁰ Booth did allow for the possibility that a woman could be influenced by what he termed “inherited passion,” but he insisted that personal disposition or temperament did not nullify freewill. But he argued that too few “moralists” released the severity of temptation under which a prohibitory “free will” might have to be exercised.

Booth’s writing indicates a unique sensitivity to the economic realities underlying a woman’s decision to prostitute in Victorian England, and by implication The Salvation Army’s awareness that not all prostitutes saw themselves as deceived victims but rather as women capable of hard-headed, if risky, choices. He observed,

It is a fact that there is no industrial career in which for a short time a beautiful girl can make as much money with as little trouble as the profession of a courtesan ... vice offers to every good-looking girl during the first bloom of her youth and beauty more money than she can earn by labour in any field of industry open to her sex... The profession of a prostitute is the only career in which the maximum income is paid to the newest apprentice.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Josephine Butler to Florence Soper Booth, re: Rescue Work, 26 March 1885, Rebecca Jarret files, The Salvation Army International Heritage Centre Archives, London, England.

¹⁰⁰ William Booth, In Darkest England, 54.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 58.

The formative Salvation Army was uncompromising in its insistence on the primacy of a spiritual restoration to any reformatory success in Rescue work. They saw scant benefit to intervention if a woman “is seeking not health of soul, but health of body: that she desires not to avoid sin but the policeman.”¹⁰² Desirable outcomes were directly linked to the client’s experience of heart transformation or personal salvation and the creation of hope, “not merely of heaven at last but of restoration to purity and blessedness here and now.”¹⁰³ Army leaders claimed that their insistence that Rescue work must “begin with the heart” in order to be successful could be empirically substantiated. By 1891, 5,000 women had gone through Army rescue homes. Florence Soper Booth asserted,

Looking carefully over the record of those amongst this number who could have been described as deeply depraved women, sunken in sin, we have not a single case that has been permanently raised to a life of morality and respectability apart from the profession and manifestation of the power of God in the heart and life.¹⁰⁴

Officers were enjoined never to “whitewash sinners,” never to “cry peace where there is no peace.”¹⁰⁵ Rather, in working with the women, they were to “go to the very root ... it is imperative that our women should also go back to the beginning of it; to the place, so to speak, where they took the first wrong step, and be properly saved.”¹⁰⁶

Rescue work was promoted as a new front for the Salvation War in the language of conflict and struggle. Described as “a department of our battlefield,” Rescue Officers saw

¹⁰²Florence Soper Booth, “Principles of Rescue Work,” All the World (1891).

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Adelaide Cox, “Methods of the Women’s Social Work.”

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

themselves as “engaged in this great conflict,” participants in a “great and glorious work.” They were doing their best to “stem the tide of sin and save the fallen.” Rescue workers faced “opposing influences, and big difficulties ... only known to those engaged in this work.”¹⁰⁷ Army writers frequently reacted with sarcasm to more conventional middle-class sensibilities. They mocked the suggestion expressed by critics that Rescue work was “not very nice work.” Staff-Captain Marianne Asdell responded to a “so-called Christian worker” in an article, “Very Nice ... I think it is *very nice* to see those who have fallen into paths of sin, changed, in their right mind, and clothed with the robe of righteousness and true holiness.”¹⁰⁸ The Captain went on to argue that whether a task was superficially pleasant or distasteful was not the issue for the Salvationist. “It is a great honour and privilege to be used in any way in such a glorious work.” To be a part of the Army Rescue work was to “find the joy hidden in the cross,” to bring “deliverance and gladness to a captive world.”¹⁰⁹

Sanctified Street Work

Rescue Officers were expected to participate in street outreach which included the regular visitation of known brothels. This was “Salvation warfare” at its most dramatic and colourful. Although The Deliverer would assert that “foolhardiness and bravery are not synonymous terms,”¹¹⁰ descriptions of the visits “behind the Green doors” which indicated houses of ill-repute in London’s West End characteristically emphasized

¹⁰⁷“A Word from Mrs. Coombs,” The War Cry (Toronto: 9 April 1889).

¹⁰⁸Staff-Captain Marianne Asdell, “Very Nice,” The Deliverer (15 August 1889).

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹¹⁰Elizabeth Clark, “Behind the Green Doors,” The Deliverer (July 1895).

elements of intrigue, risk and adventure. Here was a sphere for spiritual reconnaissance and espionage. Salvationists abandoned the readily-identifiable uniform and visited incognito, “dressed in garments which tell nothing of our motive.”¹¹¹ Usually these visits were made in response to a family or friend’s request for intervention, often expressed during a regular Salvation Army street meeting or midnight supper. Salvationists visited in pairs to minimize their safety risks, simultaneously asserting an absolute and necessary dependence upon God for effectiveness. The reporter for The Deliverer amplified,

Once inside the program is varied. In fact there is no program. This visiting is work that makes one realize the utter uselessness of depending upon anybody or anything except the Spirit of the living and loving God. It is work that requires a knowledge of human nature and an unlimited amount of tact, but most of all an unquestioning belief in the power of God to speak to and through his messengers.¹¹²

Army Practice

Rescue Work was promoted as a work for which the “better classes” were admirably equipped. It was emphasized that the Rescue Officer needed not only Biblical and theological knowledge, but keen psychological insight. Clients required a governance by force of character for which the “better classes” were prepared by their prior social standing.¹¹³ Readers of Army periodicals were informed that “there are women engaged in this work who have come out from the very best of society and have resolved to do as Jesus did - rescue the lost.”¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ William Booth, “What Should a Rescue Officer Be?” The Deliverer (15 August 1889).

¹¹⁴ The War Cry (Toronto: 13 April 1889). See also Ann Higginbotham, “Respectable Sinners: Salvation Army Rescue Work with Unmarried Mothers, 1884-1914” in Gail Malmgreen, ed. Religion in the Lives of English Women, 1730-1930 (Kent: Croom Helm, 1986), 217. “Rescue work may well have appealed to Salvationist women who would have hesitated to lead a brass band or harangue a crowd in the slums of Whitechapel. Vicars’ wives and Squires’ daughters

With an agenda so explicitly conversional, it is perhaps surprising that Army homes were popularly perceived as less restrictive and punitive places, more cheery and normalizing than many other Victorian Rescue agencies.¹¹⁵ While some of this perception can be attributed to methods of operation and the physical environment of the homes, there is a sense in which Army practice was undergirded by a radically optimistic theological outlook. Early Salvation Army workers preached that there was no limit to the redemptive possibilities of the Gospel.

Human nature is never too bad for Christ to save into goodness; character is never so firmly set upon the throne of habit that He cannot revolutionize it. The Salvation Army rests all its Social Work on the basis of this truth.¹¹⁶

Any “fallen” woman had the “makings of a snow-white angel” within. The restored could become the restorer: the sinner, the Salvationist. Booth was explicit with Officers about the ultimate goal of Army Rescue work, “to make each a red-hot Salvationist. I could not conscientiously ask any one to give you money or to recognize you as part of The Salvation Army, if you stopped short of making the girls Salvationists.”¹¹⁷

Army Practice

The image of the rescue client as “wilful wayward child” was met in Rescue practice by the image of the Rescue Officer as firm, corrective mother. Case intervention was likened

participated in work to reclaim fallen women throughout the Victorian period without any loss of respectability. The more respectable, or less adventurous of The Salvation Army's female converts could have found an acceptable outlet for their energies in the homes and missions established by the Women's Social Services.”

¹¹⁵See Ann Higginbotham, “The Unmarried Mother and her Child in Victorian London, 1834-1914” (unpublished Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1985), 106-108.

¹¹⁶“Women - of All Sorts and Conditions,” All the World.

¹¹⁷William Booth, “What Should a Rescue Officer Be?” The Deliverer (15 August 1889).

to “the motherly help which does not scruple to take this cleansing process personally in hand.”¹¹⁸ Pamela Walker has argued that motherhood was a particularly potent source of authority for working-class women in Victorian Britain, a readily understood “model and justification” of women’s work and an image consistently expanded upon in Catherine Booth’s teaching.¹¹⁹

“Deficient mothering” was frequently cited as the cause of a woman’s “fall”:

Girl R “had no mother and worse than no father, was thrown out on the world at fourteen years old, but is now mothered, happy and proving Jesus able to save.”¹²⁰ Officers were exhorted to overcome any social aversion they might feel for the women coming through the homes by recognizing that “they are some mothers’ daughters ... girls once pure and good though now black and hard with sin.”¹²¹

The Women’s Social Services regularly published expense summaries in Salvation Army periodicals such as the War Cry and The Deliverer as a means of soliciting philanthropic funds. On average a woman remained in a Salvation Army Rescue home for three months.¹²² The Women’s Social Services estimated that costs for this period of time amounted to £5 per client. £10 could keep a home of thirty girls and supervisory Officers for one week with the total expenditures for the London rescue work estimated at £120 a

¹¹⁸Major Mrs. Reynolds, The Deliverer (1 January 1890).

¹¹⁹See Pamela Walker, “Pulling the Devil’s Kingdom Down: Gender and Popular Culture in The Salvation Army” (Unpublished Ph.D. diss., Rutgers University, 1992), 140-144.

¹²⁰Marianne Asdell, “A Loose Leaf,” The Deliverer (1 July 1889).

¹²¹“Salvation Army Rescue Work,” The War Cry (Toronto: 4 May 1889).

¹²²See Ann Higginbotham, “The Unmarried Mother and her Child in Victorian London, 1834-1914,” 148.

week. In September of 1889, the Army claimed to have had to refuse forty cases in a month due to inadequate space and funding.

In order to help defray the cost of care and to silence those critics quick to complain of “pauperizing philanthropy,” the women in Rescue Homes were almost universally expected both to pay minimal fees and to contribute to the home’s upkeep through work. However, the type of work deemed suitable reflected the values of the sponsoring agency. The most common and financially remunerative task done by women in Victorian Rescue Homes was domestic laundry work. This was an option rejected by the Army in its earliest years on two grounds: first of all, it was considered too strenuous for the women who were pregnant on admission, and secondly because of the perceived immorality of the environments in which laundresses could find themselves working after their discharge from the home. Instead, the Army favoured instruction in needlework, which was “quiet” and could be done on-site while allowing adequate time for spiritual contemplation or training in those domestic arts necessary to secure a service position.

Officers responsible for the Women’s Social Services argued that there were manifold benefits to the teaching of work skills as a component of social rehabilitation. In the first place, work was necessary in order to equip women with the vocational skills for alternate, legal employment. It was “reformatory” in that it taught “self-reliance and the dignity of conduct ... so important for future success.”¹²³ Work skills were essential if

¹²³Commissioner Adelaide Cox, “Methods of the Women’s Social Work in Relation to Permanent Results,” *International Staff Councils, Addresses* (London: The Salvation Army, 1904).

women were to become “independent of vice and crime.” Furthermore, it was maintained that physical activity provided a redirection or outlet for undisciplined passions or impulsivity. Without work, the home was in danger of becoming a convalescent home, or haven of rest where energy was “recouped to sin again.”¹²⁴ Thirdly, the Army believed that psychological benefits accompanied reformatory activity. Work was a “spirit reviver.” It kept the women from brooding on past shame and failure.

Instructions given to the Officers put in charge of the Rescue Homes emphasized the integrated nature of rehabilitative concerns. The Officer’s supervisory role included the modelling of desired behaviours and attitudes, and fostering religious responsiveness in the residents.

How important then that Officers should be present with the women: on the one hand to check, through the power of grace within themselves, such demonstrations of evil; and on the other, to follow up impressions and convictions which have been received in the meetings.¹²⁵

The daily activities were organized in a manner congruent with these goals. Published descriptions of the Officers’ typical schedule emphasized the manner in which Officers and clients moved between devotional and domestic activity, between the workroom and the prayer room, between residential care and “outreach” visitation strategies.

7am:	private prayer
10am:	met the Officers for special prayer for O
12:30pm:	prayer with our girls. Our prayer mutually rose for O - and while we were taking hold of God for her, she burst into tears, and asked to be made real and true, to have her proud spirit taken away and to be made willing to “work or scrub or do anything I’m told without grumbling, even inside”
afternoon:	interviews, correspondence and prayer

¹²⁴Ibid.

¹²⁵Marianne Asdell, “A Loose Leaf,” The Deliverer (1 July 1889).

We went down - where so many difficulties had been settled today - at the foot of the cross.
evening: meeting with Sisters from Regent Hall¹²⁶

Considerable effort went into finding clients appropriate discharge placements as domestics and mediating in any consequent employment disputes. To find a girl a position as a servant in a "respectable" household was a celebrated indicator of appropriate social reclamation. The Deliverer regularly included reports of women, saved from lives on the street and snugly resettled, dusting the parlours of the upper classes:

The Salvation Army documented cases like that of Betsy.

On coming to us she was in a most drunken, filthy condition - her face cut and disfigured, probably from some street fight... Today she fills a responsible position as general servant.

Or Pattie, who

had been far sunken in sin and as we look at her today, a respectable and respected servant, we can hardly realize she is the same being who, a few brief months since, could be seen with a short black pipe in her mouth, loitering around the dens of infamy.¹²⁷

Officers were expected to be both competent needle-women and household managers who could teach the women the necessary skills for service employment. Girls were described as "anxious to show their salvation in their stoves and doorsteps. Hallelujah! This is as it should be!"¹²⁸

By the end of the century, the process of preparing women for service employment was formalized to include a three year plan of aftercare for each client, under the

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ "Wales: Cardiff Home," The Deliverer (1 January 1890).

¹²⁸ "A Loose Leaf," The Deliverer (1 July 1889).

superintendency of a “service girls Officer.” It was the responsibility of this Officer to accompany every woman to her “situation” and to ascertain whether the employment environment was “conducive to the welfare of the body and soul of her charge.”¹²⁹ Periodic follow-up visits were made to the young woman’s placement and she was encouraged to return to the Army home in the event of a relocation or change in employment status, “thus saving them taking lodging in undesirable places.”

The daily correspondence described by early rescue Officers indicates something of the range of social assistance sought by the public from The Salvation Army at late century. The Women’s Social Services Rescue Homes received appeals from parents for custodial care of daughters “getting beyond their control”¹³⁰ and for information on the employment possibilities they believed Salvation Army Officership could provide. Clearly, some working-class families were coming to regard the Army as a potential employer and source of financial independence for their daughters. The War Cry included letters like the one from a girl seeking to become an Officer “because her parents want her to be doing something for herself.”¹³¹

William Booth recognized both the resource the movement had in the Officers of the Social Wing and the need for continuing support and training for philanthropic ministries. En route to Santa Barbara, California for a period of Christmas vacation in the midst of a

¹²⁹Commissioner Adelaide Cox, “Methods of the Women’s Social Work.”

¹³⁰“Behind the Scenes at a Rescue Home,” The War Cry (Toronto: April 1889).

¹³¹*Ibid.*

gruelling evangelistic campaign, he wrote home to his son, expressing a new dream taking shape in his ever-fertile imagination.

A GREAT TRAINING INSTITUTION for Social Workers throughout the World that I would dignify by the name of University. Including the training of women for the Rescue Work. For the Mens Shelters. For the Farm Colonies. For the Insurance. For the Banks etc., etc., etc., People who think nothing of giving their millions for Colleges to teach languages, literature, science, engineering etc., would be interested I should think, in a College that was intended to create workers in Physical, Moral and Religious sciences, all to be concentrated for the benefit of the submerged millions up and down the world.¹³²

Booth's "Training Institution for Social Workers" did not materialize. But the battalion of "warrior women" coordinated by Florence Soper Booth into the Women's Social Services became the primary training ground for female leadership in The Salvation Army as it moved into the twentieth century. These Salvationist women found adventure and wielded authority in a less culturally transgressive way than their preaching comrades "on the field." Officers like Adelaide Cox, Anna von Wattenwyl and Mary Bennet embodied another "heroic spirituality"; one far more palatable to the Victorian public.

¹³²William Booth to Bramwell Booth, 19 December 1902.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Ambulance Corps: Nursing, Medicine and Occupational Health

I have been thinking, that if a little Van, drawn by a pony, could be fitted up with what is ordinarily required by the sick and dying, and trot around these abodes of desolation with a couple of nurses trained for the business, it might be of immense service without being very costly. They could have a few simple instruments so as to draw a tooth or lance an abscess, and what was absolutely requisite for simple surgical operations. A little oil stove for hot water to prepare a poultice, or a hot foment, or a soap wash, and a number of other necessities for nursing could be carried with ease.¹

In Darkest England and The Way Out, General William Booth's "social manifesto," was published on October 20, 1890. Six days earlier his adored wife and "comrade in arms," Catherine, had been buried in Abney Park cemetery after her protracted struggle with cancer. There is a striking symbolism in the timing of the publication of Booth's book. With the launch of In Darkest England, one perception of The Salvation Army was put to death: another more ambiguous understanding of the movement was born. At the time of publication Booth seemed to have regarded the work as an expression of his thought "come of age." He likened the changes in his approach to social theory to developments in nineteenth-century medical practice.

The tradition still lingers among old people of doctors who prescribed bleeding for every ailment, and of keepers of asylums whose one idea of ministering to a mind diseased was to put the body into a straight waistcoat. Modern science laughs to scorn these simple "remedies" of an unscientific age, and declares that they were, in most cases, the most efficacious means of aggravating the disease they hoped to cure. But in social maladies we are still in the age of the blood letter and the strait waistcoat.²

¹William Booth, In Darkest England and the Way Out (London: The Salvation Army International Headquarters, 1890), 178.

²*Ibid.*, 82.

Later, he was less sure. For the rest of William Booth's life he remained deeply ambivalent about the value of the network of Salvation Army social services rationalized and catalyzed by the publication of the book. He lived with the nagging apprehension that among his Officers, "bodily compassion" might come to replace the compassion for "souls" which had inflamed his own revivalist ministry.³

Essentially, In Darkest England and The Way Out was an impassioned description of the conditions, lifestyle and barriers to self-sufficiency faced by that portion of the British population which Booth referred to as the submerged tenth. Using Charles Booth's extensive compilation of social statistics, Life and Labour of the People of London,⁴ William estimated that he was documenting the problems faced by almost three million citizens at late century. The programmatic vision which accompanied this social awareness was directed to alleviating the misery of "the Disinherited of the World"; that element of the population which Booth categorized in two ways:

1. those who, having no capital or income of their own, would in a month be dead from sheer starvation were they exclusively dependent upon the money earned by their own work, and
2. those who by their utmost exertions are unable to attain the regulation allowance of food which the law prescribes as indispensable even for the worst criminals in our jails.⁵

³This apprehension is most in evidence in the vast personal and denominational correspondence William maintained with Bramwell, his "Chief of Staff."

⁴Charles Booth, Life and Labour of the People of London 7 vols, (London: AMS Edition, 1970).

⁵William Booth, In Darkest England, 25.

William Booth did not hesitate to own the explicitly religious nature of his social agenda. He stated, "I must assert in the most unqualified way that it is primarily and mainly for the sake of saving the soul that I seek the salvation of the body."⁶ Furthermore, he claimed to "see the folly of hoping to accomplish anything abiding, either in the circumstances or the morals of these hopeless classes, except there be a change effected in the whole man as well as in his surroundings."⁷ Through "the relief of temporal misery," Booth believed that he was "only making it easy where it is now difficult, and possible where it is now all but impossible, for men and women to find their way to the Cross."⁸ His plan, wrote Booth, was simply a "sincere endeavour to do something, and to do it on principles which can be instantly applied."⁹

Above all, asserted William Booth, the poor needed the opportunity to work. But first they needed to be healthy enough to do so. In direct contradistinction to the philosophy of the Charity Organization Society, the Darkest England scheme advocated for the provision of elementary remedial welfare both for the deserving and the "undeserving poor." It was Booth's opinion that whether one merited assistance could only be determined after the ground was levelled through equal opportunity. "Worthiness," meaning a genuine desire to live a socially constructive and responsible life could only be ascertained after the "denizens of Darkest England had been offered a concrete 'way out'." Then and only then might there be possible grounds for moral censoriousness. William Booth's proposed minimum standard of living was a modest one but one which

⁶Ibid., 53.

⁷Ibid., Preface.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

graphically snagged the imagination of the English public. He called it the “Cab Horse Charter,” and explained,

Every cab horse in London has three things; a shelter for the night, food for its stomach, and work allotted to it by which it can earn its corn. These are the two points of the Cab Horse’s Charter. When he is down he is helped up, and while he lives he has food, shelter and work. That, although a humble standard, is at present absolutely unattainable by millions - literally by millions - of our fellow men and women in this country.¹⁰

To deal with the social reality he described, William Booth proposed a vast three-fold system of self-sustaining “Colonies”: City, Farm and Overseas. The City Colony would commence the work of “regeneration” or human salvage by providing food and shelter in exchange for any work an individual was well enough to offer. Modest work-training programs would be a component of the City colony’s mandate. Job training would be continued in rural work-training centres where individuals could be equipped with the agricultural and industrial skills desired by immigration officials of those nations of the British Empire seeking settlers. Additionally, Booth suggested a complex range of supportive services, including the creation of a “poor man’s bank,” the provision of legal aid, a family tracing service, the recycling businesses in bottles, newspapers and rags, a Labour bureau to link prospective employers with the unemployed, the creation of village food co-operatives, low-income family housing - even a Seaside Establishment intended to put opportunities for leisure within the economic reach of the poor.

A park, playground, music, boats, covered conveniences for bathing, without the expense of hiring a machine, and other arrangements for the comfort and enjoyment of the people...¹¹

¹⁰Ibid., 27.

¹¹Ibid., 247.

In Darkest England and The Way Out met with what Inglis has called a "great but brief success."¹² A first edition of 10,000 copies sold out on the day of issue. Within the year, the book had sold 200,000 copies and gone into a fifth edition, making it the most widely-read work of social policy since the publication of Henry George's Progress and Poverty a decade earlier.¹³

The immediate response to William Booth's appeal for funds to inaugurate the scheme were encouraging. Booth had asked for £100,000, saying that if the money was forthcoming, he would interpret it as a sign that he was called to a work of "social redemption."¹⁴ Within three months, the initial financial target was reached. However, after February 1891, donations dwindled. In the next year and a half subscriptions to the Darkest England scheme amounted to only another £20,000.

The significance of In Darkest England and the Way Out has been the subject of considerable academic debate in the study of Salvation Army history. For a historian like Norman Murdoch, Booth's scheme represents an about-face in the Army's mission strategy and an acknowledgement of the denomination's ultimate failure to evangelize the urban poor.¹⁵ Much has been made of the influence of both the journalist W. T. Stead

¹²K. S. Inglis, Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), 211.

¹³See Victor Bailey, "In Darkest England and The Way Out: The Salvation Army, Social Reform and the Labour Movement 1885-1910," International Review of Social History 29 (1984).

¹⁴Inglis, 206.

¹⁵See Norman Murdoch, Origins of The Salvation Army (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994). Observing the numerical stagnation of the Army after a decade of work in the slums which it claimed as its particular sphere of mission, Murdoch argues, "How did Booth respond when critics exposed his failure to bring the gospel to the 'lowest of the low?' He quickly adopted a social program in the late 1880s." Preface x.

who assisted William with the writing of the book, and of Frank Smith, a Commissioner in The Salvation Army at the time of In Darkest England's publication, and later a Member of Parliament representing the Labour Party. Smith had become an Officer in 1881 and was so highly regarded by William Booth that he was dispatched to head up The Salvation Army in the United States when a crisis erupted in the mid-1880s. While in the Americas, Smith was influenced by the work of Henry George. W. T. Stead contended that Frank Smith had been urging William Booth to embark on a project of social intervention at least three years prior to the publication of the book.¹⁶ As a historical theologian, Roger Green's take on the significance of the late 1880s and the publication of In Darkest England is very different. For him, it marks the maturing of Booth's soteriology. According to this perspective, by the end of the 1880s Booth "struck a view of salvation which was sufficient to include both personal and social dimensions. By 1889 the Army had already entered in many places upon a dual mission of saving sinners from their sin, and redeeming the world from the evils which so beset it."¹⁷

The entire enterprise does seem to have been one of which William Booth wearied. He expressed his concerns to Bramwell,

My dear boy, I cannot go in for any more campaigns against evil. My hands and heart are full enough. And, moreover, these ... reformers of Society have no sympathy with the S.A. nor with Salvation from worldliness and sin. Our campaign is against sin!¹⁸

¹⁶W. T. Stead, The Salvation Army and its Social Scheme cited in Inglis, Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England, 202.

¹⁷Roger Green, War on Two Fronts: The Redemptive Theology of William Booth (Atlanta: The Salvation Army, 1989), 99.

¹⁸Harold Begbie, William Booth (London: MacMillan and Co., 1926), 95.

But in an oblique manner, the attitude to the poor and marginalized expressed through In Darkest England and The Way Out reflected and perpetuated the spirituality of The Salvation Army. It communicated a “spirit” which would become deeply associated with the movement’s modus operandi. Victor Bailey finds the work striking in that “no high moral tone is adopted toward the outcast, not even towards prostitutes.”¹⁹ Booth’s dream, while indisputably a bold vision of social engineering, nonetheless claimed to rigorously reject approaches to human care or formal philanthropy which seemed “mechanical, perfunctory or formal.”²⁰ His Army was to resist “anything that dehumanizes the individual, anything that treats a man as if he were only a number of a series or a cog in a wheel.”

Health Status and Unemployment

William Booth recognized the relationship between poor health and poverty, between disability and unemployment. Case studies were numerous cited in Darkest England which made the connection explicit: Among a group of men found sleeping on the Embankment, June 13-14, 1890, there was the confectioner from Dartford, claiming to be “turned off because I’m getting elderly. They can get young men cheaper, and I have the rheumatism so bad”²¹ - the “feather-bed dresser” with a cataract in one eye²² - the “tall, dull, helpless looking individual” who “hoped to have obtained a hospital letter to obtain

¹⁹Victor Bailey, “In Darkest England and The Way Out: The Salvation Army, Social Reform and the Labour Movement 1885-1910,” International Review of Social History 29 (1984): 153.

²⁰William Booth, In Darkest England and the Way Out, 80.

²¹Ibid., 35.

²²Ibid.

a truss for a bad rupture, but failing, had tried other places in vain, winding up minus money or food on the Embankment.”²³

Despite this awareness, Booth made only minimal recommendations for a formalized nursing or medical work in In Darkest England and The Way Out. However, as the decade progressed, Professional Nursing would come to be regarded as the most hopeful strategy, or entry point for “mission to the masses” in the Army’s salvation arsenal.

Nursing Care

In the 1880s The Salvation Army had commenced battle on another front with a new battalion of “warrior women.” On Curragh military base, a young soldier’s wife by the name of Caroline Frost was approached by the staff surgeon and asked if she would consider undertaking midwifery training when her husband’s regiment transferred to Dublin. The military hoped to be able to provide two certified midwives for each regimental unit. Caroline later recalled her husband’s response at her request for his permission to commence midwifery training. “He showed me that it was a brave work, and I liked all brave work, and that it was to help soldiers’ wives and so help the army and I loved the service so.”²⁴

As a Salvation Army soldier in the Channel Islands, Caroline Frost initially put her midwifery training to use by allowing her home to function as an informal receiving

²³Ibid., 34.

²⁴“Captains William and Caroline Frost of the Rescue Work,” The War Cry (29 June 1889).

home, accepting girls from the Rescue Homes of the Southern Division on the mainland. Her work as a lay Salvationist came to the attention of Florence Soper Booth who asked if she was willing to consider a relocation to London to work with the Army there? She was, and sometime in 1886 Caroline and her husband, William, took up residence in Chelsea. In addition to supporting the Rescue Work with her midwifery skills, Caroline had the distinction of becoming in November of the same year the first of the Army's "Midnight" or street outreach workers. Both she and her husband were among the first group of "Rescue Officers" formally commissioned in July of 1888 in a retrospective acknowledgement of the work in which they were already engaged. Caroline Frost contributed to the maternity nursing work of the Chelsea home (1886-88), the Pimlico home (1888), and 27 Devonshire Road (from January 1889) before supervising the early work of Ivy House, formally opened on June 2, 1890 with the capacity to care for 21 mothers and babies. The midwife, attracted to the image of nursing as "brave work," has the additional historical distinction of having in 1894 inaugurated The Salvation Army's first venture into District Nursing through what was initially referred to as The Slum Maternity Work.²⁵

In no sphere of Salvation Army philanthropic endeavour was the denominational code more congruently embodied than in the nursing services. By late century, the "trained" nurse had come to epitomize heroic, self-denying, womanly social participation. The task of visiting and caring for the sick could now be conducted with the "seriousness" so

²⁵For a comprehensive description of the commencement of the Army's Rescue and Nursing work, see Jenty Fairbank, Booth's Boots (St. Albans: The Campfield Press, 1983).

cherished by earlier evangelical sensibility. Emphasis on training and standards had removed nursing from the realm of the amateur, or dilettante women's activity of the kind despised by Catherine Booth and had given the nurse a role of undisputed practical usefulness. While "the friendly visitor, armed with the tenets of scientific charity found herself defenceless when confronted with disease," the nurse, trained in sanitary measures, was prepared for battle.²⁶ What was more, a woman could aspire to the public nature of the nursing role without facing criticism for compromised virtue. Here was a way of being simultaneously sophisticated and untainted, useful but unspoiled. As Lord Cathcart commented in his report, The Medical Charities of the English Metropolis, "Hospital life for women is rarely demoralizing; views enlarge, natures expand, the details of sorrow and sin widen nature without leaving a stain."²⁷

The increasing acceptability of trained nursing as an occupational choice for women of the middle and upper classes was supported and strengthened by an ideology which asserted women's role in social and moral guardianship. Women, by nature, were "social saviours, guarding home, health and family morality." Any truly "womanly" woman was, by nature, a nurse. She would foster in her home life that "perfect cleanliness, essential to health of body and of mind and to cheerfulness."²⁸ Throughout the late Victorian years, professional Nursing's preoccupation with cleanliness, environmental management and scouring up the pollution of the urban city was perceived as a logical extension of

²⁶Karen Buhler-Wilkerson, False Dawn: The Rise and Decline of Public Health Nursing, 1900-1930 (New York: Garland Publishing, 1989), 4.

²⁷Lord Cathcart, "The Medical Charities of the English Metropolis," in John Billings, ed. Hospitals, Dispensaries and Nursing (New York, London: Garland Publishing, 1984), 25.

²⁸See Barbara Brenzel, "Domestication as Reform: A Study of the Socialization of Wayward Girls, 1865-1905," Harvard Educational Review 50 no.2 (May 1980).

women's domestic competence. Skills fostered in the private home were transferred to the visited home, or to the "created home" nurses endeavoured to make of the institutional ward.

Furthermore, visiting nurses in the homes of the sick poor were increasingly regarded as agents of social reconciliation par excellence, "the safest and most practical means of bridging the gulf which lies between the classes and the masses."²⁹ It is not coincidental that much of the credit for formalizing and pioneering the structuring of district nursing is given to William Rathbone, a self-described "man of business." Rathbone, in Social Duties Considered with Reference to The Organization of Effort in Works of

Benevolence and Public Utility By A Man Of Business had theorized:

Regard to history confirms the fears of common sense that a state of national life, in which the moral unity of the nation is broken - in which the rich and the poor begin to form two separate castes, losing mutual comprehension, mutual sympathy, mutual regard, and becoming to each other as distinct races with separate organization, ideas, interests - is the sure forerunner, the first commencement of rapid national decay. It is by bridging the gulf of separation, by reuniting the severed sympathies and rekindling the earnestness of personal goodwill between the estranged orders that we can hope to maintain in vigorous life the common sentiments, the mutual affections, which are the breath of national life. It is only by bringing the two classes once more into relations of personal kindness and friendly intercourse, by service rendered without patronage and accepted without degradation, that we can avert the danger of those terrible collisions between capital and labour (which are the fruit of mutual misconception and irritation, much more than of conflicting interests) which, if less violent, become daily more formidable, from the gigantic proportions assumed by the separate organizations in which the labourers

²⁹ Annie Brainard, The Evolution of Public Health Nursing (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Co., 1922), 211.

are banded together, apart from, and, as it were, in antagonism to their employers.³⁰

Certainly physical suffering and disease created a neutral, levelled social space in which “relief,” in the sense of comfort and care was welcomed irrespective of source. But for nursing functions described with such words as reform, recreation and elevation, indeed for overall patient “compliance” with treatment, there was divided opinion as to whether this could be achieved by nurses from the same class background as their patients.

Pioneering nursing reformers, such as Florence Lee, an early pupil of the Nightingale school, argued that the nurse benefitted from being of a higher social class standing than her patient. In a report by Lee on the status of district nursing, published June 11, 1875, her opinion was made explicit: “Reforming and recreating the homes of the poor were simply too difficult for nurses who came from the same class as their patients.”³¹ In order to be effective the nurse needed both love and powers of coercion. “A district nurse must have a real love for the poor and a real desire to lessen the misery she may see among them, and such tact as well as skill that she will do what is best for her patients, even against their will.”³²

³⁰William Rathbone, Social Duties Considered With Reference to the Organization of Effort in Works of Benevolence and Public Utility By a Man of Business (London: Macmillan and Co., 1867), 14.

³¹Florence Lee, “On District Nursing,” Hospitals, Dispensaries and Nursing 10.

³²Ibid, 551. There was an alternate school of reformist thought which emphasized the potential benefit of “good poor women,” who, if adequately trained, and well supervised, might act as the “missing link” between Christian ladies and the classes in need of reform.

Florence Nightingale's vision of the "scientifically prepared" district nurse was very akin to the role of the Charity Organization Society caseworker. Her role was one of social supervision and not of material provision. Nightingale contended,

Besides a nurse, she must be a sanitary missionary, for when doles are given, nursing flies out the window or rather remains at the door... The nurse is a repository of knowledge, both physical and social, which she can use to direct her patients to help themselves. She is not there to act for them but to make them act in accordance with her precepts.³³

Above all, the nurse had to be able "to withstand the interpersonal buffeting of social contacts with the poor."³⁴

A Nursing Army

In the late 1880s and throughout the 1890s, Salvation Army leaders shared the general cultural conviction that nursing could play a unique role in influencing the behaviour of the labouring classes. For the Army, this was explicitly linked to a conversional religious agenda. In one of numerous appeals for women to consider entering nurses' training published in The Deliverer, Florence Soper Booth commented, "We are most anxious ... that it (nursing) should be a means of spreading the news of salvation amongst a class which otherwise we should not be likely to reach."³⁵ Three years later, The Deliverer would claim that this expectation was being fulfilled through the district nursing conducted from the Cambridge Heath Corps. In the project featured in The Deliverer the nurses were all soldiers of Cambridge Heath. Reporting on their work, the Corps or Field

³³See Dingwall, Rafferty and Webster, An Introduction to the Social History of Nursing (London: Routledge, 1988), 178-179.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Florence Soper Booth, "Personal Notes," The Deliverer (May 1893).

Officer, Ensign Will Gilks, estimated that 20 or 30 individuals were attending religious services as a direct result of a nursing intervention. Five soldiers “had been converted through the nurses ... and we have several more recruits.”³⁶ Gilks asserted that the nurses had radically altered neighbourhood opinions about The Salvation Army. He observed,

There are streets and squares around London Fields, the Broadway and Cambridge Heath in which Salvationists always got molested, insulted or pelted, until this last six or eight months, and now we can stop in any street or square and have a good meeting, and if anyone interferes, out will come a woman, or her stronger half, to say to the offending one, “yer hold yer tongue; yer dunno what yer talking about, yer dunno know ‘em or yer’d listen, or take yerself hoof.” What has made the change? I have no hesitation in saying it has not been the Corps’ work, but that it is the outcome of the steady continual work of the nurses among the poorest of the poor. And although a field Officer, I must say it is my firm conviction that if the Army is going to have any real hold over the Slums of Cambridge Heath, Bethnal Green or the Broadway, it will be largely through the blessed holy work of the nurses; they are paving the way for the spread of Salvation in those districts.³⁷

Despite Gilks’ experience at Cambridge Heath, the Army’s hoped for “hold over the slums” remained elusive. At late century the limited cultural permeation achieved by the denomination was internally acknowledged. “We are not satisfied with the hold we have upon the poor.”³⁸ Again, appeals were made for trained nurses, the belief intact that the provision of care for sick bodies would create entry points for a more critical ministry to sick souls. Proposals were put forth in Army periodicals which envisioned Officer nurses working in conjunction with non-nursing lay “Sisters of the Cross” recruited on the basis

³⁶Will Gilks, “Our District Nurses from a Field Officer’s Point of View,” *The Deliverer* (January 1896). See also *The Deliverer* (September 1895) for further attestation to the generation of public goodwill and support in response to the district nursing. “There was one district now, where the people have always offered the Army a good deal of petty persecution, really distressing, but now, since our nurses have been there, if there is a gang of working men crowding up a sidewalk, they will make way for a Salvationist instantly. Hostility has turned to friendship.”

³⁷*Ibid.*, 99.

³⁸“Progress of the Month,” *All the World* (1899): 102.

of a willingness to commit a minimum of six hours a week to slum work without financial remuneration.

Formalized and certified Nursing Services were expanded by The Salvation Army for other reasons than its apparent capacity to create positive community relations and “soften the soil for the reception of the gospel.” Maternity nursing was regarded as a highly effective strategy for preventing or reducing immoral social behaviour. By late century The Salvation Army, like other Victorian rescue agencies, preferred to restrict the assistance they provided to women designated at the stage of their “first fall” rather than to “hardened sinners.” They explained,

These are women who have made their first slip from the path of virtue. Thus the work done here is preventative, bringing to the remorseful, friendless creatures assistance in the time of their direst need and opening a door whereby they may pass to respectable employment.³⁹

As nursing was increasingly regarded as a socially acceptable choice of work for women because of the manner in which it developed the “womanly” in the practitioner, nursing intervention with pregnant women was highly regarded by late century because of the way parturition fulfilled the “womanly” in the patient. Childbirth potentially represented the moment of the Victorian female’s transformation to “true womanhood,” and the

³⁹“In the Beginning,” *All the World* (1897): 215. See Ann Rowell Higginbotham, “The Unmarried Mother and Her Child in Victorian London, 1834-1914,” (Unpublished Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1985), 112ff. Higginbotham contends that Victorian rescue work began with an “undifferentiated interest in the fallen woman” that usually meant a work with prostitutes. However, by late century, the women “rescued” were generally classified into three distinct types of case. For most rescue missions, preventive cases referred to those “not fallen but in great danger” because of their social isolation in the city, family background or poverty. The third group consisted of prostitutes whom it was believed were in need of a penitential, disciplinary environment. Most agencies placed the unmarried mothers in an ambiguous second class, choosing to describe these women as more “friendless than fallen.” The Salvation Army was one of a minority of agencies who collapsed this second group into “preventive cases.”

occasion for heightened spiritual receptivity. In explaining the commencement of the Army's maternity work, The Deliverer asserted,

For all the tenderest and most holy feelings of a woman's heart are called forth in these early hours of motherhood... Thank God, there is also His pardoning mercy, His protective pitying love for everyone who seeks, and here, if anywhere, it will become their own.⁴⁰

Not all of The Salvation Army's attraction to nursing as a strategy for mission was directed to those outside of the mission; the "unsaved," the "unwashed." Nurses were perceived as valuable for the wholistic attention they could devote to a converted but economically poor Army soldiery and to the broader Christian community. Leaders in the Women's Social Services asserted that they could identify "hundreds ... who would welcome more than gladly, a really saved nurse, who would not only tend their body, but with a heart full of love and joy, would care for their soul at the same time."⁴¹

Furthermore, Nursing was regarded as a way of involving better educated women in Army mission activity. Dr. Hart, the movement's medical advisor in 1893, made this explicit. "There would be an opening here for well-educated young women, such as the Army has not hitherto been able to make - a Salvation Sisterhood of capable, intelligent people, with the more brain-power the better."⁴²

Hart's hopes were not without warrant or precedent. In the early 1890s a cadre of nursing Officers, with backgrounds socially comparable to the Rescue Officers of the previous

⁴⁰"Our First Maternity Hospital," The Deliverer (August 1909).

⁴¹"New Home Scheme," The Deliverer (Christmas 1891): 88.

⁴²"The Grey Angel of Success," The Deliverer (September, 1893).

decade joined the Army. For example, in 1893, Miriam Castle responded to an ad published in The Deliverer. “Would any young woman not having platform ability like to offer for nursing among the poor?” Castle had not been a Salvationist and retrospectively claimed that she “knew she could not do the public side of the work.”⁴³ Already a trained nurse, Miriam Castle had read William Booth’s social manifesto, In Darkest England, and had observed the Army’s theatrical street processions or “open air work.” She was aware of her extended family’s admiration for the work of the denomination; according to her father “they were the people who most faithfully carried out the Master’s teachings.”⁴⁴ Castle wrote to Florence Soper Booth in response to The Deliverer’s appeal for nurses and was advised to link with an Army congregation or “Corps.” After training as an Officer, she was appointed to the maternity work at Ivy House, the commencement of 53 years as a Salvation Army Officer nurse.

Hannah Carr was another early Officer who was already both a committed Christian and a “trained nurse” at the time of her introduction to The Salvation Army. Like Miriam Castle, Hannah was attracted by a street meeting or “open air” and accompanied the procession back to the indoor service which followed the march. On her second visit to The Salvation Army, the Officer responsible for the meeting invited Hannah to come to the platform and publicly witness or “testify” to her faith. This marked the beginning of her involvement with the movement and a long personal relationship with the Booth family. As a “Cadet” Hannah Carr contributed her nursing skills to the work of the Celilar,

⁴³Miriam Castle, “The Wonderful Message You Brought Me!” The Deliverer (June 1928): 26.

⁴⁴“Lieut.-Colonel Castle,” The Deliverer (December 1930).

Gutter and Garrett brigade. She was personally selected by the Booths to nurse Catherine during her final illness. After Mrs. Booth's death in 1890, Hannah Carr was reassigned to the personal staff of William and Catherine's daughter Emma. She remained in the role of personal nurse and assistant to the Booth-Tuckers until Emma's untimely death in a railway accident in the United States in October, 1903.⁴⁵

Annie Sowden, another Army Nursing pioneer entered Officership as a middle-aged woman. She had raised four sons on her own and had studied Maternity Nursing prior to any Salvation Army involvement. While managing a private maternity case, Sowden approached Ivy House for some assistance with her case. She was greatly affected by the manner in which the assistant assigned to help her "lived Salvation."⁴⁶

Two of the most professionally prominent women attracted into The Salvation Army in the early 1890s were from the Netherlands. Miss Brinkman was described in All the World⁴⁷ as having been part of a small Dutch nursing elite, one of four in her country "holding highest honours in the profession." She was broadly certified in "ordinary" or medical / surgical nursing, maternity and psychiatric nursing, and at the time she encountered the Army, was the directoress of what was described as a "leading nursing hospital." In the course of a fifteen-year career in secular nursing, Brinkman had for eight years been the Head Sister of the largest psychiatric institution in Holland. As had been the case with Miriam Castle in England, her initial knowledge of The Salvation Army

⁴⁵"The Army Mother's Nurse," The Deliverer (May 1938): 50.

⁴⁶"Her Work Done. Brigadier Sowden at Rest," The Deliverer (January 1917): 8.

⁴⁷"Our First Nursing Hospital," All the World (1895): 283.

came through the reading of In Darkest England for what she described as “professional reasons.” Attracted by what she regarded as “the novelty of hearing that Social Work was part of its operations,” Brinkman began to attend the services conducted in the slum Corps in the Hague. Six months later she “knelt at the penitent form.” Army accounts of Brinkman’s theological formation stress her “conversion” from a broad, Continental liberalism to the “personal, living faith” of the Salvationist.

She had known Christ as The Good Man, Christ the misrepresented Lover of Humanity, Christ the Teacher of a Pure Philosophy, and Christ the Founder of a New religion and the Object of world-wide worship. But not till she knelt at the penitent form after six months’ close study of His humble disciples in this Dutch slum hall - did she know and realize Christ as a living and personal Saviour from sin.⁴⁸

Anna Knuttel, who entered the Training Garrison from Arnhem in 1895, was from an aristocratic background of adequate wealth to enable her to have personally funded a private hospital in Nymwegan prior to her Officership. She attributed her spiritual conversion at sixteen years of age to “the discipline and clear Christian teaching of pious Protestant parents.”⁴⁹ Knuttel’s experience provides another example of a woman drawn to “the active side of a Christian’s life” which she believed was expressed in Salvationist spirituality.

Together, these women inaugurated Salvation Army nursing work in Amsterdam in 1895. According to the journal All the World which had been launched in 1884 in order to promote an international perspective on Army operations, there were seven or eight other

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 285.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*

certified nurses training as Officers in The Netherlands in 1895. The need for this component of the denomination's ministry had become evident from the day to day experience of the larger Cadet body. The Training Home or Garrison was located in one of the poorest districts of Amsterdam. Consequently, the staff Officers were besieged with requests from the neighbourhood "at all hours to send Cadets to visit the sick and dying, tend diseased and bedridden people." Many of these appeals came from people with infectious diseases. The Officers in charge of the training program were moved by the scope of the problem but fearful of exposing "untrained" Cadets to physical risk. In addition to "fever cases," it was evident that the poor lacked access to adequate convalescent home-care, frequently resulting in scenarios where children were being found completely unattended or endeavouring to care for the ill parent. The Army intended to begin to rectify the situation by opening a ten-bed nursing institution for surgical and pulmonary cases. Five of the beds were to be reserved for male and five for female patients. Patients were expected to contribute to the cost of board, lodging and medicine, at a rate calculated by income, but Medical treatment and nursing services were provided free. Additionally, it was envisioned that the Nursing Hospital would establish an out-patients department which would serve both rich and poor patients from the locality, but with a bias toward the care of the "poorest." Although the hospital was to be intentionally interfaith "open to Jews, Catholics, Protestants and people of no religion, belief, or profession whatever," a stated goal of the provision of nursing services was "The leading of the sick and suffering to the Great Physician of souls... The nurses are Salvationists first; philanthropists second."⁵⁰

⁵⁰ibid., 287.

There were other reasons why The Salvation Army was eager to build up a Nursing Army. It was hoped that the provision of “monthly” nursing might generate income which could be used to support other mission programs. In November 1889 Florence Soper Booth reported that under Caroline Frost’s supervision, the Army “had been able to train one young woman who is now ready to undertake monthly nursing, and we are anxious to help the funds of the Rescue work in this way.”⁵¹ Five years later, this expectation was still held within Army leadership. Bramwell Booth confidently asserted in a private letter to his father, “The Nursing Institution is going to be a great success and be a source of revenue.”⁵² In fact, Army Nursing did not become a source of revenue. Nor was it able to achieve financial self-sufficiency. In a statistical summary of fifteen years of work published in 1909 it was reported that Ivy House or the Maternity Hospital ran a yearly deficit of £1,100 even with nurses accepting private cases to supplement the institutional budget.

Despite the financial disappointment, The Salvation Army maintained that through the training of Nurses at late century it was making a contribution to a broad, trans-denominational mission agenda. All the World reported,

Here alone of all Army Institutions, persons who are not Salvationists are received and trained side-by-side with Salvationists. The Army has recognized the necessity for medical knowledge in the training of Lady Missionaries and Christian workers, and extends to them the advantages it

⁵¹Florence Soper Booth, “Personal Notes,” The Deliverer (15 November 1889).

⁵²Private Correspondence, William Booth Letters, 29 September 1894, Folder #10 The Salvation Army International Heritage Centre Archives, London, England.

gives to its own nurses, combining with its teaching spiritual blessing and inspiration.⁵³

The interdenominational character of the training provided by the Army is evident from The Deliverer report submitted by Ensign Sowden in March 1897. Of the four most recent candidates she had prepared to attempt the examination for the diploma of the London Obstetrical Society, one was to shortly marry a medical missionary and leave for Mongolia with the London Missionary Society. Two others were leaving for mission responsibilities, one with the India and Ceylon Mission, the other with the Christian Alliance Mission. Sowden commented, "The Lord is so good in giving us these missionaries to train, letting our dear little S.A. Hospital help to spread the glorious gospel."⁵⁴

On the basis of both cultural and denominational confidence in the possibilities which Nursing practice presented for mission effectiveness, Salvation Army Nursing was formalized from Ivy House in 1894. The Rescue home at 271 Mare Street, Hackney began to appear in Army records as "Ivy House" late in 1889. It was ceremoniously opened on June 2, 1890 as a Maternity Home under the supervision of Caroline Frost, taking over this function from a house on Devonshire Road which was to be used forthwith to expand services as a receiving home. In 1894, Ivy House was "reopened" - now designated as a Maternity Hospital, with the pre- and post-natal care it had previously provided transferred to other homes to make possible a larger midwifery case-

⁵³"In the Beginning," All the World (May 1897).

⁵⁴Ensign Sowden, "Our Hospital Pupils," The Deliverer (March 1897).

load. Ivy House as “hospital” consisted of four wards, a case room, day and night nurseries and a convalescent ward, in addition to kitchen and dining facilities. It was possible to accommodate 25 mothers and babies in what Army periodicals advertised as the “charmingly fresh and bright ... sweet and airy institution.”⁵⁵

Ads began to appear on a regular basis in Army periodicals for women willing to enter “ministry” by training as nurses. It was specified that “only those need apply who intend to use the knowledge gained in the Lord’s service, and not as a means of livelihood.”⁵⁶ Initially, it was specified that the women entering training be Salvationists. They were required to be at least twenty years of age, “strong, healthy, kind and with a natural love for nursing.”

Theorizing about the development of an appropriate training for Nurses in 1895, Dr. Hart, the Army’s medical advisor, envisioned a program which would protect the denomination’s commitment to prepare women as “Salvationists first, philanthropists second.” He recommended that in the first year of training the nurse be both Cadet and probationer, initially undergoing three months of field or evangelistic training “to develop the war spirit within her.”⁵⁷ Ideally, in the second year she would be promoted to “nurse” and hold the Army rank of Lieutenant; the next year, “sister” with the rank of Captain and finally, as required by the expansion of Army services, become an assistant matron “with the rank of a staff Officer under whom would be sisters, whom she would train to take her

⁵⁵“From the Editor’s Pen,” The Deliverer (July 1895).

⁵⁶“Pioneers,” The Deliverer (October-November 1954).

⁵⁷“The Grey Angel of Success,” The Deliverer (1895).

place if she was moved to a foreign field.” In fact, the structure of nursing education remained less formal. By 1897, the Army had established three divisions of training at Ivy House, divisions which both reveal and perpetuated late Victorian class-consciousness. A first group training as monthly nurses were required to pass a series of requisite in-house examinations and awarded a hospital certificate. A second group of nurse-midwives prepared to write the exams required for the Certificate of the London Obstetrical Society. Additionally, the Army accepted “a limited number of Lady Pupils ... desirous of qualifying for private, mission field or district nursing.”

District Nursing

The “district nursing” for which Lady Pupils were invited to apply had been officially inaugurated in 1894, although Caroline Frost and her staff from the Maternity Home had been conducting home visits in their spare time since at least late 1892.⁵⁸ Initially it was an offshoot of the work being attempted from the Army’s Slum Posts. Slum Work, started a decade earlier as the Cellar, Gutter and Garrett brigade, had developed to the point where the 1895 report of Social Operations listed 32 Officers stationed in “posts” in London, with another 52 in the Provinces. Residing within slum neighbourhoods, and conforming “to the habits of the population amongst whom they work,” Slum Officers were expected to act as “spiritual and temporal advisers.”⁵⁹ They conducted services in homes and on the street, provided counselling and crisis intervention and endeavoured to

⁵⁸Florence Soper Booth reports in The Deliverer (January 1893) that “Mrs. Captain Frost, from our Maternity Home, with the nurses and probationers are giving their spare time to assist in this work.”

⁵⁹W. Bramwell Booth, Light in Darkest England in 1895. A Review of the Social Operations of The Salvation Army. With Annual Statement of Accounts of The Darkest England Fund (London: The Salvation Army International Headquarters, 1895).

provide practical care for “the dying and the little children.” With the transformation of Ivy House to a Maternity Hospital and Nursing Institution, it became possible to put together a team of six trained nurses, under the supervision of Caroline Frost, for what was initially referred to as Slum Sickness Visitation. In the brigade’s first five months of operation, the nurses made 8,813 home visits and provided nursing care to 283 patients. By 1897, there were seventeen district nurses on Frost’s staff.⁶⁰

In the earliest stages of the district work concentrated in the districts of Clapton, South Hackney and Limehouse, the Army nurses accepted only Maternity cases. A small fee of 7s 6d was requested for obstetrical services and the woman was attended for nine days. However the need for general Nursing quickly became apparent as Caroline Frost’s brigade succeeded in their goal of winning “family confidence” through home visitation. Typical descriptions published in Army literature illustrated the scope of nursing services provided. “There is a dear woman ill with pneumonia we go to four times a day (her sixth child shortly expected) who pays us 2s.6d weekly... An old woman pays us three pence per week for rubbing her feet every day. She is crippled with rheumatism.”⁶¹ Although patients were cared for “whether they can pay or whether they cannot,” it was strongly maintained that if people had any ability to contribute financially to their care, they should be expected to do so.

We don’t pauperize the people. If they can pay ever so little we charge them. Some will pay us by instalments, so much a week. If they are quite unable to do this, we beg the money from some friend, and tell them it has been paid for. We find they value us and our service far more than if it was

⁶⁰Staff-Captain V. F. Ward, “Slum Maternity and District Nursing,” The Deliverer (January 1897).

⁶¹Ibid.

all given for free... We charge a trifle simply to preserve their independence.⁶²

Weekly “mothers’ meetings” were conducted according to a similar format as the one used by The Christian Mission in the late 1860s and 1870s, with an emphasis on evangelization and spiritual growth. But the nurses expanded the focus of these meetings to include instruction in child care, family health and nutrition.

The 1890s saw a subtle shift in the economic status of those cared for by Salvation Army nurses. In the early 1890s, instances were frequently cited of the nurses being called upon to care for the “respectable starving sick,” the mother married to a “steady man” who had been unemployed all winter who “starved herself almost beyond recovery, secretly giving food intended for her to her children,” the six women met within a week by Frost’s nurses, of “respectable background” but subsequently reduced to life in rooms “stripped of furniture.”⁶³ By mid-decade, the district nurses evidently believed that their services were more critically needed by the working poor than by the destitute.

... the exceedingly poorest of the poor are looked after by many charitable agencies, missions, etc... On the other hand, there is a multitude of hard-working folks in most straitened circumstances who sorely need assistance, and yet who shrink from making known their poverty.⁶⁴

⁶²W. Bramwell Booth, Light in Darkest England in 1895, 49.

⁶³Florence Soper Booth, “Personal Notes,” The Deliverer (April 1893).

⁶⁴“Our Nursing Agencies,” The War Cry (23 May 1896).

The Redemption of Medicine

Bramwell Booth was fifteen years of age when he shared his interest in pursuing a medical career with his evangelist parents, William and Catherine. They were less than pleased. Biographers of the Booths describe an emotional debate which ended with a devastated Bramwell “shivering from head to foot with sobs” on a dining room settee. According to his daughter and biographer Catherine, herself a very able Salvation Army Commissioner, Bramwell had indicated a precocious interest in the physical sciences and medicine from childhood; dissecting rats and frogs - operating on his sister’s dolls. But his mother’s opinion was uncompromising and her influence absolute. The practice of medicine was a “vortex, which swamped the religion of thousands of promising, piously trained young men.”⁶⁵ In Catherine’s providential universe, God himself had vetoed her oldest son’s vocational choice by allowing him to contract rheumatic fever as a child. She salted the letters written home to her son while she was away on preaching engagements with stories which reinforced her convictions concerning suitable Evangelical vocational choices; the humble, earnest Christian she had heard of “who discarded personal faith when he got the ambition to be a doctor and get up in the world.”⁶⁶

The final quarter of the nineteenth century was marked by a radical turn-around in the valuation of the practice of medicine among conservative Evangelicals like those within The Christian Mission and early Salvation Army. At mid-century physicians, and particularly medical students, were highly suspect: for a perceived moral laxity or

⁶⁵F. Booth-Tucker, The Life of Catherine Booth, vol. II, 150.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 151.

“coarsening” which seemed an almost inevitable occupational hazard to middle-class Victorian sensibility, for indications of unholy “selfish ambition” to achieve high social status and for the “godless scientific materialism” which informed their world view. Nonetheless, Charles Finney, the American revivalist who so significantly influenced the Booths’ methodological approach to evangelization, urged that physicians, as a “class,” not be de facto excluded from revivalist concern. For Finney, the reputed “rationalism” of the medical community acted paradoxically as both a stumbling block and an aid to conversion. Finney claimed,

Very many physicians have also been converted in the great revivals I have witnessed. I think their studies incline them to scepticism or to a form of materialism. Yet they are intelligent; and if the Gospel is thoroughly set before them, stripped of those peculiar features which are embodied in hyper-Calvinism, they are easily convinced and as readily converted as any other class of people.”⁶⁷

It would appear that Bramwell wondered if his mother Catherine might be more amenable to the medical profession if it allowed a woman scope in which to exercise her intellectual gifts or natural aptitude as a healer. Perhaps this seemed to her adolescent son Bramwell a logical extension of Catherine’s argument for the right of women to preach and hold office within the church? In any case, he was quick to forward to his mother a clip from the Daily Telegraph, July 25, 1872 reporting on the appointment of a Miss Louise Atkins (M. D. Zurich) as resident medical officer, Birmingham and Midland Hospital for Women, “the first instance on record of a female medical practitioner being made an Officer of a public hospital.”⁶⁸

⁶⁷Charles Finney, Memoirs of the Rev. Charles G. Finney (New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1876).

⁶⁸Catherine Bramwell Booth, Bramwell Booth (London: Rich and Cowan, 1933), 46.

How much the “women’s issue” influenced Catherine Booth’s disregard for the orthodox medical profession is difficult to determine. Jean L’Esperance argues in “Doctors and Women in Nineteenth-Century Society” that the causes around which middle-class Victorian women chose to rally indicate a pervasive popular impression that the profession was hostile to the aspirations of women. Women reformers campaigned rigorously for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act, on behalf of the anti-vaccination movement and as members of the anti-Vivisection league.⁶⁹ Catherine Booth was in sympathy with these causes, each of which represented a subversion of the authority which the medical profession had assumed to speak on behalf of the public interest. Moreover, she was a friend and colleague of Josephine Butler, who was outspoken and persistent in her appeal for female physicians. Butler had consulted Elizabeth Garrett in the late 1860s and wrote of the “tyranny” which the male monopoly of medicine had created.

O, if men knew what women have to endure, and how every good woman has prayed for the coming of a change, a change in this. How would any modest man endure to put himself in the hands of a woman medically, as women have to do into the hands of men? ... Believe me, the best and purest feelings of women have been torn and harassed and shamefully hounded for centuries, just to please a wicked custom, while those women who are not intrinsically noble and good are debased, insensibly by such custom ... this is what the tyranny of the medical profession has accomplished.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Jean L’Esperance, “Doctors and Women in Nineteenth-Century Society: Sexuality and Role,” in Health Care and Popular Medicine in Nineteenth-Century England: Essays in the Social History of Medicine (London: Croom Helm, 1977).

⁷⁰ Josephine Butler to “Dear Friend,” 22 February 1868, Josephine Butler Collection, Fawcett Library, quoted in Jean L’Esperance, “Doctors and Women in Nineteenth-Century Society,” 119.

The first argument advanced by The Salvation Army for denominationally supported medical work was informed by the same concern. It was deemed desirable to be able to provide care for women by women. Florence Soper Booth, who had worked closely with Josephine Butler in the campaign to raise the legal age of consent, commented in The Deliverer in November 1889, “Friends will realize why we are so anxious for a hospital in connection with our work when they remember that there is no institution where these poor girls can be treated by women.”⁷¹ A woman physician by the name of Dr. Edith Huntley who had completed her medical education in 1887⁷² was acting in the capacity of medical advisor to the Rescue staff and the Training Home and had offered to spearhead a project to establish an Army hospital. Florence ruefully reported in March of the following year that because of lack of funds and an inability to secure a suitable property, the project would have to remain a vision for future investigation. Huntley, who had “waited ... as long as there was any hope” was moving on to a position with another medical mission.⁷³

By the 1890s The Salvation Army was aware of the desirability of medical support for programmatic legitimacy. It was also prepared to capitalize on the public desire for health information in marketing Army periodicals. Advertisements for special editions of the War Cry promised that in addition to the usual devotional articles, stories and poems, the publication would include “a medical paper by a London physician.”⁷⁴ The profession

⁷¹Florence Soper Booth, “Personal Notes,” The Deliverer (15 November 1889).

⁷²Huntley, Edith A., M. D. Brussels, 1887; LRCP Edin., 1887; LRCS Edin., 1887; LFPS, Glasgow, 1887. Source: The Medical Directory (London: J. and A. Churchill, New Burlington Street, 1899).

⁷³Florence Soper Booth, “Personal Notes,” The Deliverer (March 1890).

⁷⁴The Deliverer (November 1892).

which thirty years prior had been morally suspect was now “that sober, absolute, positive science ... but another name for works of mercy - the relief of human suffering in its most overwhelming form.”⁷⁵

By 1895, at least two physicians were providing medical support for Salvation Army services in London. Ensign Hart (M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., M.D. Edinburgh), a Salvationist and Corps Cadet teacher at Clapton Congress Hall was functioning as the medical attendant to the Rescue Work from a clinic or “surgery” at the Hackney Rescue Headquarters. Hart had worked with The Salvation Army in India, his clinical specialty being identified as “Diseases of the ear.”⁷⁶ Back in London, Hart divided his time between daily clinic hours for Officer patients, making rounds of Army Rescue facilities every second day, and presenting weekly lectures to the slum Maternity nurses working with Caroline Frost. Additionally, he spent afternoons dispensing medications after the daily prayer meeting or “knee drill.” Descriptions of Hart as “a stickler for ventilation, space and general healthful conditions”⁷⁷ indicate the pervasiveness of the discourse of public health in this kind of institutional practice.

It is noteworthy that published descriptions of Hart’s practice within The Salvation Army emphasized the priority of his evangelistic concerns and his avowed determination to “devote as much time as possible to other work than medical, arranging rescue meetings and doing some public work.”

⁷⁵Lord Cathcart, “The Medical Charities of the English Metropolis,” 1893.

⁷⁶“Our International Medical Department,” *All the World* (1899).

⁷⁷“The Grey Angel of Success,” *The Deliverer* (September 1895).

On May 1, 1898 a Medical Department was officially opened at International Headquarters with Major Dr. Henry W. Williams in charge. Williams, described as a “successful West End physician” had attended his first Salvation Army meeting at the Regent Hall, Oxford Street in 1885. He went because he had been asked by men he respected “of good birth, education and wealth,”⁷⁸ for an opinion of the movement, an evaluation which he was reluctant to give without first hand exposure to the Army. Williams was raised in The Church of England and described himself as having had strong religious instincts as a child. He had considered studying for the ministry, an aspiration which was opposed by his father. “Testifying” to his personal spiritual pilgrimage, Williams described the initial irritation he had felt with the emphasis placed on the conversion or salvation experience in Salvation Army meetings. Nonetheless, he was attracted both to “a comfort in their religion as Salvationists, which I had not as a Churchman,” and to the manner in which the movement explicated the doctrine of holiness or entire sanctification. Williams became a forthright exponent of a traditional “Holiness” perspective which encouraged others to seek the “blessing of a clean heart.” Regarding his own experience as prototypical, he explained,

... when I went to bed that night I prayed as I had never prayed before, telling the dear Lord how vile I was - how undone, how good for nothing, and asking his pardon which I received; and at the same time, by the power of the Spirit, I made a full surrender of self, prayed for the blessing of holiness, and that too, a merciful and reconciled Father in Christ, and for His blessed sake, bestowed upon me at the same time, and from that hour to the present I have never lost the blessing of a clean heart. Jesus has ever kept me from falling... I fully believe that the blood of Jesus not only

⁷⁸“A Medical Man Visits the Salvation Army,” The War Cry (4 September 1897).

saves me from the penalty of sin in the other world, but it saves me from the dominion and power of sin in this present life.⁷⁹

After his conversion, Williams initially functioned in a lay capacity as the medical advisor to the Clapton Training Home, assisting the Army administration with the health screening of prospective candidates. Eventually, although retaining the positions of Consulting Physician to the Hospital for Consumptives, Margate and Senior Physician, Western Skin Hospital, Great Portland Street, Williams relinquished what the Army described as his “lucrative private practice” in order to enter the ministry on a full-time basis as a Salvation Army Officer.

The primary reason given for the establishment of the medical department was the need to monitor the health of Salvation Army Officers more carefully. Perhaps as a reaction to the negative publicity surrounding the Army’s treatment of its Officers, it was denominationally acknowledged that “very often the bodily health and strength of our devoted people suffer through the hardness of the fight ... many a constitution has been shattered and many a useful life lost to the Army, owing to the lack or want of suitable medical advice.”⁸⁰ It was asserted that Officers were reluctant to seek medical advice on both ideological and financial grounds. Because the Army claimed that secular practitioners rarely knew much about the movement there was the danger of “receiving advice absolutely incompatible with one’s calling and duties.” Financially, Officers lived with the “fear of running up a doctor’s bill.”⁸¹ The establishment of an internal Medical

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Major Thonger, “The Medical Department,” Assurance (December 1899):175. See also thesis, chapter 1: 17-22.

⁸¹Ibid.

department meant that all Officers and employees with dependants were eligible for medical consultation for the nominal fee of one shilling per consultation.

At the end of the century, The Salvation Army envisioned a vastly expanded role for the new department at International Headquarters in London. Rapid international growth seemed to portend a future in which the medical office would support and co-ordinate an interconnecting network of health services. It was anticipated that it would

develop into the parent and centre at which Doctors, Dispensers and Nurses are trained for Foreign Service, who, in their turn, will go out and establish medical departments in the far-off territories of India, Africa, China, Japan, and indeed in every country which floats the Yellow, Red and Blue.⁸²

Instead, the next decade brought disenchantment. Doctors proved difficult to regulate and impossible to discipline. For a conservative manager like Bramwell Booth, physicians represented a pocket of professional resistance to the denomination's rigid structures and attention to protocol. Bramwell endeavoured to explain his organizational frustration in a letter to William Booth, once again out on the campaign trail in Canada.

It is evident that the Hospital and Dispensary work is going to be a torture to us owing to the Doctors; their wants and fads and prejudices and professional conceits, and the consciousness they evidently have in the background all the time, that they can go away and earn three or four times the money we pay them, and all that sort of thing, making them exceedingly difficult to deal with... Whatever we do, we must have some proper regulations for them. Now we have absolutely nothing.⁸³

⁸²For the official Salvation Army history of the expansion in medical missions, see Miriam Richard, *It Began with Andrews* (London: Salvationist Publishing and Supplies, 1971).

⁸³Letter, Bramwell Booth to William Booth. March 9, 1907.

Occupational Assault

If the practice of medicine in a Salvation Army context proved to be something of a mixed blessing, the denominational foray into the field of Occupational health was not less so. Not only was the formative Salvation Army sensitive to criticism which implied a lack of adequate care for its Officer staff. It resented insinuations that it was less than effective in responding to the needs of the people in the district where it had commenced, London's East End.

In July 1888, a strike by matchworkers employed by Bryant and May, an established and respected East End firm, riveted public attention. Much of the visibility and publicity surrounding the strike was due to the participation of Annie Besant - feminist, theosophist and vocal opponent of The Salvation Army. In the aftermath of the strike and despite some representative Salvation Army financial support for the strikers, Besant, articulating a position also held by the Charity Organization Society, accused the Army of "having monopolized all the gifts of the charitable" while doing nothing measurable "to alleviate East End distress."⁸⁴ The Bryant and May matchmakers were East Enders, predominantly women and financially exploited; all groups The Salvation Army claimed to seek to liberate. In a sense, Besant had thrown down a gauntlet: for public credibility the Army had to get involved.

The plight of British matchworkers in the late 1880s and 1890s highlighted both the issue of fair wages and the responsibility of employers to guarantee safe working conditions.

⁸⁴"Darkest England Matches," All the World (April, 1891).

Matchmaking was a comparatively small national industry, concentrated in London, the Midlands and Liverpool. A few large purpose-built factories were in operation, of which Bryant and May was the most successful. But much of the work, particularly the assembly of the matchboxes, was brokered through middle men or “sweaters” for distribution as piece work which could be done by women and children in their homes. Many of these workers in the “sweated trades” resided in neighbourhoods The Salvation Army desired to evangelize.

Labour statistics from 1897 indicate that in that year there were 25 factories producing matches in Britain, employing 4,152 employees. Of these, 645 were male and 2,015 were female. Among those workers aged 14-18, 425 were male, 1,067 female.⁸⁵ The industry was much larger on the Continent and English manufacturers struggled to remain competitive.

It was known that matchworkers who worked with the white or yellow phosphorous pastes used in the manufacture of the match-head were at risk of developing phosphorous necrosis, or what was popularly referred to as “phossy jaw.” This disease usually started with generalized toothache and influenza-like symptoms. Gradually, the pain would radiate to the lower jaw, face and throat. In later stages of the disease, it could involve extensive abscessing of the tissue of the gums, bone and oral cavity. Advanced phossy jaw was an agonizing and disfiguring disease.

⁸⁵Barbara Harrison, “The politics of occupational ill-health in late nineteenth century Britain: the case of the match making industry,” Sociology of Health and Illness 17 no.1 (1995): 22.

A Factory Act of 1864 did prohibit women and children from eating in sections of factories where white or yellow phosphorus was in use. But there was little structural protection in the nineteenth-century factory against environmental contamination. Industrialists claimed that the scope of the health problem was exaggerated and that very few women were involved in any of the processes which could be considered dangerous. Bryant and May, a company which despite the 1888 labour dispute enjoyed a reputation as a fair and caring firm, claimed that in 20 years of operation, they were only able to document 47 cases of phosphorous necrosis of which 9 were fatal: less than 1 per thousand. Indeed, when compared to industries which made use of lead in chemical processes, the physical risks associated with the manufacture of matches seemed minimal.

It was the image of “Phossy Jaw” as a destroyer of beauty, youth and possibility which made it such a potent metaphor in the late nineteenth-century’s growing attention to occupational health. It also made it possible for The Salvation Army to exploit its own metaphor of contrast. The Army would bring light to Darkest England!. In the underworld of the nation’s poor, the Army would manufacture matches, for fair wages and under safe conditions. A Salvation Army Match Works was intended to function as a demonstration of the kind of employment scheme Booth would recommend in his forthcoming book.

The first Army step was to place an ad in the War Cry.

MATCHMAKING: - Will any of our soldiers and comrades who thoroughly understand the manufacture of matches in all its branches, kindly communicate at once with Commissioner Frank Smith, 36, Upper Thames Street, London, E.C. ?⁸⁶

⁸⁶“Matchmaking,” The War Cry (August 2, 1890).

Within the year they were in business. The Army's match factory opened on Lamprell Street, off Old Ford Road in May, 1891 and employed on average a hundred workers. The Army publicly announced that it intended to be a "standing reproach to others";⁸⁷ to shame the broader industry into safe practice. The works manager was a man named George Nunn, a Wesleyan Methodist with 25 years of experience in the business. Three reasons were identified for the industrial experiment. The Army was committed to "help the East End Poor." This it would do by:

1. providing work under healthy conditions
2. raising the scale of wages paid to the trade
3. providing an object lesson to manufacturers making matches which are a source of danger to the health and lives of their employees.

The Salvation Army promoted the new endeavour with all of the drama and pathos it had used so effectively to gain support for the work among "Fallen women." Denominational periodicals published articles such as "The Match Maker's Leprosy" comparing the Army's work among the match workers to the work of Father Damien "and his heroic life and death on the leper islands."⁸⁸ In "Another Terrible Death from Necrosis: At Whose Door Does it Lie?"⁸⁹ a graphic description was provided of the course of the disease in a beautiful young woman's life. It was insisted that lists of shops across the country which had agreed to stock and sell Darkest England Matches be posted on the bulletins in Army barracks. Officers were instructed to hold congregational meetings where they could

⁸⁷ Adjutant McLauchlan, "Darkest England Matches: The Object of Their Manufacture and Officer's Responsibility," The Officer (December, 1894): 360.

⁸⁸ Captain Ted, "The Match Maker's Leprosy," The War Cry (11 July 1891).

⁸⁹ "Another Terrible Death From Necrosis: At Whose Door Does it Lie?," The Darkest England Gazette (13 January 1894).

explain the rationale behind the opening of the Match Works. Object lessons which made use of Darkest England matches were published and distributed for use in young people's meetings. The Salvation Army also received substantial external support for their endeavour in British labour journals such as The Labour Gazette.⁹⁰

Financially, The Lamprell Street factory ultimately failed. After what the Army described as an "initial rush of interest" the factory settled into a pattern of persistent financial loss. From 1894, the Army's social administration was pleading for better internal support. Although acknowledging the reality of foreign competition, the Army believed that if all its members would commit to the exclusive use of safety matches, the project could be viable. Those responsible decried the fact that even among Salvationists "the craze for cheapness seems to overrule everything else."⁹¹ In 1895 the Works had to be shut down for six months: in 1901 it was permanently closed.

There is a sense, however, in which the Light in Darkest England Scheme succeeded. A year before the Army closed out its operation, Bryant and May acquired the French patent for the manufacture of matches without the use of white or yellow phosphorus, and began to manufacture matches similar to the ones produced in The Salvation Army's small industrial shop. The intended industrial reproach had achieved one clear and sustainable outcome.

⁹⁰ See for example, "Advertisements," The Labour Gazette 1 no. 1 (May 1893).

⁹¹ The Officer (December 1894).

In most Protestant denominations at the end of the nineteenth century, professional nursing and medical services had come to be regarded as the heavy artillery in the missionary arsenal. The work of doctors and nurses was tangible: their services actively sought. If, as W. Houghton argues, “the essence of religion ... came more and more to lie in strenuous labour for the good of society,”⁹² they were the religious workers par excellence. Medical work was “brave work” and brave work was attractive to more than the young Salvationist nurse who first enlisted with her skills. The Salvation Army recognized that health services constituted “the branch of our operations which commends itself to the sympathies of all sections of the community.”⁹³ And precisely therein lay the denominational dilemma. The “Ambulance Corps” had secured a beachhead in the heart of contemporary culture. Society could witness its ministry. But would it understand its message? Would the achieved level of social respectability fatally blunt its prophetic power?

⁹²W. Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind: 1830-1870 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), 251.

⁹³“Medical Work in Many Lands,” The Deliverer (August 1909).

CONCLUSION

There is more than one way to fight a war, and more than one enemy to engage. As the twentieth century dawned, William Booth's international corps of soldiers were still in the fray. But the public's perception of the Army's militant engagement with sin had changed. The Salvation Army was no longer predominantly associated in the public mind with its early direct evangelistic assault on working-class neighbourhoods, and its flamboyant expression of a religious alternative. Instead, the Army was becoming better known for its work behind the lines, bandaging up the world's wounded in the trenches of poverty, sickness and addiction.

Was his Army fighting the right battles? William Booth remained acutely aware of the movement's flaws; the tendency to lapse into minor preoccupations which all too often accompanies the expansion of a bureaucracy. He had wryly confessed that "the follies, big and little of the S.A. make a perpetual marvel to me as to its survival."¹ But survive it had, fighting what theologian Roger Green has designated its "War on Two Fronts."²

Early in 1903, an aging General William Booth, on evangelistic campaign in the United States, wrote home to his son and heir apparent, Bramwell Booth. Under discussion yet again was the nature of the relationship between these fronts: the "Social" and "Spiritual" ministries of The Salvation Army. The Salvation Army leadership had come through a

¹Harold Begbie, Life of William Booth, vol.2 (London: MacMillan and Co., 1926), 95.

²Roger Green, War on Two Fronts: The Redemptive Theology of William Booth, (Atlanta: The Salvation Army, 1989).

decade of debate about the value of the movement's dual concern. On multiple occasions, in Officer's meetings, on the lecture circuit and in the religious Press, William Booth had defended on both theological and practical grounds the necessity of an integrated mission agenda. He had disciplined Commissioner George Scott Railton, the man who more than any other had helped to crystallize the mission's identity in the 1870s, for his unwillingness to actively support the Army's "social schemes." Booth insisted that Railton be brought into ideological conformity with the expanded concept of mission. The Commissioner was to be informed

that he must not say that I, or The Salvation Army have changed, except in the sense of evolution. I suppose he would have objected to Jesus Christ feeding the people in the wilderness without having a Penitent-form! Stand firm. Make the Railtons feel that we will have The Salvation Army our way!³

But William Booth's private correspondence reveals his own internal conflict: his inability to entirely exorcise contrary feelings about the way his Army had come to be regarded. It was through The Salvation Army's social work that the denomination had achieved public legitimacy: of this William was convinced.

There can be no question that the Darkest England scheme lifted us up to a position in public esteem, the world over, which we should never have gained in all human probability for perhaps a century, if even then. Moreover, it is right. It is in harmony with the teachings of Jesus Christ ... It matches the promptings of the human heart everywhere.⁴

Social work, it seemed, was comprehensible religion. Booth continued,

The world can understand this sort of religion and the world believes in those who practice it, and belief in you has to be produced in the world before it will get much benefit out of what you say on other things.⁵

³Bernard Watson. Soldier Saint. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970. 211

⁴William Booth to Bramwell Booth, 16 January 1903 from Cincinnati, Ohio.

⁵Ibid.

The sustainable immediacy of impact which The Salvation Army desired in its evangelistic work, and sought to cultivate through an emphasis on the need for plain speech, utilization of popular culture, and class-to-class exhortation, remained elusive. But if words fell on unresponsive ears, the Army's highly publicized deeds won commendation from the Victorian public.

People were largely indifferent to the motivating impulse undergirding Salvation Army social intervention. The Army's self-conscious avoidance of theological controversy - William Booth's unwillingness to "bother with spasm"⁶ - made it difficult to differentiate his movement from an array of emerging expressions of "creedless Christianity" or "Social Gospels." In a quintessentially activist age, people applauded those willing to get out and "do something." Dianne Winston astutely observes the manner in which this principle of noncontroversy enabled The Salvation Army to offer up a kind of blank slate or "canvas" for religious projection.

Service, devoid of proselytizing, made supporters of those who were not predisposed to an evangelistic message. By permitting the audience to separate Salvationists' actions from their intentions, the Army multiplied the possible readings of its activities and enabled the organization to serve as a canvas onto which men and women could project their own needs, hopes and beliefs.⁷

But an uneasiness remained. In a letter of 1899 to his Chief of Staff, William reiterated his conviction that The Salvation Army's top leadership needed to be reminded "that it is no satisfaction to us for them to build up great Social things, if they do not at the same

⁶Harold Begbie, Life of William Booth, vol.2 (London: MacMillan and Co., 1926), 85.

⁷Diane Winston, Red Hot and Righteous: The Urban Religion of The Salvation Army (Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press, 1999), 5.

time make a real Salvation Army.”⁸ By a “real Salvation Army” he meant an aggressive revivalist arm of the broader Church militant.

In Darkest England and the Way Out was published at the beginning of a decade which culminated a century of increasing bureaucratic intervention in the lives of the nation’s poor. Public discourse was preoccupied with the need for an elevation of the national character. Although his critics accused William Booth of simply publishing a sensationalized synthesis of work already being done by an array of other philanthropic agencies, the general public liked the manner in which the book presented a unifying social vision with its emphasis throughout on the need for a personal, interior transformation of those who would be helped. One Socialist commentator in the 1890s asserted that “Today the key word in economics is character.” What intellectual historians describe as this “ideal of character ... enjoyed a prominence in the political thought of the Victorian period that it had apparently not known before and that it has, arguably, not experienced since.”⁹ The emphasis in Darkest England on a necessary reformation of the individual for any sustainable economic or social change reflected this widely-held ideological presupposition, rooted as it was in an earlier Evangelical cultural dominance.

The Salvation Army claimed to be able to create not just “red hot saints,” but sober citizens, and to be able to do so among those classes suspected of harbouring the potential for social anarchy.

⁸William Booth to Bramwell Booth, 14 September 1899.

⁹Stefan Collini, Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain, 1850-1930 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 94.

We seek to make both good Saints and good citizens - that is, to cultivate the kind of saintship that includes the realization and fulfillment of every duty a man owes to God and to his fellow man ... to benefit this class, not only by leading them to submit to God, to seek his favour and to spend their lives in fighting for the eternal Salvation of their fellows, but to help them discharge the duties they owe to one another, to their families and to society in general.¹⁰

Because The Salvation Army had successfully used elements of working class culture to create a novel form of nineteenth-century religious expression, it was widely assumed that the movement had effectively permeated the poorest neighbourhoods of the British urban cities. The degree to which this perception can be factually supported remains a matter of historical debate. Contemporaries in the 1890s accused the Army of gross misrepresentation. The Church Quarterly Review deplored the manner in which The Salvation Army ignored or dismissed as inadequate the ministries of other denominational bodies engaged in similar work. In a scathing critique of The Darkest England Scheme, the journal cited research reported in The Times of March 11, 1891 which indicated that in the worst and poorest districts of the city, there was no evidence of Salvation Army presence, let alone any redemptive effectiveness.¹¹

But what evidence there was seemed dramatic. Towns and neighbourhoods invaded by The Salvation Army could cite their own rivetting cases: Jane Johnson, "champion drunkard of the world" subsequently saved and banging a tambourine; Brother J. of

¹⁰William Booth, Letters to Salvationists on Religion for Everyday (London: IHQ, 1902), 6.

¹¹"Darkest England," The Church Quarterly Review (April, 1891). "In the really poor parts of East London, The Salvation Army was, up to six months before the date of this return, entirely unrepresented, apart for the shelter, in Whitechapel. There are no barracks, no slum sisters, no outposts in Spitalfields, in South Bethnal Green, in St. George's in the East, or in Whitechapel. All the districts where The Salvation Army has agents are of the better class, such as Hackney." See also Norman Murdoch, Origins of The Salvation Army (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994).

Leighton Buzzard who “in a drunken state ... took off his clothes and gave the gate a good thrashing” - now clothed and in his right mind.¹² There were countless converts across the nation who had shared the experience of an unidentified “brother.”

Often the road and path were not wide enough, as he could scarcely keep on them at all, but blessed be God for a salvation that keeps him in the narrow way.¹³

The interrelationship of The Salvation Army’s dual concern - care for bodies, the striving for “souls” - could be interpreted as a clash between the movement’s late-Victorian pragmatism and its evangelical idealism. But it was less a matter of conflict, than of pragmatism ultimately overruling nostalgia: the nostalgia William Booth felt for an earlier time when he was able to devote single-minded attention to his first love - the preaching of the Gospel of Christ crucified. In the midst of the board meetings, press conferences and international administration which came to dominate his days, Booth would catch a whiff in memory of the sweaty revival halls and theatres of London’s East End. He would recall the street battles of his eccentric ragtag troops. And ache for the primitive power.

¹²“Buzzes from Leighton Buzzard,” The War Cry (2 August 1890).

¹³Ibid.

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