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THE UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM

SACRAMENTS AND SYMBOLS IN THE SALVATION
ARMY

BY

KENNETH LAWSON

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF ARTS
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
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2 JUL 1996

ABSTRACT

Kenneth Lawson

Sacraments and Symbols in The Salvation Army

for

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This work seeks to trace the attitude of The Salvation Army to sacraments and symbols from its early sacramental period (1865-1883) and then from 1883 to the present day, a longer time during which formal sacraments have not been used in Army worship. The thesis consists of seven main chapters, plus an introduction and conclusion. It contains a critical examination of the historical origins of the Army's non-sacramentalism and the debate which has arisen about earlier historical influences on the Army, including various Reformers, the Quakers and the Methodists. Some of the Army's own published works defending its non-sacramentalism are also examined in detail. Chapters dealing with the developing spirituality within The Salvation Army; the introduction of its own symbols into its organisation and worship, and the emphasis which has been placed on holiness are all included. There is also a discussion of the present state of debate amongst Salvationist regarding the possible re-introduction of the sacraments into its worship.

The aim of this thesis is to demonstrate that, though the Army formally abolished the sacraments in 1883, in actual practice through the extensive use of symbolism, sacramental ideas have continued to exercise a profound influence and it is therefore being inconsistent with itself in its unqualified opposition to the use of the sacraments in its worship. This viewpoint is richly illustrated by examples both from the literature of the Army and from accounts of personal experience (both of myself and others). Some of my informants have asked for their names not to be disclosed; otherwise full documentation is provided. Careful consideration is also given to possible influences of sacramental spirituality on the Army; also on its own developing spirituality - particularly as it relates to the question of holiness teaching.

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Preface

During the period in which I have been engaged in researching and preparing this thesis many people have contributed to it both directly and through informal conversations. They are too numerous to mention by name, and in any case I would not be able to recall all the names of those involved, but I record my grateful thanks to them.

I am particularly indebted to Lieutenant Colonel Jenty Fairbank, the Director of The Salvation Army Heritage Centre in London, and to the members of her staff who have given me excellent co-operation and attention in locating material relating to my subject and in making it available to me. In this connection the efforts of Mr Gordon Taylor and Mrs Judith Walker are particularly appreciated.

I owe my greatest debt to Professor David Brown, my tutor at Durham, who by his patience, invaluable comments and advice, has opened up many fruitful areas of study and research for me. He has also secured the interest of some of his other colleagues in the Theology Department who have put articles and other material at my disposal. I am grateful both to them and to him.

Finally, thanks to my wife Vivienne, who, in the years of our supposed retirement, has spent many hours alone while I have been locked away with my books, papers, and computer. She deserves more than half the credit for the effort involved in writing this thesis.

K.L. (1996)

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to examine the influences and arguments which, in 1883, led The Salvation Army¹ to abandon the use of the sacraments of baptism and holy communion, and to investigate the related issues of meaning and function of the symbols which were introduced into the movement

The work will involve research into a number of areas of Salvation Army life, some historical, some theological and some critical. Initially, we will concentrate on the arguments which were persuasive in leading William Booth to abandon the use of baptism and the Lord's supper in Salvationist worship. The material will be critically examined and evaluated and the questions asked will include: How objective were the arguments used? Were the pragmatic reasons which were advanced valid in the context of The Salvation Army and the use of sacraments in the Church in England in the late nineteenth century? Part of the investigation into the background of the Army's stance on the sacraments will include the discussion of claims that the sacramental theology of the Reformation, and particularly the ideas of Zwingli, were influential on the decision which was made. In this connection, the attitude of the Quakers to the sacraments, and the influence of their arguments on William and Catherine Booth will be noted.

In examination of the developments which have taken place in The Salvation Army since the decision was taken to abandon sacraments it will be necessary to appraise the literature which the Army has produced to explain that decision; to ask how far this literature is a balanced statement and how far it is a one-sided *apologia*. Other questions will include: What has taken the

place of the sacraments in Salvationist worship? Is it the emphasis on personal holiness? What evidence is there of a continuing and developing spirituality in The Salvation Army? Has the non-sacramental stance had an impact on this? How far has the Army's attitude to the sacraments affected its standing in ecumenical circles? Was it a factor in the withdrawal of the Army from full membership of the World Council of Churches?

An important part of this research will be to assess the present climate of opinion amongst Salvationists in various parts of the world. There is certainly some feeling that there should be a return to a form of sacramental worship. How widespread this feeling is has been assessed by a number of means, including personal interviews

I write as a Salvationist. Though I hope I have succeeded in retaining objectivity and critical distance, I believe that my long commitment to the movement has also given me some inside knowledge and insight which I have applied to this work.

NOTES

1. Throughout this thesis the term 'The Salvation Army' will be used with a capital 'T' as in the official title of the movement.

CHAPTER 1

THE ARMY'S NON-SACRAMENTALISM: ITS HISTORICAL ORIGINS

From its inception as The Christian Revival Association in 1865 (the name was later changed to The Christian Mission and then in 1878 to The Salvation Army) the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper were observed as part of the worship and practice of the movement. According to Bramwell Booth (eldest son of the Army's founders, William and Catherine) infant baptism was practised through those years but with declining interest in it. On the other hand, the Lord's Supper was administered monthly in all mission stations. As many as six or seven hundred are said to have participated on special occasions, 'with valuable spiritual results'.¹

The decision to abandon the use of sacraments in The Salvation Army was prompted by two convictions which were held by certain influential leaders of the Army at the time. One of these convictions was practical and the other theological. The practical consideration involved circumstances in which the Booths and other early Salvationist leaders were confronted by many people who claimed that because they had been baptised, confirmed, and had partaken of the sacrament their salvation was assured irrespective of whether there was any evidence of spiritual life or not. In particular, Catherine Booth viewed such a state of affairs with deep abhorrence. The theological conviction was that the sacraments were not necessary to salvation. The convergence of these two ideas led gradually to the belief that the abandonment of the sacraments would protect the Army's soldiers and converts from the evils of formalism. It is also true that the kind of meetings which were conducted by the Army tended to attract people from the lower classes who were largely unchurched. Such meetings were often noisy, but they were also ideally suited to the evangelical

methods which were employed. Formal rites and liturgies would have been difficult to introduce and to observe with proper reverence. They would also have imposed restrictions upon the freedom of the meetings. The sincerity of those who influenced such a decision is not called in question here. However, the reasons given to support the decision which was made have to be examined. And the premise, that by removing the sacramental causes of trust in outward forms the evil tendencies are cured, must also be questioned. As we shall see later, Salvationists have been quite capable of finding other external things in which to put their trust.

The sacraments abandoned by the Army

The official announcement of the decision to abandon the use of sacraments in The Salvation Army was made in an address which William Booth delivered to officers in council on 2nd January, 1883. This was published in 'The War Cry' issues dated 13th and 17th January of the same year. The opening statement on the subject reads as follows:

I cannot accept any obligation as binding upon my conscience, neither will I seek to bind any upon yours, to do, or believe, or teach anything for which *authority cannot be furnished from the Word of God*, or which God himself does not reveal to us by his Spirit, as our present duty to him or to our generation.²

He went on to argue that Christian tradition should not be allowed to stifle the new methods demanded by the circumstances in which The Salvation Army worked. The Bible, Divine Providence, and the Holy Spirit were to be the only arbiters of what was permitted. He returned to this theme later in the same address when he said: 'If it is allowable for us to have new methods, it is

desirable for such to be invented and practised, always supposing that such are *in accordance with the great doctrines and principles taught in the Bible*'.³

This seems like a surprising change of mind in view of the Army's own archival evidence which shows that the first published *Orders and Regulations for The Salvation Army* (1878) required that even at the opening meeting of the formation of a new corps 'The Sacrament should be administered'. Also in connection with Good Friday meetings held at the Army's London headquarters in 1880 and 1881, the War Cry announcements regarded the sacrament as sufficiently important as to make special mention of the fact that it would be administered on these occasions.⁴

When Booth spoke more directly about the sacraments in this address the biblical basis for the abandonment of the use of the elements was dogmatically stated rather than reasoned. This was quite in keeping with the style of government which had been adopted in the movement from 1875 when William Booth was persuaded to take autocratic control of the Christian Mission. This meant that even a momentous decision such as this one bearing on the sacraments could be taken without consultation with any conference or committee. This does not mean that Booth would not consult a close group of leaders or that he would not listen to advice but it does mean that there would be no voting on the issue and only such consultation as Booth deemed to be desirable.

The scriptural references on which the decision was shown to rest were sparse indeed. With regard to the Lord's Supper he mentioned two texts: John 6:45, which is part of a passage in which Jesus refers to eating his flesh and drinking his blood; and 1 Corinthians 10:31, which is the conclusion of Paul's

discourse on the possible use of food offered to idols. On the subject of baptism Booth confined himself to one text, the words of John the Baptist who, in bearing testimony to Jesus, spoke of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire (Luke 3:16). The limited nature of Booth's presentation is perhaps best seen if this part of his address is quoted in full:

Let us remember him who died for us continually. Let us remember his love every hour of our lives, and continually feed on him - not on Sundays only, and then forget him all the week, but let us by faith eat his flesh and drink his blood continually; and 'whatsoever you do, whether you eat or drink, do all to the glory of God.'

And further there is one baptism on which we are all agreed - the one baptism of the Bible - that is baptism of the Holy Ghost, of which baptism John spoke when he said, 'I indeed baptise you with water, but One cometh after me whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose; he shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.'

Be sure you insist on that baptism. Be sure you enjoy that baptism yourselves.⁵

Allowing for the fact that the foregoing quotation is part of a transcript of an address rather than a carefully prepared academic essay, and that William Booth was also anxious to protect Salvationists from reliance on formal outward ceremonies as well as to remind them of the need for continuing communion with God, there remain a number of questions which arise regarding such use of Scripture.

First, although Booth is quite right in emphasising the fact that the reference to eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ is about an inward spiritual feeding, it is difficult to see how the phrase could possibly be used without a recognition of the obvious links with the Last Supper. The expositions of various commentators on St John's Gospel are too involved to

enter into here, but it has to be noted that the generally accepted view is that the whole passage (John 6:48-58) has eucharistic significance. Three authorities consulted, namely, William Temple, R.H. Lightfoot, and C.K. Barrett, insist on the sacramental overtones of the whole passage. Thus to use John 6:58 as an argument against participation of the sacrament is to use Scripture in a selective way and either to ignore what is inconvenient or to fail to research the text and the context thoroughly.

Secondly, given the context of 1 Corinthians 10 and the references to eating and drinking the cup and the loaf (v.16) how can verse 31 be used as an argument against communion? Surely Paul's injunction 'So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God' (RSV) is intended to be inclusive not exclusive; to include the sacrament as part of the whole Christian life.

Thirdly, why should the promise of baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire exclude the solemn use of the symbol of baptism? To claim, as William Booth does, 'that there is one baptism of the Bible' is to ignore a vast weight of evidence. There are some fourteen specific references to baptism between Acts 2:38 and 22:16. The fact that baptism was practised at such an early stage in the Church's history cannot be easily explained if it did not have some approval from the ministry of Jesus himself. The only references to Jesus baptizing are found in the Fourth Gospel. First, at 3:22, 'Jesus and his disciples went into the land of Judea; there he remained with them and baptised', and later a statement linked with a disclaimer: 'Now when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), he left

Judea...' (John 4:1-3). Some authorities suggest that on the basis of Greek style 3:22, and 4:2, were later additions to the text of the gospel but C.K. Barrett claims that there is no textual evidence for the removal of the correction in 4:2. As the text stands, if Jesus allowed his disciples to baptise without restraint this could provide the basis for the use of the rite as described in Acts. In addition to this, many scholars find references to water-baptism at John 3:5; and even in connection with the 'feet washing' at 13:1-11. But Barrett makes a point which embraces both the emphasis of Booth and the Christian rite of baptism when he writes:

*... men must prepare for the coming of the kingdom by means of water-baptism. Jesus ... is represented as going further still; preparation by means of water-baptism only is inadequate for the kingdom he preaches; men must be prepared by a radical renewal of themselves, a new birth effected by the Spirit who comes (as it were) as the advance guard of a new age.*⁶ (My italics)

Much New Testament evidence suggests that water-baptism without the endowment of the Holy Spirit resulted in defective Christianity as can be seen from the account of the disciples at Ephesus (Acts 19:7), as also of the Samaritan believers described in Acts 8:14-17. Any idea that baptism without the witness and power of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer could be acceptable as valid Christian experience is demolished by Paul when he wrote: 'You are really in the Spirit if the Spirit of God really dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him' (Romans 8:9), and again: 'No one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit ... For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body ... and all were made to drink of one Spirit' (1 Corinthians 12:3,13). Paul's clear teaching on the significance and

meaning of water-baptism in Romans 6:1-14 has also to be considered as part of the overall picture of New Testament teaching on the subject.

In the light of the foregoing survey William Booth's attempt to identify baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire as the only baptism of the Bible is based on a selective choice of evidence and a selective interpretation of chosen texts. As a result, the question remains: Why was there such emphasis on Scriptural authority when the decision was taken to abandon the use of sacraments in Salvationist worship and why was there so little Scriptural evidence in the official statement? That provokes other questions. Can clues regarding more extensive arguments be found elsewhere? Were there any Army leaders capable of formulating such arguments?

The influence of George S. Railton

The person who was probably the best equipped academically to examine the biblical evidence and to present the Army's case was George Scott Railton. He was from a Methodist background and became a leading figure in the Army at a very early stage in its development, having served as secretary from Christian Mission days. He was a keen student of the Bible and had a firm grasp of Greek, Hebrew, and Latin. However, it is claimed that his contribution to the Army was in tactics rather than theology.⁷ This certainly appears to be true in respect of his views on the sacraments. Bramwell Booth said of him:

Railton, from the beginning, was in favour of abandoning all ceremonials which were prominently associated with the rest of the religious life of the world. He argued with cogency that if, as we all admitted, participation in, for instance, the Supper was not necessary to salvation, it became merely a

question of its value, as one method of helping the people; and he claimed that freedom which was purchased by Jesus Christ was freedom from all that belonged to the old dispensation, including the whole ceremonial principle.⁸

That this was Railton's position is confirmed by the fact that as early as 1881 he drafted a statement which was issued by William Booth, forbidding the use of baptism in such a way as to 'delude anybody into a vain hope of getting to Heaven without being "born again"'. The statement also forbade the administration of the Lord's Supper in any way that suggested priestly superiority of one person over another. He insisted that every saved person is a 'priest unto God'. He too was anxious to protect Salvationists from reliance on formalism and distance the Army from other churches in the matter of its worship. Such facts demonstrate his interest in tactics (as Bernard Watson claims).⁹ Had he been remotely interested in what was happening in the field of biblical studies he would probably have heard of the developments in textual criticism which had emerged in 1881 with the publication of Westcott's and Hort's Greek New Testament, where the words of institution in Luke 22:19,20, were declared to be an addition to the original text. This would surely have provided the basis for a sounder argument; that the Army's stand on the sacrament of the Lord's Supper had biblical authority, but such material found no place in The Salvation Army's published explanations of its position until much later.

Railton's anxiety about the misuse by Christians of these sacraments seems to have led him to produce hasty and ill-considered arguments. If one accepts, as many Christians did even in Railton's day, that the sacraments are not necessary to salvation, it then becomes, as he claims, 'a question of its [their] value, as one method of helping people'. As we shall see later, this is the

issue that many Salvationists are concerned about in the late twentieth century. But even in 1883, to abandon the sacraments was to deny that means of grace to a number of Salvationists - whether that number was large or small - who would have benefited from the continued provision of such rites.

As for Railton's claim that 'freedom which was purchased by Jesus Christ was a freedom from *all* that belonged to the old dispensation, including the whole ceremonial principle', this is very much in line with the Quaker position which he so much admired. But Railton was more of a radical than a Quaker. St John Ervine describes him as 'the Christian Communist of the Army, the most monastically-minded member of it, and his appearance, as many of his photographs show, was as monkish as his mind'.¹⁰ His biographers show that his opposition to what he regarded as stereotype religion was most intense. He disliked anything that got in the way of direct evangelism. He had a deep mistrust of social work in religion and at first he disliked the thought of taking up children's work. He insisted:

We ought not to spend our strength on teaching children - 'Sunday Schoolism' he called it; our business [is] the conversion of the drunkard, the outcast, and the careless, and let them take care of their own children. He feared it would be a mere aping of the churches, and lay the foundations of a deadly, stultifying respectability.¹¹

He was not allowed to exercise the limitations on worship and ministry that his dislike of 'all that belonged to the old dispensation' implied, but he opposed formal religion whether he found it in church or chapel. Bernard Watson claims that 'William Booth probably saved him from becoming a hopeless crank'.¹²

Catherine Booth's influence and arguments

The other powerful influence in the Army's decision to dispense with the sacraments was William Booth's wife, Catherine, and in her case we have some record of the kind of Scriptural arguments she used to support her position. Her ideas are set out in the printed transcript of one of a series of addresses which she delivered at Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, in the autumn of 1884. The whole series was published in 1887 under the title *Popular Christianity*. At the heart of her argument is the intense distrust of the formal observance of the sacraments which we have already noted. The address in which her views on this subject are expressed is entitled 'A Mock Salvation versus Deliverance from Sin', and the topic of the sacraments is introduced as follows:

Another mock salvation is presented in the shape of *ceremonies and sacraments*. These were only intended as outward signs of an inward and spiritual reality, whereas men are taught that by going through them or partaking of them, they are to be saved.¹³

This represents a radical change in Catherine's views. As a young woman she had a deep respect for communion and a determination to go to some trouble to receive it. The only time in her life that she kept a diary was during a period of illness when she was eighteen years old. One entry tells of her going to the morning service at the chapel and feeling so ill that she spent the afternoon in bed. Her own account illustrates her determination to receive communion. She said: 'At evening I went again, and stopped to receive the sacrament, but was so ill I could scarcely walk up to the communion rail, and was forced to hold it to keep myself from sinking'¹⁴ She then describes how she had to be escorted home. This is not the action of a person with a deep suspicion of the sacraments. If we ask what caused the change we can point to

her experiences amongst poorer people in the East End of London, but we would also have to note that she did not make public pronouncements on the subject until after Railton had lived in the Booth household for seven years. Railton regarded Catherine as the dominating personality in the Booth marriage. If Railton argued his case as cogently as Bramwell Booth claimed that he did, it is not difficult to imagine that he had an influence on Catherine.

By 1884 Catherine's views had changed so radically that she could claim that the sacraments had become idolatrous and she based her argument for abandoning them on passages from Numbers 21:9; 2 Kings 18:4; Romans 2:28,29 and 1 Corinthians 7:19. The Old Testament passages deal with the provision of the brass serpent as a means of healing for the affliction of the Israelites by the plague of fiery serpents, and the fact that it had become an object of idolatry by the time King Hezekiah destroyed it, calling it 'Nehustan' - a thing of brass. Using this illustration Catherine Booth went on to say:

When forms are exalted, and idolized, and trusted in, no matter how beautiful in themselves, or how Divine in their origin, they become 'Nehustan,' as a piece of brass, or a piece of bread, or a bowl of water.¹⁵

From this statement she draws upon Paul to provide support for her position and the passages which she uses all relate to the apostle's teaching on circumcision. It is true that in all the passages quoted, Paul emphasises the fact that the rite of circumcision was of no value without inward spiritual transformation and evidence of amendment of the manner of life. The relevant statements she quoted are: '[He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly] Neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh Circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God'

(Romans 2:28,29). And 'Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God' (1 Corinthians 7:19).

There is a sense in which what Paul has to say in these two passages and their contexts harmonises with Catherine Booth's fear that people may come to trust in the externals of their religion. But when Catherine Booth goes on to claim:

If Paul were here now, and could see the deadly consequences which have arisen from the idolatrous regard given to the Sacraments of the Supper and Baptism he would say Baptism is nothing, and the ceremony of the Lord's Supper is nothing, apart from keeping the commandments of God, especially that great and all comprehensive commandment, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, and thy neighbour as thyself',¹⁶

she makes huge assumptions about the apostle's possible reactions. Paul's attitude to circumcision was most probably conditioned by his conflicts with the Judaizers who, in Galatia and elsewhere, had sought to compel Gentile Christians to be circumcised - to become Jews - in order to be regarded as proper Christians. He saw such activities as a threat to the unique nature of Christianity and he resisted them with all the powers he had at his command. But nowhere did he suggest that Jewish Christians should renounce their circumcision or seek to hide it as certain Jews seem to have done in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes (1 Maccabees 1:15).

Fortunately, in the matter of abuses surrounding the Lord's supper we have a surviving example of the way in which Paul dealt with the situation. He had to take the Corinthian church to task for the way in which they had allowed the celebration of the Supper to be marked by selfishness and greed, so

that some of the more leisured and wealthy members of the congregation would gorge themselves with the food and wine and leave nothing for the poorer members who came along later (1 Corinthians 11:17-34). He was quite uncompromising in his criticism, and after pointing out the unworthy and unloving manner in which they behaved he went on to warn them: 'Whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord' (v.27). Nowhere did he suggest that because of the abuses the supper should not be observed at all. He dealt with the abuses and sought to establish orderly practice so that everyone could derive the maximum spiritual benefit from the supper. This is not an assumption of what Paul might have done in given circumstances but an account of what he actually did. Is it possible that Catherine Booth missed this example from the New Testament or did she choose to ignore it because it did not support her attitude to the sacraments? This is an intriguing question which cannot be answered with any degree of certainty. The best that can be done is to look for further clues which may reveal something of her mind on this matter.

In her 'Mock Salvation' address she described how she responded to those Christians who challenged her that the Army had 'no authority to remit the Supper, because the Lord said we were to take it in remembrance of him till he come'.¹⁷ She fastened first of all on a point of exegesis, questioning what was the coming to which our Lord had alluded. She claimed that the 'Friends' and many other Christians of all times believed that Jesus referred to his coming at the end of the Jewish dispensation. Since the Christian era had now dawned Christ's followers were under no obligation to continue with the observance of the Supper.

In a manner which is quite characteristic of her use of Scripture, she brings together texts which stress the continuing presence of the Risen Lord. First, using the words of Jesus to Woman of Samaria (John 4:23) she argues that when Jesus said 'The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth':

He could not have intended to teach that God could be more acceptably or profitably worshipped through any particular form or ceremony than without such form or ceremony, and especially if there were weighty reasons on the other side for rejecting it!¹⁸

As she introduces her second text in this section she tends to dismiss the views of anyone who might have the temerity to disagree with her:

Neither is it credible to a spiritually enlightened mind that He who said, 'If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we (I and my Father) will come unto him, and make our abode in him,' could have intended to teach that through the earthly medium of bread and wine his people were to *remember* Him on whom their thoughts were to be constantly concentrated, or to *commune* with him in any special sense above that in which they were to commune with him always and everywhere.¹⁹

For all the lofty attitude expressed in the above extract it displays a certain naivety and lack of logic. Naivety in the sense that it assumes that all Christians are capable of maintaining conscious communion with Christ all the time. There are considerable periods when other thoughts have to occupy the conscious mind of the believer and communion with Christ continues at a sub-conscious level. It follows, therefore, that one of the functions of Holy Communion can be to call into consciousness the significance of the atoning work of Christ and in this sense it can be a valuable means of grace, irrespective of the particular theological emphasis that may be placed on the

bread and the wine. In a similar way, meeting for worship does not make God any more present to us, but one of its functions is to help us focus on the reality of his presence. This brings us to the point that if Catherine Booth's logic was followed it would be possible to argue that we do not need at all to meet in church or any other public place to worship a God who is always with us.

Some of the practical objections which Catherine Booth raised have to be addressed . No doubt there were, as she claimed, many people in The Salvation Army congregations she encountered who bore obvious marks of sin and debauchery who had been baptised as infants and some of whom had later been confirmed. The fact that these ceremonies had been ineffective in the lives of so many people would cause her great distress, but that does not mean that the fault was in the ceremonies. Even the most ardent sacramentalists would insist that personal commitment and obedient faith were necessary if the symbols were to become the true means of grace.

Catherine Booth's complaint about those who taught, that by participation in the sacraments people would be saved, could also have been based on her personal experience. There have been Christian leaders who have not always been as careful as they should in teaching the spiritual meanings of the sacraments and equally there have been those who have received the sacraments who have been careless of the deeper meaning of the ceremonies of which they have been a part. Catherine's opposition to what she considered empty formalism led her to draw general conclusions from such particular examples and thus her arguments tended to become unbalanced.

The Army's pragmatic concerns examined

If, as the above evidence shows, much of the attempt to justify the Army's decision to abandon the use of the sacraments on Scriptural grounds is unsatisfactory, what can be said of the more pragmatic grounds which William Booth set out in his address of January, 1883?

Having stated his theological position ('The "Sacraments" must not, nay, they cannot, rightly be regarded as conditions of Salvation'²⁰) the main body of argument is based on the validity of the Christian experience of those who did not use the sacraments; on the differences regarding sacramental theology within the Church; the practical problems encountered by Salvationists; and his insistence that The Salvation Army was not a church but 'a force for aggressive salvation purposes'. Although this address is generally regarded as the watershed in respect of the Army's use of the sacraments, the address does not indicate, as much subsequent Salvation Army literature seems to have done, that William Booth regarded the matter as settled for all time. He said:

If the Sacraments are not conditions of salvation; if there is a general division of opinion as to the proper mode of administering them ... *is it not wise for us to postpone any settlement of the question, to leave it over to some future day, when we shall have more light, and see more clearly our way before us?*²¹ (My italics)

There is also some evidence that, at a later date, Booth expressed some unease with the decision he had taken. St John Ervine records an assertion of Harold Begbie that Booth 'sometimes wistfully, if transiently wished that he had kept the sacrament of the Supper'.²² Ervine did not publish his book until 1934 but

Begbie, who had published his own account of the life of William Booth, was much nearer to the events which he recorded and according to his preface to *General William Booth*, he had many conversations with Bramwell Booth whilst he was collecting material for his book. It is somewhat surprising, therefore, that the wish that William Booth expressed regarding the Supper does not find any place in subsequent literature about the Army's attitude to the sacraments. And this in spite of the fact that the reference appears in a section of Ervine's book which deals with sacraments within the Army. Surely there is a responsibility to give this evidence due weight or to explain why it has little factual credence.

There was some validity in the argument that since the Army was not aiming to be a church it did not need to retain the sacraments in its meetings. Booth's original plan for the Christian Mission was to send the converts gained to churches in the locality where they lived. Presumably the issues of baptism and communion would have been dealt with when people became members of churches. By 1883, however, The Salvation Army had developed a character and organisation of its own. The intention may still have been to retain the idea of a force for militant evangelism but the movement was rapidly becoming a church in all but name. It had its own leaders, its own roll of soldiers (members), its own organisation, and no direct link with another church. The development of church characteristics has continued throughout the history of the Army and in most parts of the world it is now anxious to be regarded as a church. It appoints representatives to ecumenical bodies such as the World Council of Churches and makes its contribution to world Church witness.

However, it is clear that at the time Booth's address was given there would be no further provision for the sacraments to be received within the Army. He pointed out that no attempt was being made to override the individual conscience of Salvationists in this matter, and where such conviction existed he recommended that individuals should make arrangements with local churches and chapels in order to receive the sacraments. Whatever reconsiderations might be possible in the distant future, no alternatives to the abandonment of sacrament were to be considered at that juncture, even when the new decision caused its own problems.

William Booth complained that when consent was given for some Salvationists to take part in the Church of England sacrament, 'the clergyman who invited them seized the opportunity for showing them that they were only in part qualified to receive the ordinance, seeing that part had been confirmed, and part not'.²³ Someone else suggested that those Salvationists who were not confirmed should go to the dissenters for the sacrament. Booth saw this as introducing division amongst Salvationists and he insisted that it would also cause great difficulty for the Army.

It is not easy to discover whether this experiment refers to a proposal made in 1882 by William Thompson, then Archbishop of York, that enrolled members of The Salvation Army should be invited to take communion at the local parish church once a quarter, a proposal which, according to Frederick Coutts, never really got off the ground;²⁴ or whether a more general arrangement had been made in various places as some Salvation Army centres ceased to offer communion before the official announcement of 1883 was made. Bramwell Booth's account in his book *Echoes and Memories* suggests

that the latter might have been the case.²⁵ But Salvationists should not have been surprised that certain clergymen reacted in the way described, even if at that time, as was the case, attempts were being made to integrate the Army into the Anglican Church in some way. Baptism and Confirmation are important elements in the order of the Church of England, not merely as means of initiation but also in seeking to ensure that some of the abuses of the sacraments about which Salvationist leaders complained were prevented. To attend a Confirmation service is to discover the extent to which efforts are made to impress upon the candidates the nature of the vows which they are confirming. Since membership of the church and access to the Eucharist were dependent on those rites some clergy would not be inclined to change the rules for Salvationists even though they were Christians in good standing. On the other side of the argument, would the Army have admitted Anglicans in good standing into activities of the movement without some commitment to the Army's standards of discipline, and without the willingness to wear uniform? Only if the Lord's table was open to all Christians could it be open to all Salvationists.

Whatever the exact circumstances the fact remains that the problem was created by The Salvation Army not offering the sacrament in its own worship. Further, the embarrassment of sending those Salvationists who wanted to continue to receive the sacraments to other churches would not have arisen, and the somewhat inconsistent situation of encouraging them to receive the sacraments within a fellowship to which they had made no commitment and to which they offered no service, would have been avoided. It is of course true that not every churchman would have regarded sacramental arrangements made by the Army as valid, but the Army had not been deflected when

attacked on other matters reflecting on their lack of orthodoxy, and one can only conclude that Booth was happy to let sacramental observance go. If, as was later recorded, a certain carelessness had been allowed to creep into the observance of the Lord's Supper and some disagreement about who should be allowed to administer the sacrament, in particular whether women officers should be allowed to administer it at all, some measures could surely have been taken to deal with these problems.

The matter of women administering the sacraments can be seen as real difficulty for any Christian body in the early 1880's. Women ministers were virtually unheard of even in the non-conformist churches and there would be considerable prejudice against such a new departure. We can appreciate something of the heart searching which would go on in the light of the difficulties some people are experiencing in respect of women priests in the Anglican Church in the 1990s. But The Salvation Army had been something of pioneer in respect of women's rights in Christian ministry. As early as 1853 and before she married William Booth, Catherine Mumford had dared to write to her pastor, Dr David Thomas, challenging some of his statements about the attainments and place of women. In 1859, the now Catherine Booth came across a pamphlet written by the Rev A.A. Rees, attacking, on Scriptural grounds, the right of women to preach. She published her own reply under the title, *Female Ministry* and the principles she outlined became the norm in The Salvation Army.

William Booth insisted on the equality of women and men as preachers and leaders from the very beginning of the movement. He had, in a few instances, even taken what at that time would be regarded as a daring step of

appointing a wife as leader and her husband as her assistant. It is hard to imagine that he would have hesitated in the matter of women administering the sacraments within the Army if he had really wanted to retain the rites.

In the matter of ensuring a dignified and meaningful observance of the sacraments; it was surely not beyond the capacity of Booth to achieve this. The Salvation Army had displayed a flair for producing Orders and Regulations from as early as 1878. The first volume of such regulations sought to give advice on matters which related to courtship and marriage, and personal welfare; it also set out the qualities required for officership in the Army, gave instructions on the equal status of women, the autocratic authority of commanding officers in their appointed stations, and rules forbidding the use of voting or election to any office, and the use of any committee. This list tackles some formidable and sensitive issues.

It is true that Booth never intended regulations to stifle the Army or limit the inspiration of the Holy Spirit but he also argued that some regulations were necessary:

What is done must be done in some particular fashion, and if one way of doing it is better than another, it must be the wisest course to discover that better way and to describe it in plain language, so that we may be able to walk in it until a still better way is known. ²⁶

How could a person so committed to the decent order of things and so anxious to control individual and organisational conduct have concluded that he could not have introduced order and control into the celebration of the Lord's Supper and the sacrament of baptism? The obvious conclusion to be drawn is that his mind was set on the abandonment of the sacraments and the question

of the ability to impose control on their administration did not really enter into the deliberations.

Although the use of fermented wine in the communion service has frequently been cited in later publications as one of the reasons for the abandonment of the use of the Lord's Supper in The Salvation Army there is no mention of the difficulty in William Booth's address of 1883. However, one can see that there would be practical difficulties for a movement pledged to total abstinence. There was also the problem that amongst early Salvationist converts there were a number of former drunkards and the very taste of alcohol, even in the small quantities given at communion, would present particular temptations to them. Again this is not an insurmountable problem; many Non-conformist churches did not use fermented wine, and presumably Roman Catholics, Anglicans, and others had means of meeting the needs of alcoholics who found fermented wine a problem. There is also evidence in the Army's own London archives that this was not seen as an insurmountable problem at that time. The first cash book of St Peter Port (Channel Islands) Corps has an entry dated 4 November, 1881 which records an expenditure of one shilling and sixpence for 'blackcurrant jelly for wine for the sacrament'.

How did Salvationists take this decision in 1883? As far as one can ascertain: with remarkable equanimity. Accurate figures cannot be obtained since any losses would be more than compensated for in the rapid growth of the Army between 1878 and 1886 when the number of corps rose from eighty one to over a thousand. There is no record of widespread defections, and subsequent generations which have grown up with the non-sacramental worship of the Army do not express widespread dissatisfaction. Where the

issue is raised in the 1990s, it is not the fact as to whether the sacraments are necessary to salvation which is questioned. People are more concerned about whether Salvationist worship would be enhanced by the inclusion of sacraments and whether the Army's acceptance as a church might be positively affected.

By the time the official history of The Salvation Army came to be written the reasons for the decision to abandon the use of the sacraments had been carefully tabulated. The main source of information seems to have been Bramwell Booth's *Echoes and Memories* published in 1925. There are some minor alterations and additions to the reasons given in William Booth's address of 1883 but the lists give a general outline of the considerations that shaped the original decision, and these largely reflect the official position as it stands in 1995.

The main grounds on which it was decided to cease to perform outward baptism were:

- 1 That the all-important baptism enjoined in the New Testament was the baptism of God the Holy Spirit.
- 2 Over and above all other indications that baptism is not required of partakers of the New Covenant is the record that its Author and Finisher, the Lord Jesus Christ, did not baptise.
- 3 The lack of any scriptural basis for the claim that it is essential to salvation; and the overwhelming evidence to the contrary provided by the multitudes who unquestionably have become "new creatures in Christ Jesus" and who have continued "steadfast in the faith" without having been outwardly baptised.
- 4 The conflicting views as to how and when it should be performed.

The principle reasons for the abandonment of the Lord's supper were:

- 1 That there is reason shown in the Scriptures for supposing that our Lord intended that his followers should remember the significance of His death *whenever they ate and drank together*, and not merely on a

ceremonial occasion, and that the earliest records show that this is what was then understood.

2 Even more than outward baptism it has been a cause of bitter controversy. In an article in the *Contemporary Review* (August 1882) the General [William Booth] declared that controversial questions should be avoided as being the "very poison of hell."

3 As with baptism there is the clearest evidence that it neither essential to salvation nor of itself capable of bringing about any change in the lives of those who partake of it.

4 That the church has regarded certain other commands of our Lord, couched in unmistakably explicit language, as having only a spiritual significance, instances being the "washing of feet," and his command to the lawyer to follow the example of the Good Samaritan.

5 The very practical consideration that its orthodox administration was a snare to the poor souls who had been slaves of strong drink.²⁷

NOTES

1. BOOTH, BRAMWELL, *Echoes and Memories*, London (1925) pp.191,192
2. 'War Cry' 13 January, 1883, p.4, column 2.
3. *Ibid*, p.4, column 2.
4. *Ibid*, 27 March 1880, p.3; 31 March 1881, p.4; *Orders and Regulations for Officers* (1878) p.72
5. *Ibid*, p.4, column 3.
6. BARRETT, C.K., *The Gospel According to St John*, London, (1967) p.174.
7. WATSON, B., *Soldier Saint*, London (1970) p.16.
8. BOOTH, BRAMWELL, *Echoes and Memories*, p.194.
9. WATSON, B., *Soldier Saint*, p.16
10. ERVINE, ST JOHN, *God's Soldier: General William Booth*, London (1934)

11. DOUGLAS, E. and DUFF, M., *Commissioner Railton*, London (1920)
12. WATSON, B. *Soldier Saint*, p.27
13. BOOTH, CATHERINE, *Popular Christianity*, London (1887) p.42.
14. BOOTH-TUCKER, F DE L, *Catherine Booth*, Vol 1 (1892) p.45
15. BOOTH, CATHERINE, *Popular Christianity*, pp.43,44.
16. Ibid, p.44.
17. Ibid, pp.44,45.
18. Ibid, p.45.
19. Ibid, p. 45.
20. 'War Cry', 17 January, 1883, p.4, column 3.
21. Ibid.
22. ERVINE, ST JOHN, *God's Soldier*, p.469
23. 'War Cry' 17 January, 1883, p.4, column 3
24. COUTTS, F., *In Good Company*, London (1980) p.53
25. BOOTH, BRAMWELL, *Echoes and Memories*, pp.195,196
26. SANDALL, R., *The History of The Salvation Army*, London, (Vol 2, 1950), p.32.
27. Ibid, pp.32,33

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS: THE DEBATE ABOUT INFLUENCES

The influences which led to William Booth's decision to abandon the sacraments in Salvationist worship have been attributed to various periods and movements within the history of the Church which predate the origins of The Salvation Army, of which the most important are the Reformation and the attitudes and arguments of the Society of Friends.

The influences of the Reformation

Ieuan P. Ellis of Hull University argued that changes in sacramental theology at the time of the Reformation had made it possible for The Salvation Army (and the Quakers before them) to abandon the use of the sacraments. In particular, he claimed that Zwingli's insistence that the Lord's Supper was essentially a memorial meal opened up the possibility of abandoning the use of the elements altogether.

In his book, *Closer Communion*, Clifford W. Kew traces the development of the theology of baptism and communion from apostolic times. In his reference to Zwingli he makes a similar point to the one made by Ellis. Writing from a Salvationist perspective he claims:

Zwingli reduced the number of sacraments to two and questioned the Roman definition of the sacrament of baptism and even its necessity, thus reducing it to a sign not essential to salvation. Thus he is one of the forebears of present-day non-sacramentalists.¹

In referring to the Lord's Supper, Kew quotes Owen Chadwick who said that Zwingli, "shrank from the idea that physical objects might be vehicles of

spiritual gifts" and preferred to treat the sacraments rather as symbols and signs ... than as a means of grace'.²

Two important questions arise from these claims to trace Salvationist attitudes back to the reformers. First, do the claims that are made accurately represent the views of Zwingli and other Reformers? Secondly, was there any influence, direct or indirect, exerted on William Booth and other Salvationist leaders through the writings and teachings of the Reformers?

Clifford Kew shows that the Reformers were agreed on the rejection of the medieval idea of the Church as a hierarchical institution ... administering salvation through the sacraments, and of the doctrine of transubstantiation, but he insists that 'there the agreement among them ends'.³

This statement has to be questioned in the light of the articles which were signed by ten of the leading figures of the Reformation following the Marburg Colloquy of 1529. Among the signatories we find the names of Martin Luther, Philipp Melancthon, Johann Oecolampadius, Huldrych Zwingli and Martin Bucer. A number of points of doctrine were aired at the Colloquy but according to Oecolampadius its main purpose was to discuss the respective views of the reformers regarding the Lord's Supper. On this point, the document which was signed stated:

We all believe with regard to the Supper of our dear Lord Jesus Christ that it ought to be celebrated in both kinds according to the institution of Christ; also, that the mass is not a work by which man obtains grace of another, either dead or alive. Further, that the sacrament of the altar is a sacrament of the true body and blood of Jesus Christ, and that spiritual manducation of this body and blood is specially necessary to every true Christian And although at the present time we are not of the same

mind on the question whether the real body and blood of Christ are corporally present in the bread and wine, yet both parties shall regard each other in Christian charity in so far as their consciences can ever permit, and both parties will earnestly implore Almighty God that he will strengthen us in the right understanding through his Spirit. Amen.⁴

Zwingli gained a reputation in his early work on the Lord's Supper for saying what it was not without giving a clear indication of what it was.

However, in November 1524 he made his position clear when commenting on the words of consecration, 'this is my body, given for you', he wrote:

We maintain that everything depends on one syllable, namely on the word 'is', which does not always, we know, have the meaning 'to be', but sometimes 'to signify' ... The meaning of the words of Christ will then be clearly revealed : This supper signifies or is a sign, through which you are reminded that the body of the Son of God, your Lord and Master, was given for you.⁵

A consideration of that statement alongside the articles Zwingli signed at Marburg makes it difficult to see how he gave any definite sanction to those who later abandoned the use of the sacraments on the grounds that he had regarded them as mere memorial symbols.

The widening of the gap between the Zwinglian and Lutheran Reformers probably led to the increasing isolation of Zwingli. In that situation his ideas would also become peripheral, and those who treated his work critically would tend to emphasise its negative aspects. Thus his emphasis on the memorial nature of the Lord's Supper could be emptied of the realisation of the spiritual presence in which he so clearly believed, and of the value he saw in receiving the elements as reminders of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus.

When Zwingli's ideas are compared with those of William Booth and other early Salvationist leaders some remarkable parallels can be found. Salvationists placed the emphasis on spiritual communion and Zwingli certainly

insisted on the spiritual nature of the Eucharist. In his final statement on the subject in July 1530 he wrote:

The natural body of Christ is not eaten with our mouth as he himself showed when he said to the Jews who were arguing about the corporeal eating of his flesh, 'The flesh is of no avail', that is, for eating naturally, but for eating spiritually it is very much so as it gives life. ⁶

An important part of the Army's argument for the abandonment of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is that the reality of Christ's presence is everywhere available and can be realised by faith without the use of the elements and formal celebration of the Eucharist. Zwingli's attitude has been summed up as follows:

To Zwingli, Christ was available everywhere by faith and did not 'require' the sacrament to make that real.... To him the faithful commemorated [Christ's] death and pledged themselves in faith; the sacrament was a symbol of that pledge. ⁷

If there has been any Zwinglian influence on The Salvation Army it has most probably been transmitted through the Church of England. The views of the mature Thomas Cranmer, the English Reformer, can be seen in his prayer books of 1549 and 1552, where eating the body and blood of Christ spiritually and the Lord's Supper as a memorial meal are clearly stated.

However, there is no evidence in Zwingli's work which would encourage Salvationists to abandon the sacraments. What does emerge is that Salvationists and others who have abandoned the use of the sacraments in worship and have used Zwingli as part of their justification for doing so have followed popular interpretations of the Swiss Reformer's theology rather than actual teaching that he gave.

Views which have much more in common with that of Catherine Booth and Railton, and which were eventually embraced by William Booth have been identified by R. David Rightmire in his book *The Sacraments and The Salvation Army: Pneumatological Foundation*. The author shows that the 'spiritual reformers' of the sixteenth century, namely Thomas Muntzer, Melchior Hoffman, Casper Schwenkfeld and Menno Simons, placed the emphasis on the spiritual and inner nature of the sacraments, claiming that 'spiritual communion by faith precludes the need for outer communion'.⁸ Rightmire claims that there are some affinities between Spiritualist and Salvation Army sacramental theology but he also acknowledges that 'the degree of influence is not clear'.⁹ However, he goes on to trace the influence of the sixteenth century Spiritualists, from Europe into England, and then through the Quakers.

Although there is some agreement of ideas in the writings of the 'spiritual reformers' and Catherine Booth, the claim of direct influence on the Salvationist attitudes has still to be proved. If Catherine was influenced by these ideas it is much more likely that she gleaned her information from her general reading than from a direct study of the Reformers themselves. We know that from an early age Catherine was an avid reader of Christian literature including the Bible, Wesley, Finney, Fletcher, Mosheim, Neander, and Butler;¹⁰ we have no record of her reading the Reformers, and no evidence that she quoted them in her arguments for the sacramental stance that she took. It is much more likely that some reformist ideas came to her in distilled form through her Wesleyan Methodist background.

Much the same could be said of Railton, the son of a Methodist minister. George, like his father, was a person of austere and independent character, and his brand of Methodism was fiercely evangelical. William Booth, and the Christian Mission which he founded, appealed to Railton because of the evangelical thrust and the lack of 'churchiness' in the methods employed. Therefore, it is not surprising that any influences which he brought to bear on the Army's decision regarding the sacraments were less attributable to the Reformers than to his own ascetic nature.

Any influence that the Reformers may have had on William Booth with regard to the sacraments is even more difficult to trace. His early background was quite different from that of Catherine or Railton, and he was much more conservative in his outlook. He was baptised in the Anglican Church when only two days old. He was a regular communicant as a member of the Wesley chapel in Nottingham, and later as a minister in the Methodist New Connexion he administered the sacraments. In this respect Bramwell Booth wrote of the influence which early experience had on his father's attitude:

Here, as in some other matters, the Founder's early training in the Church of England and in his later Church work influenced him. He was in some measure predisposed to attach importance to ceremonial of this nature, and while he never allowed that in itself it possessed any spiritual efficacy, or that it was in the least degree necessary to the Salvation of any man, yet he used it, *though with increasing misgiving*.¹¹ (My italics)

William Booth's misgivings were the result of practical considerations rather than the influence of the Reformers. His first enquiry with regard to the adoption or abandonment of any measure was, "Will it help to our great end? If it will not, will it hinder?" Little by little he came to believe that there was danger in the continuance of this practice amongst us'.¹²

The fourth Salvationist who could have had influence at the time that the decision was made to abandon the sacraments in the Army was Bramwell Booth. By this time he had become Chief of Staff, the second in command in the movement and to a large degree had usurped the authority that Railton had for many years as General Secretary to the Mission.

Bramwell proved to be more difficult to persuade than the other three in respect of the Lord's Supper. He said:

For myself, I confess that I had so often received spiritual help - no doubt the result of my own faith - in the administration of the Supper, that it was with considerable hesitation, not to say reluctance, that I came round to the view which the Founder finally adopted. I believe that I was the last Officer of The Salvation Army to administer the Lord's Supper to any of its people; and, indeed, the Founder gave me, young as I was, a freedom in this matter which, so far as I am aware, he gave to no one else, and which he gave to me on no other subject of importance on which our views were for the time out of accord. But gradually I, too, realized how prone the human mind is to lean upon the outward.¹³

Far from being influenced in his change of attitude by any Reformation theology or the arguments of other Salvationist leaders, he claimed that the High Church party in the Church of England with its tendency to rely on outward and visible signs as substitutes for inward and spiritual grace, had a crucial affect upon his thinking. Here, he seems to be totally unaware of the impact that the Anglo-Catholic movement was having in the poorer parishes of the East End of London; and this precisely because of the appeal of symbol and ceremonial to people of limited education and means. The failure to recognise this is all the more surprising in view of the fact that the Anglo-Catholic success was in the very areas in which the Army was working. If

Bramwell was aware of the Anglo-Catholic success he may have seen in its extremism only the encouragement of superstition

Having come eventually to agree with the decision which William Booth made for The Salvation Army, Bramwell wrote:

The great blessing is, must be, in the redemption itself. Only too often have I seen how 'communion,' and the material trappings which the Churches have associated with it, obscure the thought of a real redemption. *Life* does not come by a sacrament, nor is it maintained by a 'sacramental substance,' but by a Divine Person consciously revealed in us as a present redeeming, life-giving Saviour.¹⁴

The influence of The Society of Friends (The Quakers)

The indebtedness of The Salvation Army to the example and witness of the Quakers in respect of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper has been readily acknowledged in the Army's literature and by its leaders. Catherine Booth referred to the strong arguments which had been put forward to support the view that Jesus did not intend to institute a permanent rite and among those who held this view she mentioned 'the "Friends" of our own time'.¹⁵ Bramwell Booth also acknowledged this influence when he wrote: 'Much is to be said for the Quaker standpoint. I think it is perhaps better set forth in Barclay's *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* than in any other writing I know.'¹⁶ A similar point is made by Robert Sandall in the second volume of *The History of The Salvation Army* where he claims:

The General [William Booth] was not only convinced by the arguments of Mrs Booth and Railton, but felt there was a substantial backing for those in the position taken by George Fox and his followers, the Society of Friends, who, holding that church sacraments were but symbols of

spiritual truths, had laid them aside, seeking after the experience that these symbols represented.¹⁷

Sandall also refers to Robert Barclay's *Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, in a footnote linked with the above extract.

These claims of a link between The Salvation Army and the Quakers are repeated in later Army publications such as *The Sacraments - the Salvationist's Viewpoint* and in Clifford Kew's *Closer Communion*.

Unfortunately, anything more than this general acknowledgement of Quaker influence is not to be found in Salvationist publications. If the claims are to be substantiated, the ideas which were set out by early Quaker writers will need to be compared with the arguments which have been advanced by Salvationists. This comparison will be especially valuable in assessing any influence there might have been on William and Catherine Booth, and on Railton.

Before considering Barclay we look at Quakerism's founder. According to his journal, when George Fox dealt with the issue of the sacraments he did so in the context of the fierce controversy and persecution which was being experienced by Quakers in the seventeenth century. This new community was challenged on several issues of importance one of which was their refusal to include the sacraments in their worship.

The first part of Fox's argument centred on the Lord's Supper and he claimed that Jesus did not intend to institute any permanent rite. He fastened on the phrase 'as often as ye drink it' (1 Corinthians 11:25) and claimed that neither Jesus nor Paul commanded people to eat bread and drink wine as a

communion always.¹⁸ He also argued that the cup, the bread, and baptism were Jewish rites observed in their feasts which were not intended to be perpetuated in the Christian era.

Another feature of Fox's argument concerned the ineffectiveness in the lives of those who participated. He was convinced that mere partaking did not effect any spiritual or moral change in the participants unless they already experienced Christ's indwelling. In 1656 he wrote:

As to the bread and wine, after the disciples had taken it, some of them questioned whether Jesus was the Christ; for some of them said, after he was crucified, 'We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel,' &c. And though the Corinthians had the bread and wine, and were baptised in water, the apostle told them they were 'reprobates if Christ was not in them'; and he bid them 'examine themselves.'¹⁹

Fox repeated this argument in much the same form in his debate with the Jesuit ambassador from Spain in 1658. The Jesuit traced the Old Testament origins of the Supper through to the words of Christ 'This is my body' and Paul's words to the Corinthians. He claimed 'that after the priest had consecrated the bread and wine, it was immortal and divine, and he that received it, received the whole Christ.' In describing the course of the debate Fox wrote in his Journal:

I followed him through the Scriptures he brought, till I came to Christ's words and the apostle's; and I showed him "that the same apostle told the Corinthians, after they had taken bread and wine in remembrance of Christ's death, that they were reprobates, if Christ was not *in* them: but if the bread they ate was Christ, he must of necessity be in them, after they had eaten it".²⁰

There is some general agreement between the statements of Fox and those of early Salvationist leaders, particularly in regard to the efficacy of the sacraments. The two centuries which divide Fox and the birth of The Salvation Army inevitably result in the statements being made in different ways but the conviction of the Salvationists that receiving the sacraments did not ensure salvation, and that faith in Christ was essential before the rites could be at all effective reflects the teaching of Fox.

Rightmire makes a strong case for Quaker influence on the Army's non-sacramental position but he recognises that such influence is difficult to identify precisely. He finds the strongest affinity in Bramwell Booth's commendation of Robert Barclay's *Apology*, which, he claims, establishes an explicit link between Quaker non-sacramental theology and the Army's position. Rightmire is critical of Edward McKinley who is much more sceptical of the direct influence that the Quakers had on the Army. Rightmire claims that McKinley did not give sufficient credit to the theological climate which the Quakers had created in regard to the sacraments. This does not really do justice to McKinley, who in his essay, 'Quaker Influence On The Early Salvation Army: An Essay in Practical Theology', wrote: 'Certainly the fact that two centuries earlier the Quakers had developed both a clear doctrinal defence for abandoning the sacraments and a practical demonstration of successful worship without these ceremonies was of interest to Booth in the 1870s'.²¹ McKinley is right in insisting that 'at no time was the Quaker position the only consideration'. As for Rightmire's charge that McKinley 'relegates all possible influences to a *post de facto* status',²² this is also unjust. A strong case could be made for the fact that general Quaker attitudes influenced the decision that Salvationist made regarding the sacraments, but there is no hint of direct Quaker influence on the

Army's initial statements regarding the sacraments. Apart from a single text (John 14:23) there is little in Catherine Booth's arguments which show dependence on Fox or Barclay. It is also important to remember that the reference which Bramwell Booth makes to Robert Barclay's *Apology*, and on which Rightmire sets so much store, was included in Booth's *Echoes and Memories* which was not published until 1925, over forty years after the events that it describes. There was certainly time for *post de facto* influence on Salvationist sacramental understanding.

What is surprising in the comparison of Quaker and Salvationists positions is that Fox was prepared to face up to the Scriptural passages in the Gospels and 1 Corinthians and argue his case by his examination of the text. As I have noted above Fox interpreted the phrase 'as oft as you drink it' as placing no obligation on Christians to perpetuate the supper. By contrast, as shown in the first chapter of this research, early Salvationist statements do not address the New Testament direct references to the Supper at all. Surely, if there had been serious Quaker theological influences on the Army from the point at which the decision to abandon the sacraments was made, there would have been some explicit evidence in the statements which were made in 1883 and soon afterwards

NOTES

1. KEW, C. *Closer Communion*, London (1980) p.31.
2. Ibid p.39.
3. Ibid p. 38.

4. Quoted by ATKINSON, J. *Martin Luther and the Birth of Protestantism*, London (1968) pp. 273,274.
5. *Zwingli's Samtliche Werke* III, pp. 342,345. Translation by H.J. HILLERBRAND, *The Reformation in its own Words*, London (1964)
6. POTTER, G.R. *Huldrych Zwingli* London (1978) p.109
 quoted
 from Jackson's *Zwingli*
7. ATKINSON, J. *Martin Luther and the Birth of Protestantism*, p. 269.
8. RIGHTMIRE, R. DAVID, *Sacraments and The Salvation Army: Pneumatological Foundation*, London (1972), p.105.
9. *Ibid* p.118.
10. BOOTH-TUCKER, F. de L. *Catherine Booth*, London (1892)
 Vol I p. 32.
11. BOOTH, BRAMWELL *Echoes and Memories*, p.191.
12. *Ibid* p. 191.
13. *Ibid* p. 193.
14. *Ibid* p. 195.
15. BOOTH, CATHERINE *Popular Christianity*, p.44.
16. BOOTH, BRAMWELL *Echoes and Memories*, p.195.
17. SANDALL, R. *The History of The Salvation Army*, Vol II, London (1950) pp. 131,132.
18. FOX, G. *Fox's Journal*, London (1905 Edn) p.228.
19. *Ibid* p.228.
20. *Ibid* p.270.

21. A private circulation essay submitted to The Salvation Army Historical Commission (1974). This came into my possession as a duplicated copy, but according to Rightmire it has now been published as one of a series of papers in *Heritage of Holiness*, New York (1977).
22. RIGHTMIRE, R. DAVID, *Sacraments and The Salvation Army*, p.124

CHAPTER 3

DEFENCES OF THE SALVATIONIST POSITION

I. *The Sacraments: the Salvationist's Viewpoint***Introduction**

Following William Booth's first official announcement in 1883 that the use of the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion were to be discontinued in The Salvation Army, and Catherine Booth's defence of this decision in her *Popular Christianity*, a few pamphlets and explanations were published by various authors. However, there was no thoroughgoing attempt to explain and expound the Salvationist position to its own people and to other Christians until 1960. Since that time three books have appeared devoted entirely to the subject of the sacraments. These are: *The Sacraments: The Salvationist's Viewpoint*, 'Issued by the Authority of the General' (1960), (the true author's name not disclosed), *The Salvationists and the Sacraments*, by William Metcalf (1965), and *Closer Communion* by Clifford Kew (1980) A number of articles were published before these books but they were restricted in their circulation, some directed to staff officers, and others to all officers. Other references to the subject of the sacraments appear in books dealing with the Army's history and ecclesiology. A number of other pamphlets have now been issued in various parts of the Army world and these have all followed the arguments which were put forward when the sacraments were abandoned by the Army in 1883. There is evidence that there has been some development in the way these arguments are presented but all the literature seeks to defend the following six points:

1. The sacraments are not essential to salvation.
2. There is no clear biblical evidence that Jesus instituted the sacraments, or that he gave any clear instruction that these rites should be continued in perpetuity.

3. The history of the early Church as found in the New Testament and contemporary writings provides no convincing evidence that these rites were observed as sacraments from earliest times.
4. Sacraments have little or no spiritual value apart from the faith of the believer; therefore it is possible to receive divine grace without partaking of the elements.
5. The continuing vibrant spirituality found amongst Salvationists (and the Quakers) provides convincing evidence of the legitimacy of the stand which has been taken.
6. That there are disadvantages to the use of the traditional sacraments which have caused The Salvation Army to cease to use them in its form of worship.

Of these three publications the book by William Metcalf was intended for use in missionary situations and as such its biblical arguments are less critical than those used in the other two. The general arguments presented in *The Sacraments: The Salvationist's Viewpoint*, are followed by Kew in *Closer Communion*, but Kew gives more space to Reformation influences and develops some of the biblical arguments.

In considering these publications, two main issues need to be addressed. First, are the arguments presented convincing in defending the Army's non-sacramental stance? Secondly, is the scope of the debate wide enough to provide a reasoned examination of the subject of the sacraments?

Since *The Sacraments: The Salvationist's Viewpoint* was the first of these books to be published, my examination will concentrate on the material it presents and refer to the other books only where they are indicative of important new contributions to the argument. Its official status also means that it is essential to examine its contents in some detail.

The Sacraments: The Salvationist's Viewpoint

The publication of this book marked certain important developments in the way that the Army's viewpoint was presented. It includes, for the general reader, the first published evidence of the use of biblical textual criticism in support of the stand taken with regard to the sacraments. The author also makes use of the work of Christian writers such as Ignatius, bishop of Antioch (early second century), Meister Eckhart (fourteenth century), Erasmus (sixteenth century), Quaker writers including Robert Barclay (seventeenth century), and twentieth century scholars including H.H. Rowley, William Temple, Emil Brunner, and William Neil.

The whole aim of the book is fairly comprehensively stated when following his exposition on the teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the author writes:

Just as ceremonial proved inadequate in Israel's history so can it be shown to be non-essential to salvation in Christian history. It is our Saviour who is adequate to meet every spiritual need, *with or without the use of external rites.*¹ (My italics)

The writer is determined to place the emphasis on the 'without'. What this research aims to show (in a later chapter) is that the attitude of many Salvationists has changed, and the 'with' is becoming increasingly important.

Support for the Army's case

In setting out the Army's viewpoint, the author takes the definition that a sacrament is 'the outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace' and claims that this implies that 'the elements are not more than elements which

have no efficacy apart from faith in the facts they represent'.² To support this argument he draws on a number of sources.

From Catherine Booth he quotes:

What an inveterate tendency there is in the human heart to trust in outward forms, instead of seeking the inward grace. And where this is the case, what a hindrance, rather than a help have these forms proved to growth, nay, to the very essence of the spiritual life which constitutes the real and only force of Christian experience.³

Further support is found in the work of Professor H.H. Rowley who wrote:

The symbol is of less importance than that which it symbolises What matters most is not that a man has been voluntarily immersed ... but that he has truly died with Christ and has been raised to newness of life in him The symbol is worthless without that which it symbolises.⁴

Emil Brunner is the next authority the author calls on and the following extract from a rather lengthy quotation gives the gist of what Brunner said:

Intimately, as these two so-called sacraments are associated with the saving events in Christ, yet they are not identical with them - they are not therefore unconditionally necessary to salvation. In asserting their unconditional necessity to salvation we should be contradicting the witness of the New Testament The decisive test of one's belonging to Christ is not the reception of baptism, nor partaking in the Lord's Supper but solely and exclusively a union with Christ through faith which shows itself active in love.⁵

The authorities referred to above, and many others which the author could have quoted, would also be unlikely to disagree with his assertion that, 'the Christian religion is essentially spiritual, but it is not essentially ritualistic, for it can and does exist - and very often thrives - without any ritual expression'.⁶ However, apart from Catherine Booth whose opposition to the sacraments

has been discussed in an earlier chapter of this work, none of the other authorities quoted here call for an abandonment of the sacraments. Their words are generally in line with the attitude of sacramentalists of all shades of theological persuasion, in that they emphasise the proper use of the sacraments, and hold that penitence and faith are essential to a effective observance of the rites.

Possible pitfalls in sacramental religion

In this section the writer lists five dangers or developments which are regarded as possible snares in sacramental religion. He introduces his points by acknowledging that most sacramentalists are aware of these dangers. However, since the book was written primarily for Salvationists and 'does not aim to dissuade ... friends who find a sacramental church order helpful,'⁷ it is not surprising that the emphasis in the five points listed argues almost exclusively for non-observance.

Below I list his five points, together with some critical comments of my own.

1. Symbols always tend to gather to themselves more importance than is their due so that they come to be regarded as necessary means of communicating spiritual gifts.

In highlighting this danger the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion are quoted:

Although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth ... the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ: but rather to their condemnation, do eat and drink the sign or sacrament of so great a thing.⁸

There is no doubt that Article xxix in *The Book of Common Prayer* warns against careless and faithless use of the sacrament but the omission of the first phrase, 'the Wicked and such as be void of lively faith', tends to mislead the reader of the Army's book. Article xxix needs to be read in the context of the whole section dealing with the sacraments (Articles xxv - xxxi); its purpose then becomes clear, as the intention to guard against the careless use of the sacrament, not discredit its value altogether.

2. The danger of making a false division between the secular and the sacred.

Here, the argument is that such division leads to regarding places and buildings as 'sacred'. It is claimed that 'material things of themselves have no moral and spiritual values' although they may become associated with blessings which accompany their use.⁹ The author carries this concept through to challenge any idea that water, bread and wine can be regarded as holy. 'Only people can be holy', he claims, 'then everything in their lives serves a sacramental purpose'.

The idea of the sacramental purpose reaching out into the whole of life has a splendid ring to it, but surely it is not intended to suggest that all non-sacramentalists have this clear vision of the unity of the sacred and secular, or that sacramentalists are excluded from such understanding. Consideration needs to be given to the fact that true sacramentalists think of all the world functioning sacramentally: because we are physical beings God uses physical means to communicate with us. In other words, sacramentalism can be a way of claiming all the world for God, rather than limiting its terrain to the merely religious.

Further, it cannot be claimed that Salvationists have been saved from false divisions by virtue of their non-sacramental stance. It is true that from the early days of the Army there was a stern refusal to consecrate buildings and other objects, and that still holds to the present day. In practice the Army can, and still does, use any building for the purposes of mission and worship. What, however, does happen is that the Army 'dedicates' buildings, instruments, and flags and even though it is often argued that this is something quite different in that it does not render the objects 'sacred', in practical terms it is hard sometimes to see the difference.

What exists in theory and what happens in the mind of many Salvationists is often in sharp contrast, and halls that are built and set aside for worship are often regarded as 'sacred'. Sometimes the worship hall is officially known as 'The Sanctuary'; and the term 'Temple' is not unknown. At local level people often protect that part of the building from what they regard as secular use. The same is true of brass instruments. There have been a number of instances in which a young Salvationist musician has not been allowed to use an Army instrument in a school band because the instrument was regarded as 'holy' - dedicated to God's service. If it is only people who are holy, the Army still has some hard thinking to do.

3. The danger of a double standard for Christians inherent in the above view.

Here, the concern is about a separate calling of people to the priesthood. It is claimed that the sacrament has led to a departure from the simple custom of the first Christians who broke bread in their homes. Ignatius, bishop of

Antioch is quoted as an early advocate of the separation between clergy and laity - he refused to regard any Eucharist as valid unless administered by a bishop or under his orders.¹⁰

In this regard, the Quakers are much more consistent than the Army in that they refuse to separate people off to a distinctive ministry - all are allowed to minister under the direction of the Holy Spirit. The Army subscribes to the concept of 'The Priesthood of all Believers'; any Salvationist can lead meetings for worship or preach, and many do. But the training and commissioning of officers does tend towards a kind of professionalism - a division which arises even apart from the administration of sacraments.

4. The danger of seeming to localise God's presence in a place or in a ceremony

To support this the author quotes William Temple who said:

No doubt Christ is always and everywhere accessible; and He is always the same. Therefore it is possible to make a 'spiritual communion' which is in every way as real as a sacramental communion. Where Christ is at all, there He is altogether. To say that His divinity is present elsewhere but His humanity only in the Eucharist (the Lord's Supper) seems to me mythology, and nonsense at that. Everywhere and always we can have communion with Him.¹¹

There is a splendid irony here, since in *Christus Veritas* Temple is found to be someone who tried to rethink the whole sacramental approach, and without any hint of abandoning the sacraments he sought to answer some of the criticisms and difficulties of the sacramental system. To use Temple to support a non-sacramental point of view involves selecting material in such a way as to misrepresent his main position.

From the Salvationist point of view the issue is whether this tendency to limit or localise God's presence is eliminated simply by refusing to use the sacraments. Growing spiritual awareness in the life of the individual is the only real protection. To claim, as the Army's writer does, that 'it is worth the sacrificing of convention to declare that God can be found in the "haunts of sin and shame", as well as in recognised places of worship' suggests that the Army's way is the only way to recognise God's presence in the world. At the best, this is patronising, and a grave misrepresentation of many sacramentalists who are sensitive to God's presence everywhere.

5. The danger of externalising religion accompanies the use of external aids.

In this section the author's use of the word 'can' in three successive sentences is interesting and informative.

By nature men are spiritually indolent, and there are so many gravitational pulls that would keep them at a low level of achievement. Sacramental religion *can* make its appeal as an easy way to accomplish a difficult task. It *can* induce a man to shelve responsibility. If only something for which the individual is not directly responsible - external ceremonial acts - *can* be substituted for the effecting of an inner change! That is a very natural and understandable tendency in those inclined to be content with religion by proxy. ¹²

These 'can' words indicate dangers not certainties and any idea that by removing the outward forms all spiritual indolence will be avoided has no basis in fact.

Having stated the dangers, the writer comes at last to the main point of his argument: 'Absence of priests or rites is no barrier between a suppliant and

his Saviour. We declare it necessary for man to partake of Christ and this comes by faith. The possession of this faith leads to a whole life that might be described as sacramental.'¹³

The strong denial that there is any intention of opposing Christian friends whose thoughts and practices differ from those of Salvationists is repeated. What is not discussed is how the needs of those Salvationists who have a growing desire to participate in sacramental worship are to be met. This was not much of an issue in the 1960s but it is assuming greater importance in the 1990s.

The Practice of the Early Church

In the survey of the development of the sacraments throughout the history of the early Church, the anonymous author sets out to show that simple voluntary activities were gradually overlaid with ritual and theological meanings which they did not originally possess.

The description of the development of baptism in this chapter is not particularly detailed. The main aim seems to be to show that although baptism of converts took place from the beginning of the Church, Jesus did not baptise anyone nor did he instruct his disciples to baptise. The writer shows that there is no evidence of the baptismal formula of Matthew 28:19; actually being used in New Testament times. Such baptisms as took place did not involve a Trinitarian formula but were carried out in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38; 10:48; 22:16).

The question is then raised as to whether the practices which were retained by the first Christians can be held to be binding for all future times. The author follows the pattern which we saw in the work of Catherine Booth (chapter 1, pp 13-16), namely that Paul had argued for Christians to be free from the legal requirements of Judaism and that mainly as a result of his influence at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) the Church was freed from Jewish rites and laws. In the plain sense of Acts 15 this is true, but it needs to be remembered that the issue which confronted the Jerusalem Council was whether Gentiles could be admitted to the Church without first accepting circumcision and becoming Jews. It is not surprising that baptism and the Lord's Supper were not mentioned in the letter which was sent out from the council since Christian ceremonies were not the issue. Some scholars are in any case of the opinion that the food regulations which were laid upon the whole Church were concerned with the matter of social intercourse between Jewish and Gentile Christians including joint participation in the Lord's Supper. ¹⁴

In developing the argument Paul's attitude to circumcision is discussed. On the basis of Galatians 5:6; ('For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh through love'), he claims that ceremonies would pass but the truths they symbolised would remain. Unease has already been expressed about comparing circumcision with baptism and Holy Communion. Here again like is not being compared with like. Circumcision belonged to the old dispensation and according to Paul carried the burden of the keeping of the whole Law (Galatians 5:3). Paul was concerned that the Christian faith could become locked within Judaism and thus Christians would be deprived of the liberty which God had made available to them in Christ. It was that particular restriction that he opposed. Baptism

was something different; it had been adopted by the Church as an initiation rite and as Paul's account in Romans 6:3-10 shows, it had become thoroughly Christianised.

Throughout this Army's publication a number of arguments from silence are used to support the non-sacramental position; for example it is claimed that since there is an absence of any reference to wine where the 'breaking of bread' is mentioned in Acts 2:46; 20:7,11; 27:35, these verses must refer to an ordinary meal and not to the Lord's Supper. But the argument from silence can be a double edged weapon that can be just as easily used to show that the absence of explicit prohibition of baptism and Holy Communion means that there was no general disapproval of these ceremonies as they existed at that time.

Developments in the Lord's Supper during the early years of the Church are dealt with in more detail. The writer traces that development from a simple fellowship meal or 'love feast', to a separate rite in the control of bishops and priests. The influence of mystery religions is seen as a factor in the emergence of a highly developed rite.

The outlook of this whole section on early Church influences can be summed-up in the author's own words:

In all of this we see the tendency of men to complicate the simple and make a law out of what had before been a matter of choice. That which could have remained a spontaneous means of grace becomes overlaid with conventions.¹⁵

Baptism

A more detailed account of the Scriptural grounds on which The Salvation Army takes its stand in respect of baptism is provided in chapters four and six of the book under review. Chapter four examines the attitude of Jesus, Paul and John.

The author acknowledges that Jesus accepted the baptism of John in Jordan, but he points out that John recognised the inadequacy of his own work and pointed to the true baptism when he said: 'I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me ... shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire' (Matthew 3:11). Further, Jesus spoke of another baptism which referred to his death on the Cross (Luke 12:50). This is seen as the culmination of the vocation of Jesus which began with the baptism of John and which was consummated and made effective through his death. The upshot of this, so far as the author is concerned, is that 'at Calvary, Christ underwent a baptism of suffering that is abundantly effective, effective by man's faith and repentance, and not by a return to the symbol now that the reality is there.'¹⁶ In reviewing this conclusion everything depends upon the way in which the symbol is viewed, there are many who would regard the symbol not as a substitute for reality but as a means of emphasising present reality.

Another point that the author makes concerns the fact that Jesus submitted himself to the ceremonies and observances of Judaism: might baptism, he asks, be seen in a sectarian light? This is seen as having no more significance than the fact that he had been born a Jew and as a result he observed the conventions of his race. But this was in no way automatic so far as our Lord was concerned. As the writer goes on to point out Jesus

challenged those aspects of Jewish tradition which he saw as undermining the spirit of the Mosaic Law and insisted on the inwardness of real religion.

Another view could be that this points to the fact that Jesus was unlikely to observe the conventions of his nation without giving due thought to their value and significance, and the author makes a huge assumption in the following claim and question:

All of which leads us to the conclusion that it is most unlikely ... that Christ would desire to impose any particular or detailed rule or practice on His followers. The Mosaic system was but 'a shadow of good things to come'; would he then desire to institute new ceremonies that would in their turn be a shadow of good things that are past? ¹⁷

Paul's attitude to baptism is seen in the light of his experience at Corinth and with the Galatian Church, together with his teaching in Romans. It is claimed that as a result of the division which had arisen at Corinth (Corinthians 1: 10ff.) 'the Apostle found himself regretting those few baptisms he had performed and rejoicing that he had quickly laid aside the practice.'¹⁸ It is true that Paul focuses the attention of the Christians at Corinth on the centrality of Christ and claims: 'Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel' (1Corinthians 1:17), but it is also true that the apostle was addressing the issue of party rivalry and it must remain doubtful whether the principles he outlines for the Corinthians can be applied to the whole Church. It must also be doubtful whether the matter of baptism as he dealt with it there can be used as evidence that he disapproved of the rite altogether. The emphasis which the writer puts on 'Justification by faith' as opposed to sacramental observance is really a false dichotomy. There is no reason why the emphasis on faith should be affected by the observance of the sacraments.

Chapter six of the Army's book is solely concerned with the subject of baptism and it begins by emphasising the claim that there is one baptism - baptism by the Holy Spirit. Robert Barclay's *An Apology for the True Christian Divinity* is quoted in introducing this theme: 'As there is "one Lord" and "one faith" so there is "one baptism" This baptism is a pure and spiritual thing, to wit, the baptism of the Spirit'.¹⁹ This was the 'one baptism of the Bible' to which William Booth referred in his statement of 1883. Some reference has already been made to the text of Matthew 28:19; and the writer returns to it again, but without any reference to its doubtful authenticity he shows that William Booth felt that this isolated text provided no ground for seeking to make water baptism obligatory. Booth is also said to have been of the view that baptism 'in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost' was essentially baptism of the Spirit.

The witness of the Fourth Gospel (John 3) in which the reference to water appears in verse 5 is seen in the context of the spirit of the whole gospel to be a metaphor rather than an indication of actual water baptism. The author recognises that some authorities regard this verse as evidence that water baptism is called for; C.K. Barrett certainly sees this as a possible interpretation,²⁰ and R.H. Lightfoot claims that at this verse 'the instructed reader cannot fail to think of the rite of initiation into the Christian Church, a rite issuing in the endowment of its members with the Holy Spirit'.²¹ The writer of the Army's book will have none of this; on the basis of verse 6, 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit', he claims that there does not seem to be any intention of indicating that water baptism is the necessary means by which the Spirit is given. He insists that since water is used in a figurative sense elsewhere in John's Gospel (John 7:38;

4:13), and the particular emphasis of chapter 3 is on the inwardness of spiritual experience, 'born of water' must also be regarded as figurative. It is of course true that John's method is not always direct but this does not mean that in his account of the gospel he was incapable of combining literal and metaphorical meanings when that is what the reported situation required.

The evidence which the author finds in Paul concentrates mainly on the apostle's teaching. From Romans 6:3,4; and in a similar passage in Colossians 2:12; where Paul outlines the spiritual significance of baptism, it is claimed:

While water baptism may have provided Paul with the illustration who can doubt that in such phrases as 'baptized into Jesus Christ', 'buried with Him in baptism', the symbol had diminishing significance and the emphasis was increasingly on the spiritual facts.²²

Again this seems like a piece of doubtful exegesis; it is not a convincing argument to suggest that the spiritual significance of the baptismal rite excludes its use, or indicates its 'diminishing significance'.

Concluding the examination of baptism, reference is made to Ephesians 4:4-6; where we have the sequence: 'One body and one Spirit ... one Lord, one faith, one baptism', and again the author insists that the 'one baptism' is the baptism of the Holy Spirit in which the Salvationist most firmly believes. That the baptism of the Spirit is essential for every Christian is not called into question here but we must consider whether Paul (assuming that Paul is the author of the letter) would so understand the phrase 'one baptism', or whether he would also have the Christian rite of initiation in mind. It takes considerable ingenuity to eliminate any hint of the water rite from this passage of Scripture. As J.K. Parratt has pointed out, the whole passage could reflect a baptismal confession, and the use of 'baptism' in this passage is better connected with the

'one Lord' who is confessed during the ceremony of baptism, rather than to the references to the Spirit in verses 3 and 4.²³

The Lord's Supper

In considering this subject we refer again to chapter four of, *The Sacraments: the Salvationist's viewpoint*, where some aspects of the general New Testament emphasis are examined and chapter five where a more detailed treatment of the subject is attempted.

In the more general review in chapter four the writer deals with the witness of Paul and of the Fourth Gospel. Of Paul's teaching it is claimed that he called for an observance of the Passover feast in a new way, 'not by rigid adherence to ritual detail on certain occasions, but by the infusion of a new spirit throughout the whole of life'²⁴ The author's evidence for this is:

For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1Corinthians 5:7,8).

It is true that Paul is exhorting the Christians at Corinth to observe the highest standards of Christian conduct but the interpretation which is offered involves a certain wrenching of the text out of its context. The setting is the case of incest which the Corinthians had failed to deal with, and on which Paul instructed them to act. Paul's illustration is linked with the cleansing in preparation for the Passover, and he calls upon the Corinthians to clear out all traces of evil by dealing with the offender among them; they are to remember that they are the New Israel redeemed by Christ (their Paschal Lamb) and as such are called to be holy; they are to keep the festival (the Christian Passover) which is continuously observed in the new life of faith. Again the apostle

emphasises the essentials of communion and relates them to a particular situation without calling for the abandonment of the rite.

In turning to the Fourth Gospel the writer places his emphasis on the act of 'foot washing' at the Last Supper. 'As the account stands' he claims, 'the command to perpetuate this custom is more explicit than that relating to the bread and wine in Luke's Gospel.'²⁵ The argument then continues that since the washing of feet in this way was a local custom made necessary by conditions in Palestine, and the actual act is not generally perpetuated in the Church - the emphasis being placed on the spirit of humility and service which Jesus demonstrated - the use of the elements mentioned in the Synoptic accounts can be dispensed with in the same way .

Turning to chapter five of the Army's book we come to the most critical examination of Scripture which can be found anywhere in this publication. Under the influence of such renowned textual scholars as Westcott and Hort the Synoptic accounts of the Last Supper are examined. It is noted that Matthew and Mark do not include the words of institution in their accounts and that 'in several early manuscripts and six of the most ancient Latin versions of Luke's Gospel verses 19b and 20 are missing'. The result is that the words of institution on which so much emphasis is placed by many sacramentalists are not to be found in the most reliable manuscripts of the gospels. Westcott and Hort concluded that:

The evidence leaves no moral doubt that the words in question were absent from the original text of Luke, notwithstanding the purely Western ancestry of the documents which omit them.²⁶

On the basis of this omission the author claims that Salvationists cannot be condemned for holding the view which many scholars support, that Jesus

did not institute a ceremony of this kind as binding on his followers. He then tries to account for the fact that the words of institution eventually found their way into the later texts of Luke and he boldly claims that they have been taken from 1Corinthians 11:23-26. Some other authorities are equally bold. For example E.W. Barnes, a former Bishop of Birmingham writing in 1947 makes the same claim.²⁷ But the verdict of Westcott and Hort is not so universally accepted as this might suggest. Detailed textual arguments lie outside of the subject of this research but it should be noted that textual investigations did not end with Westcott and Hort. The United Bible Societies' *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, (1975 edition) shows how new evidence casts doubt on the conclusions of Westcott and Hort in that they gave undue weight to inferior manuscripts and that their methods were not consistent: they isolated only nine passages for their special treatment and ignored other places where words were absent from the Western text. As a result of this and on the basis that the longer text of Luke is supported by a greater volume of superior manuscript evidence than the shorter version, the editorial committee of the United Bible Societies decided, by a majority verdict, to accept the longer version.²⁸ Before the Salvationist author wrote his book on the sacraments there was also a body of scholarly opinion which did not accept Westcott and Hort's conclusions. Among these were J. Jeremias, H. Schurmann, G.W.H. Lampe, N.P. Williams and D. Stone. The fact that no opposing points of view were included in this, and other Salvationist publications, reveals their true nature. They provided no room for debate and were really in the nature of an *apologia* for the non-sacramental position.

In discussing Paul's treatment of the abuse of the Supper in 1Corinthians 11:17-33; the author sees in the words 'This do ye, as of as you drink it, in

remembrance of me', not a command to perpetuate a formal ceremony but an instruction to remember him whenever a cup is taken. This is in keeping with his view that the meal taken at Corinth was an ordinary fellowship meal and that it was from such meals that the special ceremony of the Eucharist evolved. In *Closer Communion*, Clifford Kew gives much more detailed attention to 1Corinthians 10 and 11 and one of the conclusions he draws is:

The present observance of the Lord's Supper may well owe more to the interpretation of Paul in this particular situation at Corinth than to any intention of Jesus that it should be observed for all time. ²⁹

However, there is another point of view and among those who approach the Corinthian correspondence from a sacramental standpoint and who find obvious references to the fact that the occasion that led to Paul's criticism was concerned with the misuse of the Eucharist was Darwell Stone. His *History of the Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist* highlights some aspects of Paul's letter which point not to a general fellowship meal, but to something much more significant. Following Paul's account of the institution of the Supper the apostle declares that whenever the Lord's Supper is celebrated it is a declaration and witness to the Lord's death. Paul also shows that to participate unworthily is to put oneself in jeopardy. On this section Stone comments:

Here ... the idea of the Eucharist as a means of fellowship in the body of Christ is found. It is this idea which gives force to the warning that whosoever eats or drinks unworthily is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, and that one who receives the Eucharist without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment to himself. ³⁰

It cannot be denied that Paul was referring to a spiritual malaise and was emphasising the spiritual significance of the Lord's Supper, but to claim, as

Kew does, that the logical conclusion of that is the abandonment of the sacraments, is to go beyond the evidence.

Various opinions remain about the actual procedure of celebration as observed at Corinth. Some think that the Agape preceded the Eucharist, and others that the Supper and the Agape were the same thing. Some, like A.J.B. Higgins, who is quoted by Kew, think that Paul moved the celebration away from its original intended purpose towards a separate ritual. Higgins writes: 'Paul orders that the common meal is to cease being a satisfaction for hunger He thus initiated a process which ended in the separation of the eucharistic celebration from the community meal'.³¹ By contrast, many more are quite sure that, 'in the first days of Christianity, the celebration of the Eucharist took place in the course of a meal (the *Agape* or "love-feast") and before or after a normal day's work (this was, of course, before the Lord's Day ... had become the new Sabbath, the day of rest, in Christendom)'.³²

A recent study by David Horrell³³ examining the Corinthian situation it throws important new light on the subject so far as Salvationist exposition is concerned. He has shown that the habit of the rich eating a larger proportion of the common meal was a cultural custom of the times and such conduct would not automatically be regarded as outrageous at Corinth. Horrell has also pointed out that in Paul's mind, 'eating and drinking unworthily', was not primarily concerned with matters of individual conscience but with a breakdown in the true nature of the Christian community. What the Corinthians did may not have been unusual in its social context but it was unacceptable among those who claimed to be 'in Christ'; where the Christian community should transcend all divisions of class and gender. Paul's offers no

support for those who would abandon the Lord's Supper but is concerned that it should emphasise the oneness of the community. This leads Horrell to consider the significance of the Corinthian evidence for today and whilst he does not reject the personal and individual emphasis on 'communion with the divine', and all that the broken body and shed blood of Christ means for the individual, he claims that Christians should be more mindful of the wider context of the supper as a means whereby the community emphasises fellowship and togetherness.

Other matters such as the influence of the Mystery Religions have been brought into this whole debate about the sacraments. Kew does not mention these but the unnamed author of *The Sacraments: The Salvationist's Viewpoint* does³⁴ and note needs to be taken of their bearing on the subject. One of the main planks of his argument is that Paul, in order to make Christianity more acceptable to Asian and Hellenic converts, had admitted certain mystery cultic patterns into the Church of which the sacraments were a part. In advancing his critique of this line of approach N.P. Williams has said:

Only if we assume that the most heroic of evangelists may pervert his message for the sake of cheap success, or that the most vigorous of thinkers may so befog himself by self-hypnosis as to lose grip on the realities of his own past life - shall we think it a probable explanation of the genesis of Catholic sacramentalism that "St Paul, though ready to fight to death against the Judaizing of Christianity, was willing to take the first step, and a long one, towards the paganising of it." ³⁵

On a more general note of the validity of scriptural evidence in respect of the sacraments Oliver C. Quick sums the matter up admirably:

It may, however, be well to state at once, as a general conclusion from the historical controversies of the last half-century, that we are no longer justified in resting the whole, or even the main, weight of the authority for

the doctrine and practice of any sacrament upon the bare fact that the Bible attributes a particular form of words to Jesus himself.

Nevertheless, in so saying, we need by no means sever the doctrine and practice of the sacraments from the most intimate connection with the historic life and work of Jesus Christ....

The Christian is still entitled to assert that some at least of the Christian sacraments did actually appear before Gentile influence within the Church had time to make itself seriously felt, and these seem to be derived unquestionably from hints, if not from actual directions, conveyed in the words and acts of Jesus.³⁶

In the closing paragraphs of the book Salvationists are then reminded of the challenge they must face as non-sacramentalists:

The heart-searching question to which Salvationists have always had to submit their lives is not: Ought I regularly to participate in the Lord's Supper as a religious ceremony? It has always been and is: Is there a real communion between myself and my Lord? Do I possess His Spirit and do His Will? Those who survive the scrutiny of the latter can dispense with the former question and can do so without feeling they are in any way disregarding any command of Christ.³⁷

The third book published by The Salvation Army and mentioned at the beginning of this chapter; William Metcalf's *The Salvationist and the Sacraments*, follows the main pattern of the books which have already been examined. The book is aimed at third world countries where Salvationist missionaries have established the Army's work and this may account for the fact that it is less confrontational in style than the other volumes. Whereas *The Sacraments: the Salvationist's Viewpoint* and *Closer Communion* claim that they do not denounce sacramental practice in other churches, they contain little that confirms that claim. By contrast Metcalf's book is conciliatory. He accepts the importance of ceremony and symbol in worship generally and shows that every group of Christians, including Salvationists, has its own customs and

symbols. Although the author upholds the Army's non-sacramental position he also recognises:

Most Christians in the world today use the sacraments. If we say it is wrong to use them, and this the Army has never said, we are saying that everyone is wrong except ourselves. If we say that God does not bless people through the sacraments, we are blind to the testimony of thousands of people. These people ... have their greatest experience of the Lord at his table. They feel that baptism has helped them to a real newness of life.³⁸

The indebtedness of The Salvation Army to many sacramentalist hymn writers, Bible translators, and scholars is also acknowledged by Metcalf.

As in other Salvationist books on the subject, Metcalf considers that biblical evidence must provide the starting point for any investigation of the Army's stance on the sacraments. He claims that 'the most important thing about the sacrament was that Jesus seemed to order it to be held'. He then goes on to say that the Bible has to be studied to see if this is so. He claims that 'there are only three texts that can help us to decide whether Jesus himself really wanted us to make baptism and communion necessary to the worship and life of the Church'.³⁹ These are Matthew 28:19; Luke 22:15-20 (as given in the Authorised Version), and 1 Corinthians 11:23-25. He gives no guidance to his readers regarding the critical difficulties which are involved in these passages. He does not even explain why his reference to the Authorised Version is important. It could be argued that Metcalf felt that most of his 'third world' readers would be unimpressed by the detailed textual and critical arguments involved in the examination of this evidence. He does remind his readers that people approach the Bible from different standpoints and reach different conclusions about the sacraments. He then leaves Salvationists with a

series of questions: What is the mind of the New Testament about these ceremonies? Were the writers not trying to free themselves from ritual? Do ceremonies seem to be a necessary part of the new life in Christ?⁴⁰ In seeking to give guidance in answering these questions he rehearses the familiar arguments used by other Salvationist writers: that there is only one baptism - the baptism of the Holy Spirit; that the scriptural support for communion is weak, and that the New Testament warns us to beware of tradition (Galatians 1:13,14). However, the author cannot shake off his respect for the witness of the Church and he writes:

Although the scriptural support for holy communion may be weak, there must be some good reason why the Church chose this particular command. Therefore, there must have been something special about the command to eat the bread, although the New Testament does not tell us what it is. Otherwise the Church would not have kept the command so faithfully.⁴¹

He then tries to return to his loyalty to the Salvationist position by means of a weak and contradictory statement that 'if the sacramental tradition is so old, this could be because the Church so quickly lost the true vision of the new life in Christ'.⁴² The final point in Metcalf's argument is that early Salvationists were intent on presenting the gospel in the simplest possible way; free from ancient ceremonies. This is a strange claim in view of his earlier admission:

Now, of course, few men can always be worshipping entirely in spirit and truth. Our minds have not enough strength, our hearts not enough goodness, to do this. Few among us can really be free from signs and ceremonies.⁴³

Add to this the fact that the Army has needed its own structure and symbols, and its system of 'Orders and Regulations' and one is hardly struck by a sense of simplicity in what the movement aims to do or in how it does it.

To sum up, the foregoing paragraphs show that even taken on their own ground, as an explanation of the Salvationist's viewpoint, these books are selective in their choice of evidence. Set against the context of the wider debate on the sacraments the book ignores far too many counter arguments which could be set against the non-sacramentalist position. Surely any satisfactory defence of the Army's position should make the effort to examine the other side of the debate and then set out reasons for adhering to its original decision. If such a debate is not possible, the non-sacramental stance becomes untenable.

NOTES

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4. ROWLEY, H.H., *The Unity of the Bible*, p.172
5. BRUNNER, EMIL, *The Misunderstanding of the Church*, (ET) pp.71, 72
6. *The Sacraments: The Salvationist's Viewpoint*, p.10
7. *The Sacraments: The Salvationist's Viewpoint*, p. vi
8. *Ibid* p.13
9. *Ibid* pp.13, 14
10. *Ibid* p.15
11. *Ibid* p.15, 16, quoted from William Temple, *Christus Veritas*,

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12. Ibid p.17
 13. Ibid p.20
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(see also) BARCLAY, W., *The Acts of the Apostles*,
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 16. Ibid p.33
 17. Ibid p.35
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 19. Ibid p.54
 20. BARRETT, C.K. *The Gospel According to St. John*, p.174
 21. LIGHTFOOT, R.H. *St John's Gospel: A Commentary*, p.116
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 25. Ibid pp.41, 42
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 27. BARNES, E.W. *The rise of Christianity*, p.287
 28. METZGER, BRUCE M. *A Textual Commentary on*

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29. KEW, C. *Closer Communion*, p.23
30. STONE, D. *The History of the Holy Eucharist*, (Vol 1) p.14
31. KEW, C. *Closer Communion*, p.23
32. EDWARDS, D.L. *Religion and Change*, p.288
33. HORRELL, D. 'The Lord's Supper at Corinth and in the Church today' *Theology* May/June (1995) pp. 196-202.
34. *The Sacraments: The Salvationist's Viewpoint*, pp. 28,29.
35. WILLIAMS, N.P. *Essays Catholic and Critical*, p.399.
36. QUICK, O.C. *The Christian Sacraments*, pp. 125, 126.
37. *The Sacraments: The Salvationist's Viewpoint*, p.52.
38. METCALF, W. *The Salvationist and the Sacraments*
pp. 18,19
39. *Ibid* p.12
40. *Ibid* p. 45
41. *Ibid* p.47
42. *Ibid* p.48
43. *Ibid* p.31

CHAPTER 4.

DEFENCES OF THE SALVATIONIST POSITION II. Community in Mission: A Salvationist Ecclesiology

We turn now to the most recent official expression of Salvationist attitudes; particularly pertinent because of its setting against an ecumenical context. As we will see, it will also provide a useful introduction to other forms of symbols used in Salvationist practice. The book concerned, written by Phil Needham, an American Salvation Army officer, is not solely devoted to the subject of the Army's attitude to the sacraments. However, since it is concerned with ecclesiology it includes substantial sections which deal with baptism and the Lord's supper as well as Salvationist attitudes to symbols. Published in 1987 the book carries a foreword by the then international leader of The Salvation Army, General Eva Burrows. She explains that Needham's book was written in response to an invitation to provide a personal reaction which would be a supplement to the Army's official response to the Lima Document, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*. She claims:

This book ... is not a theological statement emanating from the deliberations of an official group, but is something more vital - a positive statement from a dedicated Salvationist working from a biblical and experiential perspective.¹

This work was highly regarded in the top echelons of The Salvation Army and in her own assessment of the book Eva Burrows said:

Besides clearly setting out the Salvationist stance on baptism, Eucharist and ministry the writer challenges present-day Salvationists to recognise, apply and practice the Army's approach in everyday living and service I believe he has produced a volume which will become a standard work giving a sound and convincing view of The Salvation Army's role and purpose in the Christian Church today.²

Needham claims that his book is written to enable Salvationists and the whole Church to understand the characteristics and aims of the Army in the context of the calling of the whole Church in the world. He intends to encourage theological reflection on the Salvationist movement itself, because he believes that Salvationist history has something to say to the whole Church. He also makes an important distinction between a Salvationist ecclesiology and an ecclesiology of The Salvation Army when he insists:

The Salvation Army is only one concrete expression of the Church in human history; it is also a human institution which is subject to many of the forces and influences to which all institutions are subject. To write an ecclesiology of this one ecclesiastical expression would be idolatrous, a substitution of the part for the whole. Any attempt at a true ecclesiology assumes that a theology of the Church universal is intended.³

The concept of The Salvation Army as an integral part of the universal Church is fundamental to all that Needham has to say about the Army itself. He recognises that William Booth did not set out to found a church. The initial intention was to make converts and then pass them on to local churches. When this plan failed and the Booths felt compelled to provide a spiritual home for their converts they had, claims Needham, established a church which was regarded as very unchurchy.

Booth did not like the term 'church' applied to The Salvation Army, and there were occasions when he said 'we are not a church'. He preferred to think in terms of an evangelical mission. Even when it became obvious that something more permanent had developed he preferred to speak of a movement rather than a denomination. Needham claims that in spite of those misgivings The Salvation Army is truly a church.

The true body of Christ is united in the essentials and mutually tolerant on other matters. The Salvation Army claims total allegiance to that which

the Scriptures clearly show to be essential to the Christian faith and practice.⁴

Our interest in *Community in Mission* is with three chapters which the author has entitled, 'Chartered by Christ - the new humanity', 'Created by the Holy Spirit - the redemptive fellowship', 'Commissioned for battle - the army of salvation'. The purpose is to evaluate the extent to which Needham achieves his own aims. We will also seek to assess the claims of General Eva Burrows, that the book 'clearly sets out the Salvationist stance on baptism [and] Eucharist' and gives 'a sound and convincing view of The Salvation Army's role and purpose in the Christian Church today'.

Chartered by Christ

Phil Needham gives an early indication that the arguments of his book will follow the official Salvation Army line in the matter of sacramental worship when he describes how the new humanity in Christ begins. He does not use the words 'conversion' or 'being saved' which would have been the favoured language of the early Salvationists. Instead, he speaks of the response of faith to the gospel of the Kingdom which, in turn, gives rise to the Church. He writes:

It [the Church] is the community of those who are bound together by a common faith in Jesus. We call this community 'the new humanity' because it is based upon that which contradicts and supersedes the old, fallen humanity, it is, in fact, a new order based upon the gospel.⁵

The next point that is made is that the Church is 'chartered by Christ' because the Church is called to live in obedience to him. Needham claims that the Church's life and action under the lordship of Jesus has to be marked by obedience. 'The Church has a bias towards obedience rather than observance

because of this lordship. It is called not to perpetuate ritual but to step out in trusting obedience to its Lord's commands'.⁶

There is little to quarrel with in the general tenor of these statements except the lack of any acknowledgement that the perpetuation of ritual and 'obedience to the Lord's commands' can exist together. Although there are occasions in the book when Needham seeks to be more balanced in his approach, this contrast between the sacramental and non-sacramental positions is implicit throughout his work. In this he echoes much of the argument which was advanced by Railton and William and Catherine Booth in 1883.

When Needham argues for the validity of the non-sacramental position, he does so by appeal to Scripture, but his approach is in marked contrast to much of that used by earlier Salvationist writers. His method is not based on biblical criticism but he accepts the general approach of earlier writers and commends *The Sacraments: the Salvationist viewpoint*, *The Salvationist and the Sacraments* and *Closer Communion*, as 'able defences of The Salvation Army's non-sacramental position [which] have demonstrated the lack of a scholarly basis for asserting that Jesus instituted the supper as a sacrament'.⁷

Needham finds his scriptural basis in Romans 1:16 - '...it is the power of God for salvation to *everyone* who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek' - and argues that this universality can only be protected if considerable diversity in expressions of faith is allowed. He insists that the acceptance of the gospel does not depend upon simultaneous acceptance of a particular culture or ecclesiastical tradition which would nullify the universality of the gospel. He claims:

It is a disservice to the gospel to insist that grace must be received through the meditation of a particular ritual or procedure, and there is no evidence in the New Testament from which a case can be argued for such a view.⁸

Needham rejects any concept that God's grace could only be received through the sacraments and any idea that transmission could be 'magical' but he recognises that 'man has a need to nurture and celebrate profound spiritual realities through symbolic acts'. However, he avoids the obvious question: why then abandon the use of the traditional sacraments? by saying:

What the immediacy of grace does imply is that no ritual can be seen as somehow necessary in order for someone to receive grace and that *any ritual which faithfully conveys the gospel and adequately allows for a response is appropriate.*⁹ (My italics)

When he speaks of a ritual which 'conveys the gospel' he presumably means, not automatically and not by that ceremony alone. What Needham's statement does is prepare the way for what he wants to say about rites in The Salvation Army. Throughout the following pages of his book Needham seems to be worried by the problems which we have already noted, namely, the idea that the sacraments are regarded as the only means of grace, and that such grace is automatically conveyed whether the sacrament is received in faith or not. He also seems to assume that those who use the sacraments generally hold these views.

Oliver C. Quick deals with both these points in his book *The Christian Sacraments* when he exposes the dangers that emerge when the sacraments become particularised. He insists that the sacraments should be understood as more than a 'means whereby God brings certain men into certain relations with

himself', they should also be understood as representing 'universal relations of all men toward God'. It is, claims Quick, failure to take this wider view which leads to the idea that a particular sacrament is the *only* means whereby relationship with God can be established. The next step is to assume that the performance of the rite automatically guarantees grace to the participant irrespective of faith or attitude. Quick then continues:

Catholic orthodoxy has on the whole repudiated it [the particularist and magical view]. It has always insisted on the necessity of spiritual preparation on the part of those who receive the sacraments, if they are to receive really the spiritual grace or virtue and not the outward sign alone. And moreover the great scholastic authorities have been generally followed by orthodox theologians in maintaining the principle that God is not bound by the outward signs of his sacraments.¹⁰

This rejection of a magical assimilation of grace by receiving the sacraments is certainly as old as *The Book of Common Prayer*. Thomas Cranmer had himself rejected any idea of particularist and magical views by the time of the House of Lord's debate of 1548, when he observed:

I believe that Christ is eaten with [the] heart. The eating with our mouth cannot give life Only good men can eat Christ's body. When the evil eateth the Sacrament ... he neither hath Christ's body nor eateth it¹¹

It is clear then that mainstream theology regarding the sacraments, at least from Reformation times and probably before that, has rejected notions of particularity and the magical endowment of grace. It would, however, be foolish to claim that everyone who received the sacraments and every priest or minister that administered them did so in strict theological orthodoxy. As has

already been pointed out in this research, no rites, including those used in The Salvation Army, can be guaranteed freedom from human error or abuse.

Any departures from orthodoxy do not invalidate the sacraments themselves nor weaken their theology. It is of course right to take note of human failures and to warn against them, but Needham is concerned with providing a rationale for the Army's position. In arguing for freedom in diversity and from the basis of the rejection of particularist and magical views he simply re-lays foundations which are already in place in the historic attitudes of the Church and then uses them to claim that the traditional rites are not essential.

He acknowledges that water baptism is used by most Christian fellowships as the sacrament of entrance into the community of Christ's people and as a sign of personal commitment to Jesus Christ. He also recognises that it was used by the New Testament Church. As for the value of baptism he agrees that the sign

can be a very effective witness to the world of the transformation wrought by faith if, in fact, the evidence supports the claim. It reinforces the convert in his new commitment, and it reminds the gathered fellowship of the commitments they have made. Rich in the symbolism of death and resurrection, a washing away, cleansing, rebirth and renewal, it is a fitting representation and confirmation of the conversion that has taken place.¹²

With this acceptance of the history and spiritual significance of baptism, and in spite of what the author sees as The Salvation Army's reservations about the rite as an indispensable part of true Spirit baptism, the only sure grounds on which he can argue the case for the Army's ceremonies is that by virtue of its quasi military structure, The Salvation Army is culturally different from other

churches. He continues: 'It [baptism] is not the only public witness to ... spiritual reality. The Salvationist fellowship has its own rites of public witness to conversion'.¹³ He then goes on to describe the significance of the Army's rites - the use of the mercy seat, and the swearing-in of soldiers.

It is interesting that when he speaks of the significance of penitents kneeling at the mercy seat he uses very similar ideas to the ones he has already outlined in his reference to baptism. The action signifies penitence, a desire for conversion, and personal resolve, and points to true discipleship through spiritual death and resurrection. It also strengthens the seeker and encourages the prayerful support of the congregation. As with baptism, Needham insists that the act of kneeling at the mercy seat does not guarantee conversion, and he writes:

In actuality the mercy seat itself is symbolic of *any place* where a seeker after God comes in prayer. The true mercy seat is of the heart, and the outward kneeling at a prayer bench, or any other place is nothing if not the outward sign of the keeling soul.¹⁴

The author also points out that kneeling at the mercy seat is not an essential precondition of soldiership in the Army.

Needham then turns his attention to the ceremony of enrolment, or more accurately, the swearing-in of soldiers. For the purposes of comparison this Salvation Army rite is best equated with the Anglican service of confirmation. The new convert undertakes a period of preparation in Christian doctrines as outlined in the Army's statement of faith, and in the principles of discipleship. Particular attention is paid to Salvation Army methods and principles. When this is completed the public swearing-in ceremony takes place. As Needham

points out, the emphasis is on discipleship and the ceremony celebrates the convert's acceptance of this calling. The terminology used is, in keeping with the name of the movement, militaristic in tone. It is a call to enlistment in a life of spiritual warfare and the discipline that such a life requires. The justification for this terminology is found in such Scripture as Ephesians 6:11-17; 1 Timothy 6:12 and 2 Timothy 2:3,4. It is interesting that such metaphors can be used as authority for militarism whilst the many actual references to water baptism in the New Testament can be written off or disregarded by Salvationists. In keeping with his general attitude, Needham insists that 'the ceremony of itself has no efficaciousness apart from the integrity and seriousness of the convert who is taking the step'.¹⁵

In summing up this section of the writer's argument it has to be noted that unlike some early Salvationists he is not opposed to the use of rites and symbols in themselves. Whilst, in a footnote he is critical of some of those early attitudes:

Some early Salvationists were so intent upon disparaging the efficacy of sacraments alone that they argued themselves almost to the brink of a Gnostic anti-materialism. Both Catherine Booth and George Scott Railton wanted the elimination of rituals as dangerous temptations to reliance upon the physical and avoidance of authentic divine experience.¹⁶

However, Needham has not thrown off the Army influences completely and this presents him with something of a dilemma. He is keen to uphold the Salvationist position and at the same time to recognise value in the traditional sacraments.

In comparing the author's description of baptism with Salvation Army ceremonies a number of similarities were noted. This raises the question as to how there can be justification for introducing a new set of ceremonies which are hardly comprehensible to people outside The Salvation Army, and then excluding traditional ceremonies which are basically well understood, at least among Christians. The idea that the Army is culturally different from other churches hardly justifies the rejection of the sacraments. It is true that public decisions for Christ are in keeping with the evangelical and revivalist traditions evident in Methodism and in meetings conducted by Moody and others. It was certainly appropriate for the kind of meetings which were conducted in the early Army. The continuation of the tradition need not preclude baptism. Indeed, the method of public decision is used by late twentieth century evangelists such as Billy Graham, but converts are incorporated into local churches and baptism then takes place. Similarly, the Army's title and emphasis on soldiership may make the continuing use of the swearing-in ceremony appropriate; however, some Salvationists are now asking if there is any reason why soldiers may not be baptised.

Created by the Holy Spirit

In the early section of this chapter the author deals with the Holy Spirit's relationship to the Church. He sees the Kingdom expressed through the Church by virtue of the Spirit's creative activity, and there are four particular ways in which this creativity works. First, 'the Spirit creates a visible expression of the peace that has been made by Christ'. This is achieved by the creation of unity out of hostility and disorder. Second, 'the Spirit creates a community of shared life'. Here the emphasis is on a fellowship in which

struggles and hopes are shared. Needham claims that 'there is a togetherness in this fellowship that goes far deeper than mere camaraderie. The ... Spirit empowers the ... members of the community of faith to *be with* one another in every circumstance'. Third, 'the Spirit created a high level of participation in the fellowship'. This section emphasises the priesthood of all believers and Needham sees the growth of clericalism within the Church as a barrier to true participation. In spite of attempts to reform the Church it is still far removed from the ideal in which every part contributes to the whole. Fourth, 'the Spirit creates a community which seeks to simplify life'. This enables Christians to give attention to the essentials of the spiritual life and to live free from extreme materialist distractions.

This is the kind of sacramental life which is empowered by the Holy Spirit and which is the hallmark of the Salvationist's understanding of the 'sacramental' without recourse to formal sacraments. In describing what the Holy Spirit is doing in the Church he observes:

The Church is God's purposeful setting for freeing Christians to live redemptively Redemption is the repossession of that which is of value. Those who have been reconciled can cease fighting battles that have no real victories and can get on with repossessing those experiences and concerns and relationships which hold promise.¹⁷

The author does not immediately identify 'the battles that have no real victories' but it soon becomes evident that he has debates about the nature and theology of the sacraments in mind. The first evidence he lists is of the Holy Spirit empowering the Church through the repossession of the *sacramental life*. Most Christians would agree with Needham's contention that

the sacramental life is based on the continuity of God's incarnational presence in all human biography and history. It aims at living in a way that imbibes the Real Presence and gives witness to it Those who 'walk by the Spirit' look for the sacredness of every moment, the presence of God in every encounter, the divine possibility in every human soul, the sacrament in every experience.¹⁸

There is, however, a certain presumption in Needham's next suggestion, that by de-ritualising the language of the Lord's Supper and calling upon Salvationists to remember the broken body and shed blood of Christ continually, William Booth somehow helped to rescue the sacramental life from some form of obscurity. Then further, the claim that the Army's emphasis on personal holiness, following Wesley, made the sacramental nature of life more real for Salvationists, smacks of spiritual pride.

Holiness and the sacraments

The emphasis that Needham places on holiness teaching within the Army is important. The development was seen as necessary when the Army became a church. That is when it had to provide for the spiritual nurture of the converts and for other people who joined the movement. The influence of this holiness teaching cannot be denied but whether it has provided a satisfactory permanent substitute for the Lord's Supper is another question which has now to be addressed.

John Kent claims that 'it was as a holiness movement based on this American teaching [holiness revivalism led by Robert Pearsall Smith] that the Army made its first, all-important impact, and owed its spread, to a greater extent than has been recognised, to the prior existence of many local holiness groups'.¹⁹ Kent does not provide detailed evidence for these claims and his opinion has been challenged by leading Salvationists, not least, the late General

Coutts. However, it cannot be denied that holiness teaching has had a great impact on the movement.

More recently (1992) R. David Rightmire has written *Sacraments and The Salvation Army - Pneumatological Foundation*, in which an important part of his argument is that in recent years the Army has re-interpreted its holiness teaching. Sanctification as a crisis experience has been largely replaced with the concept of lifelong growth in Christ commencing at conversion. In practical terms this retreat affects the Army's understanding of its theology of the sacramental value of the whole of life and, according to Rightmire, requires a re-evaluation of its attitude to the traditional sacraments.

Rightmire's claims will be examined in a later chapter but in the meantime David Guy's suggestions that it is not lack of holiness teaching but the lack of the sacraments which have led to the neglect of the sacramental nature of the whole of life, are worthy of note

If it is true that subsequent generations of Salvationists are failing to uphold the concept of sacramental value in the whole of life, could this be in part because the instituted sacraments have been neglected and the whole concept of sacramental living thereby rendered alien? Should the communion service have been seen as an ally, rather than a rival, necessary to retain the ideal that would turn every meal into a sacrament?

20

The Salvationist concern with personal obedience and response to the divine initiative which issues in holiness reflects the conviction of Quick who comments that one's 'growth or purification is brought about by a process of divine action and human response, which response is also, in the last analysis, made possible by divine action'. But unlike the official Salvationist position

which would want to stop there, he shows that the sacraments have an essential part to play in the spiritual progress of the individual and he insists:

the sacraments from first to last not only represent the ideal truths which the process actualises, but also the process itself the saving and gracious activity of God, which in truth permeates all life, is naturally found at its fullest and clearest in the sacraments, just in so far as these are always transcending themselves and spreading their illumination and influence over the life which is beyond them.²¹

The foregoing paragraphs turn Needham's argument on its head in that the *emphasis on Christian holiness is in no way seen as a substitute for the sacraments*. As we have seen from Quick the separation between sacraments and maturing spiritual experience is false.

Far from obscuring spiritual truth, as the Salvationist position claims, the sacraments can become a powerful force in evangelism. David Watson said: 'It is quite often at this service that I have seen unbelievers brought to faith in Christ; others are convicted of sin and drawn back to the Saviour; others are healed'.²² Bramwell Booth made much the same point when he described occasions on which the Lord's Supper was celebrated in the Army prior to 1883. 'There was', he said, 'wonderful freedom'.

The faith of many was strengthened, former promises and vows were recalled and renewed, and not seldom the unsaved or irreligious who had been allowed to come into the buildings as spectators were there and then brought to Christ.²³

Needham is so caught up in supporting the Army's traditional position that he gives no room for a consideration of the possibility that the neglect of the sacraments might lead to spiritual impoverishment rather than greater spiritual well-being. He has the familiar Salvationist approach to the Lord's

Supper: 'Salvationists are not anti-sacramental; they are simply non-sacramental'. This is a strange claim in view of the fact that the author continues to write quite expansively showing how the Army is, or ought to be, sacramental in a different kind of way.

First he gives a summary of the reasons why The Salvation Army ceased to use the traditional sacraments in 1883. These reasons have already been examined and need not be re-stated here.

'Love Feast' in place of Eucharist: An alternative sacramentalism?

Needham has particular points of emphasis which he makes concerning the Lord's Supper. Linking it to what he has already said about holiness teaching, he claims that the sacramental rites are to be seen in a very different light. By that, he means that they are not rites by which God's grace must be experienced. They are, 'celebrations of a far greater grace - the grace which is given to the whole of life and which make living a continuing sacrament'. As a result the writer ends up with a very low view of the sacraments and his arguments fall into the error which Quick described: 'They [the sacraments] become no more than pictorial or dramatic presentations of realities'. In fact, Needham makes that claim for the Salvationist position: 'As a ritual observed in Christian worship, the Lord's supper *is only a representation and reminder of the new sacramental life and the new community of fellowship in the Spirit which are made possible through Jesus' death and resurrection*'.²⁴ (My italics)

He is quite happy that the traditional sacraments are no longer a part of

Salvationist worship. For him it is not so much that the Army discontinued the supper but that it was transposed. It was 'transported from the high altar to the lowly meal table. It was taken out of the sanctuary and placed back in society. Could we be so bold as to say that the meal was brought closer to its origins in the early Church?'²⁵

The question is really a rhetorical one which paves the way for the next point that this author wants to make about the supper. This is that the earliest sacramental meals were common meals in which the everyday became a remembrance of Christ's sacrifice. These were *agape* meals or 'love feasts', and Needham claims that there is no New Testament warrant for the separation of the rite from the fellowship meal. His authority for this view and for the claim that Jesus did not intend to institute the supper is drawn from Emil Brunner (*The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith and Consummation, Dogmatics Vol III, 1962, pp 60ff*) and some pungent quotations from Vernard Eller's (*In place of Sacraments: A study of Baptism and the Lord's supper, 1972, pp.12,39*). What he fails to address is how, in view of these opinions, the sacraments came to assume the importance they gained at an early stage in the Church's history. Another omission is the failure to consider any alternative view of 1 Corinthians 11:17ff. As has already been shown, there are those who consider that the abuses which Paul complains about at Corinth were the misuse of the common meal but that the meal was also an occasion when the Eucharist was celebrated. Consideration could also have been given to a number of scholars who recognise that the case for the institution of the rite by virtue of any command of Jesus himself, is weak, but who also insist that the sacrament reflects the whole sacramental life of Jesus in all that he taught and did. The case for the fact that the early Church reflected the mind of Jesus

through its observances is cogently argued by C.H. Dodd, who, in commenting on the validity of 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 writes:

By this time none of the gospels was written. They drew on living memory. Sunday by Sunday, without intermission, from a time when events were quite recent, the Christian congregation in many different places deliberately renewed the memory of facts which they could not allow to fall into oblivion. This moment of remembrance became the centre of Christian worship, and the centre about which the whole life and work of the community was shaped.²⁶

Hans Kung is perhaps even more radical in his view when he asks: 'Is it possible that Jesus himself did not celebrate such a meal [the Last Supper], but the post-paschal community did celebrate one "in memory of him," in the mind and the spirit and thus according to the mandate of Jesus?'²⁷ Kung's argument is quite extensive and involved but the foregoing quotation indicates the general tenor of his thinking on the subject.

Such arguments require that the sacrament should be observed. But the reasons for Needham's omission of such evidence soon becomes obvious; he has a strong attachment to the idea of the love feast. He sees it as having ecumenical value and he claims:

Sacramental and non sacramental churches alike can also observe the love feast as a less ritualised version of the early Christian common meal and approach it as an invitation to affirm the reconciliation of life in Christ by opening themselves to one another and accepting the responsibility of nurturing unity in Christ and service to one another.²⁸

As the author points out, when the Army discontinued the sacraments the love feast remained and the provision for its observance has continued.

Needham's description of the sequence of events gives the general picture of the way in which a love feast was celebrated in the Army:

The intimate atmosphere of a fellowship meal is created by a simple drink and bread or a plain biscuit. There are no *prescribed* elements The food and drink are served from a common table by the corps officer(s) (pastor), sometimes assisted by local officers (lay leaders), the words of Scripture are read, and a statement is made to the effect that this is not a sacrament but a fellowship meal, a celebration of oneness in Christ made possible by his death and resurrection. Reference is usually made to the last supper event as the prototype of the new fellowship and as a reminder that just as our Lord presided over that table in the flesh he now presides over this table in the Spirit. It is in this context that participants are invited to consider their own relationships. As thanksgiving is offered to God for the gift of reconciliation, opportunity is given for all to examine their interactions with other persons and ask whether they reflect the peace that has come in Christ. Then the leader challenges them to work on those relationships where enmity or apathy has had its grip, where healing is needed, and where forgiveness should be sought or extended.²⁹

Reading this paragraph one might suppose that the love feast is celebrated regularly in the Army, but the author notes that by 1923 it was being bemoaned that 'love feasts have dropped out of general use among us'³⁰ It is not surprising therefore, that in connection with this research it was possible to obtain only two examples of an actual order of service recently used for a love feast. One, from Canada, which was used fairly frequently, follows very closely the outline given by Needham. The second one which was used in connection with a series of united meetings in Manchester was much more formal. It contained exhortation to receive the bread and drink in a spirit of true repentance and faith; to live in obedience and love towards God, and a spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation toward other people. It included a prayer of confession and a reminder of the significance of the bread and the drink by reference to the Last Supper. But there was no consecration of the elements and no words of institution were used.

Further, enquiries initiated in connection with this research and affecting some thirty Salvation Army corps in the United Kingdom revealed that only three centres had celebrated a love feast in the past twelve months and all three were associated with Maundy Thursday. In the remainder there had been no celebration in the last two years. Some people questioned, who had been lifelong Salvationists, could not remember taking part in such an event in their lifetime.

Having outlined the general pattern of the love feast, Needham claims that Salvationist theology moves the love feast beyond its ceremonial setting into the home where every meal becomes a celebration of Christ's reconciling work in the home. From there reconciliation is then taken out into the world. Bramwell Booth is quoted in this regard when he spoke of faith being the main vehicle of grace in the sacrament. He said 'I see no reason why that same faith should not turn every meal into a sacramental feast'.³¹

There is plenty of support amongst Christians for taking the sacramental experience out into the world, and the ideal of making every meal a sacrament also has its attractions. However, one has to be aware that the ideal is not always realised. More often than not this failure is through human frailty and forgetfulness; but it cannot be claimed that such an ideal is in any way substantially advanced by Salvationist support for the love feast.

Regarding the effectiveness of the love feast Needham claims:

This writer has never participated in a love feast in which he has not perceived the Kingdom in a new way that brought exhilaration,

experienced the oneness of the fellowship as an indisputable reality, sensed that healing was taking place at the time, and departed with greater resolve and empowerment to be an agent of reconciliation.³²

The author does not say whether he has ever received communion and if so what his feelings were on such occasions. For most Salvationists any experience of the love feast will be unknown to them. Instead, in the ecumenical developments of the past thirty years many of them will have a number of experiences of communion received with fellow Christians.

Part of the dilemma for Salvationists who have strong views about the absence of sacraments in their worship is that they have no symbolic link between worship and the sacramental life in the world. Needham has argued strongly for a sequence of events which passes from the love feast within the Christian community, to the family table, and then out into the world. But the first part of the chain, the love feast, has disappeared in the majority of places within the Army, and any failure on the part of Salvationists to keep alive the consciousness of the sacramental at the family table means that the ideal of 'every meal a sacrament' also disappears. Therefore, without the first link in the sequence there is no visible reminder in worship of the extended responsibilities of the sacramental life.

In this respect, sacramentalists are better equipped in their preparation for taking the sacramental life into the larger world. The first link in the chain is always in place and the regular reminder which it provides of larger responsibilities is an invaluable part of the provision for Christian discipleship.

Needham wants to see the love feast reinstated in Salvation Army worship. He says: 'It is to be hoped that the Army of the future will claim this

worthy celebration of its early years as an observance which has the potential of nurturing love and mutual support within the body'.³³ It is uncertain just how many Salvationists would share that hope. Conversations in connection with this research have shown that few had any idea what a love feast really was, whilst others regarded it as an inferior form of communion and would not take part in such a ceremony if it were available.

On this matter of love feasts the last word must be about Needham's appeal to William and Bramwell Booth on the common meal as an extension of the *agape*. In fact, both these early leaders were referring to the Lord's Supper when they spoke of enjoying communion at every meal. It is strange that Needham has neglected this link and then applied it to the love feast. Like all Salvationist writing on the subject he has failed to see how illogical the argument is. If the material elements taken at the meal table can be powerful reminders of the sacrifice of Jesus and the demands of sacramental living, why prohibit the use of the elements of bread and wine in a service of worship as a thanksgiving and celebration of the Lord's life and death. Surely the elements have to be significant symbols on all occasions or on none.

Service as a sacrament

Another important factor in the sacramental life is, according to Needham, servanthood. The most potent incident in the Life of Jesus which calls for this quality is seen as the foot washing as described in John 13:3-5, 12-17. Again, the Scriptural background to this has already been discussed, but what Needham does that no other Salvationist writer on the sacraments has done is see the event as a significant parable of the Kingdom. He thinks that an occasional symbolic foot washing might be appropriate as a reminder of

Christ's servanthood and our responsibility to serve others. As further Scriptural support for servanthood he quotes Mark 10:45, 'For the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many', and the servant passage in Philippians 2:5ff.

It is surprising that there is little other development of this theme since in other parts of the book the Army's emphasis on practical service to others is discussed. He is content to say, 'that life for others ought to be implicit in both the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and the celebration of the love feast'.³⁴

Finally, our discussion of Needham's work ends with a brief assessment of the extent to which the author has achieved his own aims and those outlined by General Burrows. To what extent has Needham explained The Salvation Army to non-Salvationists? How does his work on the sacraments help the whole Church to understand the Army's place as part of the whole? These are difficult questions for another Salvationist to answer. There is a sense in which he has presented a picture of the ideal Army as he sees it. Some of the things he describes exist in theory but so often fail to operate in practice - the love feast would be one example and the idea that Salvationists always carry sacramental consciousness into the whole of life would be another. Perhaps the real assessment should go to a non-Salvationist. Edward H. Patey in his review of this book for Expository Times commended the Army's zeal and sense of mission, but he also remarked:

Major Needham seems to take little account of the deep spiritual experiences which all sorts of Christians have derived from the regular practice of the Eucharist. And has not the Salvation Army developed its own set of particular traditions, making it as much at peril as any other church of becoming imprisoned in its own history.³⁵

As for General Burrows' claim that the book 'clearly sets out the Salvationist stance on baptism [and] Eucharist' and gives 'a sound and convincing view of The Salvation Army's role and purpose in the Christian Church today', the foregoing chapter has indicated a number of places where the claim is not fully justified.

NOTES

1. NEEDHAM, P. *Community in Mission- A Salvationist Ecclesiology*, International Headquarters of The Salvation Army, London (1987) p. iv.
2. Ibid p.5.
3. Ibid p.3.
4. Ibid p.2.
5. Ibid p.7.
6. Ibid p.7.
7. Ibid p.122, note 19.
8. Ibid p.8.
9. Ibid p.8.
10. QUICK, O.C. *The Christian Sacraments* Collins Fontana, London (1964), For this extract and the supporting argument see pp117,118.
11. CRANMER, T. MS Royal, folio 159 - quoted by Brooks P.N., *Thomas Cranmer's Doctrine of the Eucharist*, Macmillan, London, (1992).
12. NEEDHAM, P. *Community in Mission*, p.10.
13. Ibid p.10.

14. Ibid p.11.
15. Ibid p.11.
16. Ibid p.121, note 11.
17. Ibid pp.17,18.
18. Ibid pp.18,19.
19. DANIELOU, J., COURTAIN, A.H., KENT, J. *The Pelican Guide to Historical Theology* London (1971), p.357.
20. The Officer, (A private circulation magazine)
July 1992, p.336.
21. QUICK, O.C. *The Christian Sacraments* p.123.
22. WATSON, D. *I Believe in the Church* London (1982)
p.24.
23. BOOTH, BRAMWELL *Echoes and Memories*, p.192
24. NEEDHAM, P. *Community in Mission*, p.27.
25. Ibid p.27.
26. DODD, C.H. *About the Gospels*, Cambridge (1958) pp.18,19
see also QUICK, O.C. *The Christian Sacraments*, London
(1964) pp.125,126
27. KUNG, H. *On being a Christian*, London (1974) p. 322
28. NEEDHAM, P. *Community in Mission*, p.29.
29. Ibid pp.29,30.
30. Ibid p.29 (Quoted by Needham from The Officer).
31. Ibid p.30 and p.124, note 32.
32. Ibid p.124 note 31.
33. Ibid p.124 note 31.
34. Ibid p.32.
35. PATEY, E.H. Book Review Expository Times (1989)

p.393.

CHAPTER 5

THE INEVITABILITY OF SYMBOLISM

The hint in Needham's work of alternative rites and symbolism clearly present in The Salvation Army now needs to be explored further.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Developments within the Christian Mission during the first twenty three years of its history were dominated by the desire to attract the attention of people so that the task of evangelism could be more successfully achieved. This resulted in a certain *ad hoc* development which threw up ideas that were later adapted and became part of the structure, whilst other methods were seen to be of limited usefulness and were abandoned. Many of the changes which took place during this early period seem to have had more to do with chance than with strategy.

The change of name from Christian Mission to The Salvation Army provides a particular example of this. According to Robert Sandall's first volume of *The History of The Salvation Army*,¹ the sequence of events was as follows: George Scott Railton had prepared a new report for the mission which read, 'The Christian Mission is a volunteer army of converted working people.' On reading the draft of this report William Booth objected to the term 'volunteer army' and said 'No, we are not volunteers, for we feel we *must* do what we do and we are always on duty.' He then crossed out the word 'volunteer' and wrote above it 'salvation'. Part of Booth's objection was the derision with which the military 'Volunteers' - a part-time citizen army which had been raised by George III and reorganised in 1863 - were regarded. Booth

had no intention of being a sub-standard soldier of Christ. The small alteration that Booth made radically changed the ethos of the movement. The next Conference of the Christian Mission was described in the *Christian Mission Magazine* as 'Our War Congress' and the title 'Salvation Army' was emblazoned on a sign displayed in the meeting hall. Initially, the term 'Salvation Army' does not appear to have been a substitute for 'The Christian Mission' but an explanation of its purpose. However, the letter-head used by December 1879 had reversed the order of importance and read: 'The Salvation Army' followed by 'called The Christian Mission'. The formal and legal change of name and control of The Christian Mission required a change in the deed-poll of 1875; this was effected by 24 June 1880. William Booth who had been General Superintendent of the mission (a title which was probably adapted from the Methodist 'Superintendent Minister') now became known as General.

Speaking of these changes at St James's Hall, London in 1881, Booth summed up the process towards this change in these words:

We tried for eleven years, various methods. We tried many plans.... Gradually the Movement took more of a military form, and finding, as we looked upon it, some four years ago, that God in His good providence had led us unwittingly, so to speak, to make an army, we called it an army, and seeing that it was an army organised for the deliverance of mankind from sin and the power of the devil, we called it an army of deliverance; an army of salvation - The Salvation Army.²

Some of the changes mentioned above had their precursors in the initiatives of Elijah Cadman, a converted chimney sweep, appointed to open the work of the Christian Mission in Whitby. Posters announcing his arrival read:



WAR! WAR! IN WHITBY

2,000

MEN AND WOMEN

Wanted at once to join the Hallelujah Army,
That is making an attack on the Devil's Kingdom
every Sunday in

ST HILDA'S HALL AT 11 a.m., AND 6.30 p.m.

And every night in the Old Town Hall at 7.30

To be led by CAPTAIN CADMAN from London

Evangelist of The Christian Mission

A similar poster was prepared to announce the visit of William Booth which took place one month later, Cadman hid the spare copies in his house because he felt it might not meet with Booth's approval. However, Booth found one and ordered Cadman to send a copy to Railton at the London headquarters. The bill read:

MR BOOTH THE GENERAL

of the

HALLELUJAH ARMY

is coming to

WHITBY

TO REVIEW THE TROOPS

GREAT BATTLES

WILL BE FOUGHT

Speaking at the 1878 War Congress Cadman explained that he had assumed the title of Captain in the military sense - not as has been sometimes assumed, in imitation of the ship captains of Whitby.³ He said that the idea was inspired by the fear and fever of war which was rife in England at that time. Cadman was also the first to suggest the use of uniform as a symbol of his commitment to Christ. He told the War Congress 'I would like to wear a suit of clothes that would let everyone know I meant war to the teeth and salvation for the world!'⁴

Many of the ideas which were already embryonic in the mission developed quickly once the title 'The Salvation Army' was adopted. It should cause no surprise that once the quasi-military structure had been introduced that ranks, uniforms, badges, flags, and related ceremonies appeared. It was also to be expected that these various innovations should be designed in such a way that they symbolised the principles on which the Army was based. What is surprising is that leaders who were so strongly opposed to what they regarded as the dangerous symbolism of Church sacraments should be full of enthusiasm for the latest developments within the Army. Sacraments and symbols play an important part in securing the identity of any movement and Salvationist symbols accentuate the Army's distinctiveness. However, as the following paragraphs will show, the Army is already engaged in giving sacramental meaning to its own symbols and these developments prompt the question: Why not strengthen the bond with the majority of Christians by adding the traditional sacraments?

SALVATION ARMY SYMBOLS

The flag.

The first notions of a flag were promulgated in Christian Mission days. It is reported that in 1874 William and Bramwell Booth had discussed the 'colour, character and device of a flag'. In May 1876, William Booth wrote to Mrs Billups, who, along with her husband, had long given sympathetic and practical support to the work done by the Booths. He said:

We are thinking of getting a flag, and if so, of crimson ground and blue border. What do you think? - the crimson signifying the atonement, and the blue purity.⁵

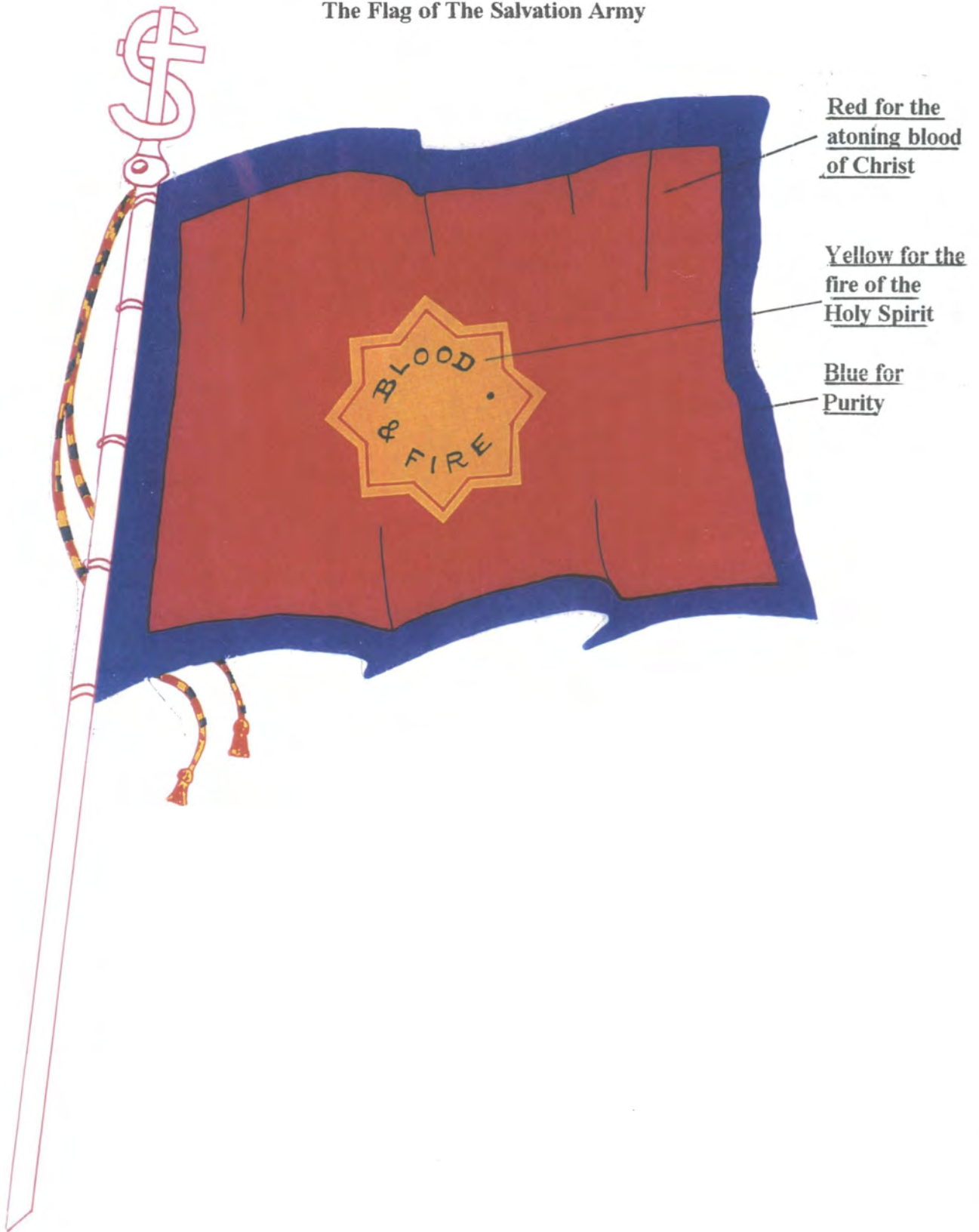
This was really a move to regularise something that had been introduced on the initiative of the people. William Booth acknowledged that before any official design had been approved, 'all over the country corps were using flags of various kinds in their processions and it struck him that if they were to use flags at all they might as well have one flag'.⁶

Catherine Booth presented the first Salvation Army flag to the corps at Coventry during a visit she made 28-30 September 1878. The flag had become a tricolour, a yellow sun had been added to the design that William Booth had earlier described to Mrs Billups. That design lasted only until 1882 when the yellow sun was replaced by a yellow star. No explanation for this change has been discovered. A widely held supposition has been that the design was altered following a suggestion of Frederick De L. Tucker (later Booth-Tucker), a former Indian Civil Servant who was about to commence Salvation Army work on the sub-continent. He is said to have made the point that the sun was a most important religious symbol for Parsees and unless the

design of the Army flag was changed it would be a source of confusion and hinder the Army's work. The suggestion has gained credibility through the support of officers who served in India.

That basic design has been retained for over a century and the flags now used consist of a crimson ground with an eight pointed yellow star in the centre, and a blue border. The star also has the Salvation Army motto 'Blood and Fire' emblazoned on it. (See illustration: p.106) As to the symbolic meaning of the colours of the flag there is some confusion. This relates to the blue border. All are agreed that the blue represents purity and the generally accepted view is that this refers to the purity of the life of the believer and this is reflected in the songs about the flag. However, Cyril Barnes, one of the Army's own authorities on the history of the movement, is not consistent in what he has to say about the matter. In his book *God's Army* he claims 'the purity of God is emphasised by the blue', whereas in his booklet *Army Without Guns*, he says that the blue border of the flag symbolises 'the possibility of living without sinning'. This may seem a minor matter but it is important for a proper understanding of the symbol. If the blue refers to the nature of God the flag symbolises the Trinity. If, on the other hand, the blue refers to the holy life of the believer, the flag symbolises the human experience of forgiveness through the blood of Christ, cleansing and empowering by the Holy Spirit, and purity of life in the individual.

The Flag of The Salvation Army



If Salvationists are not always clear about the symbolism of the flag it is not surprising that other Christians are confused. One theological student who was interested in this matter had no difficulty in linking the red background with the blood of Christ and the Yellow star with the Holy Spirit, but he then suggested that the blue border represented the Virgin Mary. Someone else pointed out that the logical colour to represent purity would be white rather than blue.

Catherine Booth's enthusiasm for the symbolism of the Army colours is readily illustrated by extracts from an address she gave when presenting flags to corps in the area of Newcastle-on-Tyne on 17 May 1879.

This flag is a symbol, first, of our devotion to our great Captain in Heaven and to the great purpose for which his Blood was shed - that he might redeem men and women from death and Hell....

Secondly. This flag is emblematical of our faithfulness to our great trust. Jesus only wants faithful soldiers in order to win the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession....

This flag is also an emblem of victory! When a soldier goes into battle he may hope for victory, he may believe in victory, he may fight ever so valiantly for victory, but he is never sure of it. But in this war of ours victory is sure. We shall win.... But by what power is this victory to be achieved? By fire! ... Our trust is in the living fire - the Holy Ghost?

It is interesting that Catherine, who was later to declare her mistrust of the external elements used in baptism and the Lord's Supper, and stoutly defend the Army's decision to abandon the use of sacraments, should commend another external symbol with such enthusiasm. Her use of the word 'symbol' in the first paragraph quoted above and of the closely related words

'emblematic' and 'emblem' in the second and third paragraphs shows that she regarded the Army flag as something more than an adaptation of the idea of regimental colours as used in British and other armies. This special association is further reinforced by her description of the nature of that which was symbolised and to which Salvationists were called to be devoted. Although the reference is only to the shed blood of Christ the whole idea of his atoning sacrifice is implied. Here we have a significant parallel to the symbolism which Catherine had rejected in connection with the Lord's Supper. It is true that in itself the flag was not regarded as conveying any virtue or spiritual grace to Salvationists; it was simply a symbol and reminder of the principles by which they were called to live. However, as a symbol it had little or no meaning for anyone who was not initiated into The Salvation Army, whereas the Lord's Supper, in spite of all the theological differences which surrounded it, had, and still has, a fundamental link with Christ's sacrificial death which is understood throughout Christendom. Here the issue is not whether The Salvation Army should have introduced a flag or not, but whether it was consistent to reject the familiar symbols of the Supper and then commend a new symbolism so wholeheartedly.

A further evidence of Catherine Booth's devotion to the flag and all that it symbolised is described in an account of the closing days of her life. In 1889 she was suffering from terminal cancer and confined to bed, she had been moved from one room to another and she called for the Army colours to be brought from her previous room and fastened above her head. When the flag was in place she asked for her hand to be guided to its folds and as she fondly traced the motto 'Blood and Fire' with her finger she was heard to say: 'Blood and Fire! Yes, that is very appropriate. It is just what my life has been - a

constant and severe fight.' It is significant that one who had insisted that material symbols of spiritual truth were of little consequence should call for the symbol of the Army's principles and dedication to Christ to be available to her as she faced death. There is some parallel here with those Christians who, in similar circumstances, would call for the administration of the sacrament.

That other champion of the Army's abandonment of the sacraments, Railton, also displayed a surprising enthusiasm for the flag when it was introduced into the movement. In his book *Heathen England* he commented: 'The use of flags has done more than anyone could have imagined to bind all our soldiers together and to encourage and develop the spirit of enterprise and resolution.'

The fact that the flag was enthusiastically welcomed by Salvationists and became a rallying influence upon them cannot be denied. This is perhaps best illustrated by the number of songs which have been written and included in various revisions of *The Salvation Army Song Book*. The 1899 edition of the book contained eight songs mostly urging or promising faithfulness to God in the Army; encouraging people to mission, or as in one particular case, elevating the flag beyond its proper station. The following extract from William Pearson's song will illustrate this last point:

Amen for the flag to the Army so dear!
 'Tis the flag for all lands and all seas;
 The flag that is making Hell's legions to fear
 The flag both for war and for peace.
 The flag that will ever in battle look bright,
 The flag that will wave till the wrong is put right,
 The flag that shall triumph with salvation might,
 Is the flag of The Salvation Army.

The flag that guides poor sinners on the way,
 The flag that leads to endless day,
 The flag that fill all Hell with dismay
 Is the flag of The Salvation Army.

The flag for all people, for conquest and song,
 The banner of Blood and of Fire,
 The flag for the brave, nobly marching along,
 The flag that is leading us higher.
 The flag and the music that cheer up the way,
 The flag that will conquer oppose it who may,
 The flag that is giving to Jesus the sway,
 Is the flag of The Salvation Army.

The flag ever bringing salvation to view,
 The flag that the holy will fly;
 The crest and the yellow the red and the blue,
 The flag we will wave till we die.
 The flag that will gather wherever it waves,
 The flag that keeps winning the battles it braves,
 The flag to be waved by the side of our graves,
 Is the flag of The Salvation Army.

If ever symbolism was allowed to overshadow the things that it symbolised it is displayed in this song. The song was modified for the 1953 edition of the *Song Book* so that the last four lines of the second verse read:

The flag that we fly as we march to the fray,
 The flag and the music that cheers on the way,
 The flag never lowered, oppose it who may,
 Is the flag of The Salvation Army.

This amendment is little better than the original for although it eliminates any suggestion that Jesus is given victory through the flag, it also removes any reference to Jesus at all and the song becomes even more of an eulogy to the Army flag. Happily the song was removed from the 1986 revision of the *Song Book* but the total number of songs on the theme had increased to ten.

The Crest

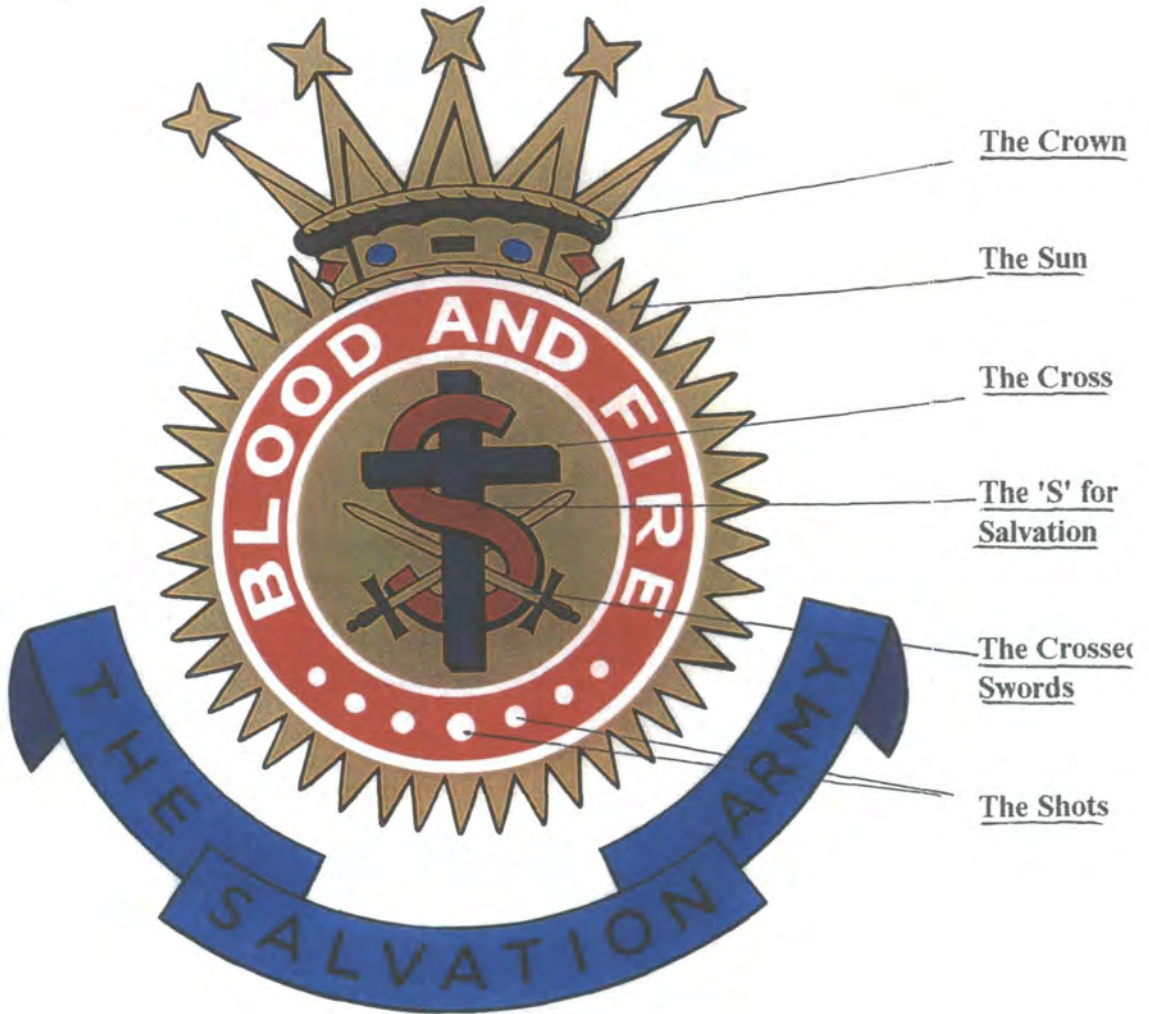
A second Salvation Army symbol which has assumed importance within the movement is the crest. The first use of this which has been found is on the printed heading of a letter sent from Bramwell Booth to Cadman on 26 March 1879. The original design was by Captain William H. Ebdon and the only modification was the addition of a crown to the top. By its nature this innovation did not attract the public euphoria which had greeted the introduction of the flag but it soon became the logo on Salvation Army literature, it was used as a cap badge on uniforms, it was incorporated into the various rank badges for officers and some local officers, and also embroidered on Jerseys and Guernseys. Again, it is an object loaded with symbolism. The official description of its meaning is listed as follows:

- (a) The round figure - the sun - represents the light and fire of the Holy Spirit
- (b) The cross in the centre, the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ
- (c) 'S' stands for salvation
- (d) The crossed swords, the warfare of salvation
- (e) The shots, the truths of the Gospel
- (f) The crown, the crown of glory which God will give to all his soldiers who are faithful to the end.

In the USA the crown, was until recent times, replaced by a pair of eagle's wings and signified those who would 'rise to worlds unknown'. This change was necessitated by a split in the Army's ranks in America in which, among the property seized, was the copyright of the design of the crest as it had originated in Britain. This split was caused by Major Thomas E. Moore who had been appointed from England to take command of the Army in the United States. He had considerable early success but resented the control which was exercised from London. In October 1884 he declared the independence of the movement in America and continued his command of

what he continued to call The Salvation Army. Only when this rival movement declined and its control expired could the legitimate Salvation Army in America bring their design into line with the rest of the Army world.

The Salvation Army Crest



For details of symbolism
see page 111

From the illustration included on page 112 it will be seen that the symbolism is quite complicated and many Salvationists would be at a loss to explain the significance of every part. As a logo and a uniform badge it was no doubt desirable and is no more complicated than a coat of arms used by a family, company, or other organisation. However, it is very much a symbol for those who are initiated into The Salvation Army and compared with the symbolism of the sacraments it can communicate very little to other Christians, or to the non-Christians which the Army seeks to evangelise.

The Mercy Seat

Originally known as the 'penitent-form' and an adaptation of the 'mourners bench' used in Methodist camp meetings, the use of a seat at the front of the meeting hall where people were encouraged to come forward and kneel in repentance and confession of their sins was a feature of William Booth's meetings from Christian Mission days. From the very beginning of his ministry, as a youth conducting cottage meetings in his native city of Nottingham, Booth had insisted that penitents should register a public decision for Christ and be counselled in the elements of conversion. Later as a minister in the Methodist New Connexion and as an itinerant evangelist he invited seekers to kneel at the communion rail. Therefore, it is not surprising that the penitent-form was used from the time that Booth conducted the first tent meetings of the Christian Revival Association in 1865 and that it has remained an important symbol of a personal approach to God in Salvation Army meetings.

The term 'mercy seat', which is now the most commonly used designation, marks something of the development of the use of the penitent-

form. Even in the early days of the Mission a 'holiness table' came into use, and people seeking to grow in grace or pursuing the life of Christian holiness were invited to kneel there rather than at the penitent-form. In many places, space and the design of buildings made it impossible for such a table to be sited at the front of the hall and the penitent-form assumed a dual use. It has also become the custom to invite people to move forward and use the penitent-form as a place of prayer as in worship they respond to some revelation received, or seek some special grace. In these circumstances the congregation is reminded that no counsellor will speak to them unless they indicate a desire to receive such help. This widened use has made the term 'penitent-form' inappropriate and 'mercy seat' has become the official name although it is often referred to as 'the place of prayer'.

More recently some Salvationist leaders have tended to invite people to come forward and kneel at the mercy seat in an act of spiritual communion. In these instances the leader of the meeting often reminds the congregation that although The Salvation Army does not use the elements of bread and wine it does believe in the sacrificial work of Christ and that people can receive the grace he offers apart from any use of the symbols. In these situations it is not uncommon for a considerable number of people to respond. This may be an indication that there is a desire amongst Salvationists for an opportunity to be provided within their regular worship whereby they can express their need to partake of the spiritual food available in Christ, without the stigma of the mercy seat which, in many minds, is still associated with confession of guilt and wrongdoing.

Another interesting aspect of this later development of inviting people to enter into communion at the mercy seat is that it uses a symbolic act as a means of grace. The Army's earlier rejection of the symbols of the Lord's Supper has been replaced by the use of a different symbol.

This evolution in worship, linked with the experience that a number of Salvationists have had with Holy Communion through their ecumenical contacts, has raised in some minds the issue which Railton was said to have argued when the Army abandoned sacraments in 1883 namely, whether the Supper could have value in helping people in their worship and personal response to God. A recent spate of correspondence (1993-94) in the columns of the Army's own newspaper Salvationist indicates that there would be some support for the reintroduction of the sacraments into the movement. (This correspondence will be reviewed in more detail in a later chapter.)

Uniform

One of the natural consequences of adopting the title The Salvation Army was that the idea of uniform soon presented itself. It has been shown at the beginning of this chapter that whilst Cadman was at Whitby he expressed the desire to wear a suit of clothes that would let everyone know of his commitment to the cause of Christ. Catherine Booth wrote in November 1878 that it had been finally decided to adopt uniforms and she took a distinct interest in the kind of uniform women were to be encouraged to wear. She was keen that it should be of neat appearance and a contrast to the flamboyant fashions of the day. The straw bonnet was carefully chosen from amongst a number of possible styles and what has been described as the 'coal scuttle' shape - a bonnet with a deep crown and a large brim - was preferred. The size

of bonnets has been reduced over the years and the silk rucking inside the brim has disappeared, but the basic shape is retained today.

The development of uniforms for men was more haphazard. Once their use was approved all kinds of sources of uniform were explored. Railton, who was originally opposed to the idea because he thought it might create a barrier between Salvationists and the people, began to wear a helmet adorned with crude home-made badges, as also did Cadman. Tin labels bearing the words 'The Salvation Army' were attached to bowler hats, and helmets with plumes and second-hand military tunics were all pressed into service. Guernseys, first in blue and of the fisherman type with 'Salvation Army' embroidered across the chest provided a cheap type of uniform. The blue gave way to red in 1882 and such garments sometimes with a Salvation Army crest replacing the words have remained in use up to the present day. However, back in 1891 the January edition of the magazine All the World reported:

One of our workshop-men has adopted as his motto, and embroidered on his guernsey, the delightfully appropriate sentiment, 'Under New Management'.⁸

In fact, uniform was not very uniform in these early stages and attempts to regularise designs began in 1880 when officers were invited to apply to headquarters for details of the uniform that was to be adopted. In 1883 William Booth said that every Salvationist ought to wear always, anyhow when on parade or public duty, some sign to indicate that he was a soldier in The Salvation Army. He then gave details of the uniforms, badges, caps, and bonnets which were available.⁹

The uniform is itself a symbol of a person's commitment to the cause of Christ in The Salvation Army, but of all the customs and methods adopted by

the Army it carries least symbolism in its basic design. Officers and soldiers uniforms all have the letter 'S' on each side of the upright collar, or on the lapel of the uniform jacket. This symbolises the mission of the Salvationist 'Saved to Save'. All bonnets, caps, and hats have a band or badge with the words 'The Salvation Army' printed on them. Some uniforms also incorporate the crest, which has been previously described, but this is usually worn as a cap badge or badge of officer rank. But, although there may not be any great detail of symbolism in the uniform, the sacramental pattern remains, in the desire to express through the uniform one's commitment to Christ. As the final revision of this work is being undertaken a statement by Paul Rader, the present General of The Salvation Army, emphasises the sacramental emphasis. In a public meeting he said, 'uniform is like baptism - an outward sign of inward grace. Its appearance may change over the years but it must always be understandable and recognisable by the public ...' ¹⁰

SALVATION ARMY CEREMONIES

In common with other churches The Salvation Army has ceremonies which are used in connection with important events in the lives of soldiers and other member of its congregations; these include births, marriages, and deaths. Although a handbook of guidance is published outlining the various ceremonies, with the exception of the legal requirements of the marriage ceremony, the form of words is not intended to be binding upon the officiating officer. The major requirement is that any ceremony should be performed in such a way as to make it impressive and spiritually helpful. In most instances, however, officers tend to follow the form of words and the outline of the ceremony as laid down in the handbook.

In addition to these general ceremonies others have been devised which have special significance in the context of the quasi-military structure of The Salvation Army. These include the swearing-in of soldiers, and the commissioning of officers.

The dedication ceremony

In The Salvation Army this ceremony has replaced christening or infant baptism. When it was announced in 1883 that the use of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper were to be abandoned in the Army, William Booth also promised that a formal service for the dedication of children would be provided within a few days.¹¹ The provision of a service of dedication to replace infant baptism was not new in the churches. The Baptists had taken that stand long before the Army came into existence, but they had made baptism a matter of adult confession. Salvationists abandoned water baptism altogether and it was logical that some alternative ceremony should be provided.

Within the ceremony itself, the main differences when compared with *The Book of Common Prayer* are that baptism is not administered, while the promises made on behalf of the child are made by the parents and not by godparents (on some occasions friends of the parents stand with the family on the platform during the service of dedication but they are not recognised as godparents). It is usual for The Salvation Army flag to be held aloft over the presiding officer and the family during the ceremony. The promises which parents make usually take the following form:

In the dedication of this child you desire to give him/her fully to God. You wish to thank God for entrusting this precious life into you hands, and you want him/her to be nurtured in all that is pure, lovely and honest. To this

end you promise that you will keep from him/her, so far as you are able, everything which is likely to harm him/her in body, mind or spirit.

You also promise that, as he/she grows in wisdom and stature, you will teach him/her the truths of the gospel, encourage him/her to seek Christ as Saviour, and support him/her in the commitment of his/her life to the service of God. You must be to him/her an example of a true Christian.¹²

It will be seen that the basic promises which are included in this ceremony are similar to those used in infant baptism in other churches.

This protects the theological point made by the Army that baptism does not automatically convey grace and salvation. However, what it fails to address is the Army's insistence on the doctrine of original sin and how this can be dealt with before the child reaches the age of discernment.

The marriage ceremony

This follows the pattern of other Christian ceremonies and includes exhortations to the couple to enter into their new relationship with serious intention, and due consideration of the purposes for which marriage has been ordained. The solemn promises of lifelong commitment and the required legal pledges are made, rings are exchanged, and the whole emphasis is that the contract is made under God as well as to each other.

An additional feature where the couple to be married are both Salvationists is that they are encouraged to pledge themselves to The Salvation Army articles of marriage. In the case of the marriage of officers, both parties, who must be commissioned officers, are required to sign the articles before the ceremony takes place. These articles of marriage were used for the first time on 12 October 1882 when Bramwell Booth was married to Florence Soper. The seven points contained in the original articles are too lengthy to quote in

full at this point but they are set out in Appendix A of this work together with the revised form which was published in 1989. The following paragraph from the original document gives the flavour of the whole:

We do solemnly declare that we have not sought this marriage for the sake of our own happiness and interests only, although we hope these will be furthered thereby; but because we believe that the union will enable us better to please and serve God, and more earnestly and successfully to fight and work in The Salvation Army.

As this and the full text shows, Salvationists were expected to make extraordinary commitments in their service to God through the Army.

The funeral ceremony

This is another ceremony which follows the pattern used by other churches but which has certain additions where the funeral of a Salvationist is concerned. In keeping with the military structure and the belief that death is but the gateway to immortality the Army does not use terms such as 'death', or 'passed away'; the officially accepted term is 'promoted to glory'. In earlier days such funerals were accompanied by a kind of jubilation. The wearing of black was discouraged, Salvationists were urged to wear their uniform and to display a white armband on the left sleeve. The Army flag was prominent and was draped with white ribbons. A flag also covered the coffin. Where a Salvation Army band led the march to the cemetery muffled drums were forbidden. In the late twentieth century it is rare to see such a funeral conducted with full ceremonial but the draped flag is still used and the band often accompanies the singing at the service in the Army hall and at the graveside or in the crematorium.

Swearing-in of soldiers

This ceremony is used when converts are accepted into full membership as soldiers of The Salvation Army and it replaces Confirmation and similar ceremonies used in various Christian denominations. Again, as its title suggests, it is a ceremony which reflects the military form of the Army. After a suitable period of instruction and preparation, recruits are given the opportunity to sign the 'Articles of War'. This is a document which consists of a commitment to The Salvation Army's eleven points of doctrine plus certain promises which are made in respect of service to God and loyalty to the aims and principles of the Army. (A full copy of this document is also included in Appendix A). This signing usually takes place in private and is then followed by the public swearing-in ceremony which is intended to impress upon all present the importance of Christian discipleship. The ceremony takes place under the flag and includes the affirmation of faith made by the prospective soldier - this may consist of the reading of the 'Articles of War' in full or at least a summary of their contents. Each soldier is then asked:

Do you declare in the presence of God and this congregation, that you undertake, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to live and work as a true soldier of Jesus Christ and of The Salvation Army, according to the witness and promises you make this day? If so raise you right hand and say: 'I do'

On receiving the correct response the officiating officer then makes the declaration:

In the name of the Lord whom you love and serve, I accept your declarations and receive you as a soldier of the Corps of The Salvation Army.

A prayer of dedication follows and the new soldier is sometimes asked to testify to his or her faith in Christ.

The commissioning of officers

This usually consists of a series of meetings conducted by the General, the Chief of Staff, or some other leading officer and follows the satisfactory completion of a period of training (usually two years). The meetings include a service of commitment and dedication and the individual commissioning of each cadet who also receives his or her first appointment. As with other ceremonies the symbolism associated with the Army is given a prominent place, the flag is much in evidence, and total commitment to Christ through the Army is enjoined. In more recent years the idea of ordination has been added to the commissioning ceremony. This caused some disquiet in certain quarters, particularly amongst officers who had been commissioned in earlier years and who, in consequence, were not ordained. Part of the official explanation for this change was that in certain parts of the world it gave Salvation Army officers added status among their clerical and ministerial colleagues. In fact, the word 'ordain' introduces a sacramental element into commissioning and gives the ceremony close relationship with the ordination ceremonies of other churches where the element of commissioning to divine work is also emphasised.

The significance of this ceremony, and of Salvation Army officership in general, is that it accepts the principle of setting certain people apart for the function of Christian ministry. This in itself is a symbolic as well as a utilitarian action. An important part of their function is to point beyond themselves to divine reality, and that, in essence, is what a sacrament seeks to do.

It will be seen from the outline given in this chapter that The Salvation Army did not eliminate symbols or rituals from its worship. In many instances it invented symbols appropriate to itself and adapted ceremonies and rituals to serve its character and purposes. In the context of this research it is the substitutionary use of symbolism that is of primary interest and it is this which gives rise to such questions as: Did the Army's leaders recognise something of the logical contradiction which was involved in adopting such symbols as the flag and the crest? Was the more likely explanation that many of these things evolved, suited the nature of the movement, and were adopted without any awareness of inconsistency? Are more recent developments in the movement leading towards the reintroduction of the sacraments?

OTHER USES OF SYMBOLS

There have been occasions when some Army leaders have experimented with other symbols in Salvationist worship. These experiments are important in respect of this present research because although the word 'sacrament' has not been applied to these activities, they have been introduced in a near sacramental way.

The loaf and the cup.

In a 'Church Growth' conference held at St John's Theological College, Nottingham, in 1990, Sunday morning worship was led by Commissioner and Mrs Ian Cutmore. The worship took place in the college chapel and the delegates were all Salvationists. There was a certain element of surprise as the delegates entered the chapel because on the altar table a loaf of bread and a

cup of non-alcoholic wine were displayed. The presence of these symbols was unusual if not unknown, to most of the delegates present. One possible explanation was that we were about to take part in a love feast or *Agape* meal. Whatever the leaders had in mind, the pre-meeting conversation was marked by an unusual curiosity.

As the meeting progressed it became clear that the loaf and the cup were to be used in a kind of object lesson and Ian Cutmore used the symbols to draw out the spiritual significance of the way our Lord used the bread and the wine at the Last Supper. Throughout the whole meeting, and especially the sermon, the subject was handled with the greatest sensitivity. It would have required an excessive degree of perversity to have missed the point that the broken body of Christ is our communion bread and his shed blood our holy wine.

During the concluding song and prayer members of the congregation were invited to move forward and kneel at the mercy seat (the communion rail was used for this purpose). This was not an invitation to receive the elements, but to receive the spiritual blessings of communion without partaking of the elements. This was a poignant reminder of the Army's emphasis on the inward and spiritual nature of communion. A significant number of delegates responded to the invitation.

What was certainly an innovation in Salvationist worship was, in fact, something akin to the Roman Catholic practice of the Middle Ages, when the host was elevated in the presence of the congregation but the people were not allowed to participate. Presumably, this was to ensure that no unworthy persons received the sacrament. This was a custom that did not last but it forms

an interesting commentary on the Army's attempts to secure spiritual purity by denying its people the sacramental elements.

The conversation before the meeting had been animated, but the reaction afterwards was charged with spiritual emotion, and comments about the power and helpfulness of what they had just experienced were to be heard all around. What was surprising to the writer of this research was that no one questioned the incongruity of the experience. It seemed illogical that the symbols should be present and used with such spiritual and sacramental power, but then withheld at the point at which members of the congregation were invited to move forward. It may be that no questions were raised by the delegates because in their regular worship Salvationists are now used to not having access to the elements. However, it is difficult to see how the loaf and the cup could be used as a powerful means of focusing on an object lesson, and then regarded as of no spiritual importance at the point where people were invited to receive the grace that God has made available through Christ.

In an unpublished paper entitled 'Immediate Grace'¹³ Ian Cutmore has shown himself to be a stout defender of the Army's stance on the sacraments. However, it has to be noted that he recognises the possibility that 'some future General may well find himself under real pressure to reverse or modify the Army's traditional view on the issue'. But in using the loaf and the cup in the way he did at Nottingham, and, according to other informants, he has done on other occasions, Cutmore has moved away from the traditional Army position. The outward symbols which William and Catherine Booth, and Railton so mistrusted have been given sacramental significance. All this, as Cutmore

claims, 'without ever passing a piece of bread or offering a sip of wine to anyone'.¹⁴

The question that remains for Commissioner Cutmore and the Army to address is: If the symbols are so helpful and powerful on the altar, how can they be less helpful and powerful if they are actually received by believers?

The supper

Two officers who were interviewed in connection with this research described how, on Maundy Thursday, they re-enacted the biblical accounts of the breaking of bread and the taking of the cup at the Last Supper. On these occasions the elements were not used merely as an object lesson, they were distributed to the congregation.

In one of these instances the officer said that he knew that some Salvationists might object if the meeting was announced as the Lord's Supper and that there would be serious repercussions if news of such a celebration reached his superior officers. To avoid such problems the meeting was announced as a love feast. He said that he had serious misgivings about the possible response to this experiment, but in the event the attendance at the Maundy Thursday evening meeting was better than in previous years. And there were no objections to the distribution of the elements. The spiritual impact and the encouraging comments that followed fully justified the experiment. The officer concerned was under no misapprehension regarding the nature of the event. He knew that it was not a love feast in the tradition of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, nor was it the kind of token love feast as observed in

some churches and, on occasions, in the Army. It was a communion service in all but name.

It is interesting that in addition to the two examples already mentioned, in some Salvation Army corps in recent years, similar meetings have been introduced on Maundy Thursday. It is doubtful whether, in all instances, the motive has been as sacramental as in the case outlined above, but there is an obvious desire to introduce the symbols of the loaf and the cup into Salvationist worship at this point in the Christian year. That the commemoration is announced as a love feast usually reflects the belief that the participation is in a fellowship meal, and this is coupled with the assumption that the Last Supper was definitely a Passover meal. But the sharing of a piece of bread or a wafer, and partaking of a common cup, however informal the setting, hardly reflects the fellowship meal in which Jesus and his disciples participated. It would be more in keeping with the re-enactment of the Last Supper to provide a full meal following the pattern of that used at the Passover. Any exclusive concentration on that part of the supper that is parallel with the loaf and the cup uses the elements in the sense in which they are used in the Eucharist - the use is overtly sacramental.

It seems that the desire to explore the spiritual meaning of the use of the bread and the wine by Jesus leads some Salvation Army officers to introduce the actual symbols into worship. Most of them are, however, also constrained by the desire to remain faithful to the Army's stance on the sacraments and this causes them to avoid the word 'communion'. This produces confusion rather than clarity in the minds of the officers and their congregations. It also devalues both the communion and the love feast. The confusion that is

produced illustrates the dangers that a total ban on the sacraments produces, namely, that in an attempt to give added point to the teaching of the Last Supper, the symbols are introduced either under a cloak of deviousness or without any clear understanding of the way they are being used. It also shows that there is a lack of wholehearted commitment on the part of some Salvationists to the non-sacramental stance taken by the Army.

Another experience that has been collected during this research provides further evidence of the confusion that exists in Salvation Army circles about the Lord's Supper. A Canadian officer told how on his appointment to one corps he found communion vessels in a cupboard in the officers' room at the hall. It was obvious that these vessels had been used quite frequently and he felt that some form of communion had been observed. Not having any firm information about the way in which they had been used he decided to use them to observe a love feast.

To facilitate this the officer drew up an order of service and this was used during the Sunday morning meeting at regular intervals throughout the year. The copy of the service he used shows that the emphasis is quite clearly on the love feast. By way of introduction the common meal of the early Christian fellowship is described and this is followed by emphasis on the principles of reconciliation: love, sharing, caring, restitution and repentance. The Scripture reading is 1 Corinthians 13, which is arranged as a responsive reading. In the prayer that precedes the sharing of the cup and the biscuit, specific references are made to the need to abandon any resentments that may be held against others. The prayer for personal forgiveness is also linked with the need to forgive others.

The sharing of the elements is accompanied by the suggestion that should one so choose the biscuit could be shared with another person as a sign of a desire for deeper fellowship. There is also an emphasis on God's love towards all people and the need to love one another, based on 1 John 1:1-5.

The legitimacy of holding a love feast cannot be questioned, and there may be a case, as some have suggested, for its more frequent use in the Church today. However, the fact that it is now so rarely used in vast areas of the Army world causes one to ask whether this Canadian experiment was not a type of substitute for communion.

These stones

The readiness of Salvationists to respond to the introduction of symbols into their worship is illustrated by an event witnessed in Norway. On Whit-Sunday 22 May 1994, a group of Salvationists from the Fredrikstad Corps met for a weekend retreat. As the congregation met for the Sunday morning meeting each person was invited to take a small piece of stone from a box, and to keep it by them for use later in the meeting. As the meeting came towards its conclusion members of the congregation were invited to pick up the stones they had received earlier and regard them as symbols of some aspect of their lives - a burden, a gift, something precious, some hope, some fear, or some possession. They were then invited to use this symbol in an act of dedication and offer it to God so that the Holy Spirit could take it and work on it or through it. The suggestion was that individuals should make their dedication privately where they were standing, or in a public act of placing their stone on

the altar (a simple table at the front of the meeting room). There was no pressure to make the public form of response, but ninety per cent of the congregation chose that option.

This provided surprising material for this research and when the leader of the meeting was questioned afterwards he provided further interesting information. He said that he had used the idea on several previous occasions and had also seen it used by other people. On each occasion between eighty-five and ninety-five per cent of those present chose to respond publicly. Here is further evidence that Salvationists respond readily and wholeheartedly to any use of symbols in worship. The Norway experiment was not an attempt to introduce a communion service, and there was no reference to the bread and wine. It seemed that almost any object could have been used as a symbol and the response would have been the same.

This view is further confirmed by a report that appeared in Salvationist, dated 26 November 1994. An account of the South Wales divisional youth councils (annual meetings organised in various areas of the country for young people between the ages of fourteen and thirty and usually held in a suitable central location) describes a particular piece of symbolism as follows:

One of the most poignant moments of the weekend was when many young people signed their names on a 300-piece 'brick wall' painted on canvas, as a sign of their belonging to the people of God - living stones united in Christ.¹⁵

It is significant that The Salvation Army's decision to abandon the symbolism of the sacraments, because the symbols obscure the spiritual impact of worship, was then so easily reversed, using objects that did not have the

universal significance of the bread and wine. Also, one observes that Salvationists were not only responsive to such symbolism but they testified to the spiritual power that was unleashed in the symbolic action. It may be that the stones were regarded as 'neutral' symbols and that people would have been less responsive to the use of bread and wine. For whatever reasons, wherever Salvationists have the opportunity to react to the use of symbols in worship they are reversing many of the arguments that have been advanced for the Army's rejection of symbols. By their actions they are also giving sacramental significance to the symbols they use.

The question also arises as to whether stones are really neutral symbols. In his article 'Simple Water, Consuming Flame: Nature, Sacrament and Person in Paul Tillich', H.R. Carse has shown that we need to have a wider appreciation of sacramental symbols than can be encompassed merely in water, bread and wine. Carse quotes Tillich who asked: 'Can we not say, that the "natural element in the sacrament", be it water, bread fire, oil ... or milk, is never simple? In every sacramental moment, these elements give us pause. Why are they there? In his extensive article Carse reminds his readers that 'the words, stones, colours and trees around us vibrate with invisible power on our behalf'. In support of this idea he quotes Tillich who wrote: 'As Nature participates in the history of salvation, it is liberated from the demonic and made capable of becoming a sacrament'.¹⁶ This raises the question as to whether the Salvationists who use unusual symbols in their worship have made these objects sacramental without really knowing it.

Sharing worship

Whenever Salvationists share in worship with other Christian bodies there are some interesting reactions to the possibility of taking communion. There is still a small number who refuse to participate because they feel that to do so betrays the Army's position. This happens despite the fact that Army statements on the subject have, from the very beginning, emphasised the fact that Salvationists are not anti-sacramental. However, most Salvationists see these occasions as an opportunity to demonstrate that they are not opposed to sacraments and that by participating they show their solidarity with other believers.

One recently commissioned Salvation Army officer who serves as a part time chaplain at a British university told how she regularly assisted in serving communion but did not take communion herself. When questioned further about this she said it was mainly because she was uncertain about the attitude that the Army would take to her participation since she was an official representative in that situation.

In an article published in The Officer Mrs Captain Olivia Milner makes brief references to the circumstances in which the Army abandoned the use of the sacraments in 1883 and discusses some of the developments that are now being experienced in various places. She writes:

A corps recently had to vacate its hall for building work, the soldiery joining with the local United Reformed Church for its Sunday morning worship. The corps officer noted that about forty per cent of the soldiery took communion. *Is there here, an ambiguity, or at least an ambivalence in the Salvationists' view of their own communal identity which appears to change when we are included in the wider Christian community?*¹⁷

The evidence gathered during this research suggests that the attitude of Salvationists to the sacraments cannot be disposed of as simply as Olivia Milner's question suggests. What her evidence supports is the earlier contentions made in this chapter, that given the opportunity to respond to symbolism in worship, Salvationists do so instinctively, recognising that spiritual mysteries are often more adequately expressed in symbols than in abstractions. It also confirms the fact that as Salvationists are exposed to ecumenical influences they become increasingly aware of sacramental values.

The anointing

At a United Kingdom Evangelism Conference organised for Salvationist delegates in September 1994 a significant piece of symbolism was introduced into an Army meeting. More than three hundred delegates from the United Kingdom Territory of The Salvation Army were invited to attend - a balance of officer and lay Salvationists. The main speakers were Canon Michael Green and Gerald Coates, and the overall subject was 'mission'.

Describing this event for readers of The Officer Captain Alan Burns referred to it as 'one of the most exciting "Army" events in the Decade of Evangelism'. Among the general descriptions of the conference he included the following significant observation:

A notable event during the weekend was the visit of Gerald Coates He spoke, and then called leading officers who were present to come forward for special prayer. After this he announced his intention to anoint the leaders of the territory with oil.

Unprepared for what is an unusual practice in Salvation Army worship, and uncertain as to what would occur, they stood forward for the ceremony. (I personally felt that perhaps the intention behind this was a statement of unity - an effort to achieve a sense of 'togetherness' in what God is doing in the Church in Britain.)¹⁸

Burns then goes on to describe the worship that followed this event as a time in which a special manifestation of the Holy Spirit was experienced. This seems to have been akin to what has recently become known as the 'Toronto Blessing' with some people falling to the ground, some laughing, some crying, and others quietly allowing the Spirit to speak to them. The writer makes no link between the anointing with oil and the Spirit's anointing and other people who were present have not drawn any parallels.

The interesting thing is that apart from restrained accounts in publications such as The Officer and Salvationist, news of the 'Toronto Blessing' spread like wildfire throughout the Army world. Lieutenant Colonel Keith Banks working in Papua New Guinea wrote:

The 'Army Grapevine' certainly lived up to its world-wide reputation following the experience of the 'Toronto Blessing' at a recent United Kingdom Territory evangelism course. Within days letters began to arrive *from many of our friends in our home territory describing the spiritual surprise and its dramatic effects on those who were present*.¹⁹

The news also sparked-off a lively correspondence in the columns of Salvationist, some letters were sceptical about the events that were described as manifestations of the Spirit, others welcomed it, whilst some thought it could not possibly be of God. It is of greater surprise to the writer of this thesis that the symbolic action of the anointing of the Territorial Commander and other leading officers has not provoked a single comment.

It is true that this was an event that took place in the worship session of a conference rather than in a regular public Salvation Army meeting, but it was also a definite introduction of symbolism into Army worship. Part of the original argument against the use of the sacraments in the Army was that symbols were dangerous in that they could be thoughtlessly received and that people could come to trust in them rather than in a true experience of the saving grace of God. Catherine Booth, in particular, was strong in her condemnation of ceremonies and sacraments that she regarded as mere outward signs of inward spiritual reality, and she described any observance without true heart response as a 'mock salvation' (see chapter 2). On that basis alone, Gerald Coates and the leading officers who received the anointing demonstrated a clear contradiction of the Army's official stance on the use of ceremonies and symbols.

This is not to suggest that Coates and the officers concerned were insincere in what they did, although it should be noted that in his report, Burns said that the officers were 'unprepared' for what was about to happen. Another delegate to the conference, when questioned about this aspect of symbolism, said that he thought that Coates had placed the Salvationist leaders in a dilemma. He claimed that it was obvious that Coates had not given them any previous warning of his intentions, but it was clear that he had briefed Michael Green since Green was ready to assist in the ceremony. In the circumstances the officers could not refuse the anointing without seeming churlish and uncooperative. If this is a true account of the circumstances it goes some way to explaining why the event took place. One wonders what would have

happened in the same setting if Coates had produced bread and wine and proceeded to celebrate communion.

A second difficulty arising from this incident concerns the historical significance of the act of anointing. In the New Testament, anointing with oil occurs in connection with healing as in Mark 6:13; and James 5:14 but the word 'anointing' is also used to indicate the gift of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:21f.; 1 John 2:20-27). There is some evidence that by the second century AD Christians were anointed with oil at their baptism and that later the anointing was reserved for confirmation. It was mainly in connection with the healing of the sick that the ceremony survived into later Christendom, but in the Western Church this gradually changed and the oil was used for the benefit of the soul rather than the body, when recovery seemed impossible. The Roman sacrament of extreme unction is a survival of this kind of use. The Reformation saw the abolition of extreme unction within the Protestant tradition. There was some provision in the 1549 Prayer Book for the restoration of the anointing of the sick but this did not survive. Most interest in the ceremony in modern times has been centred in the Pentecostal and charismatic movements. However, there is an additional element to this which is often overlooked. In Roman Catholic and some Anglican churches a blessing of the oil takes place on Maundy Thursday. This oil is then used at baptisms and for anointing the sick throughout the next year. There is also an element of dedication in these services when the renewal of ordination vows takes place and commissioning for service is emphasised.

The short outline of the use of anointing which is given above reveals the variety of links that can be associated with the ceremony. Whilst it would seem

that Coates was using it in the context of the charismatic experience, the way in which anointing can be interpreted theologically is at least as confusing as the theology that surrounds the sacraments, and the core meaning of anointing is not as universally understood as baptism and the Lord's Supper. So if a difficult, not easily decipherable piece of symbolism is acceptable, why not an easier one?

The event that took place at the United Kingdom Conference on Evangelism is a further illustration of the kind of confusion into which The Salvation Army has drifted concerning symbols. It seems that any symbol is acceptable provided it is not the water of baptism or the bread and wine of communion.

Communion without elements

To supply some balance to the incidents that have been described throughout this chapter, it is now necessary to describe some of the attempts that are made by leaders of Salvation Army meetings to centre the attention of the congregation upon spiritual communion in worship.

One method is for the leader of the meeting to call for a period of silent prayer (a fairly uncommon phenomenon in a Salvation Army meeting); this is usually a period of one or two minutes, and before it begins the congregation is encouraged to centre on the Army emphasis that communion can take place at a spiritual level without recourse to the use of the elements. How successful this kind of attempt is cannot be easily measured. Two minutes of silence can seem like a long time as anybody who has stood at the local cenotaph on

Remembrance Sunday can testify. The silence requires special discipline or the mind is prone wander.

A different line of approach makes use of the Salvationist custom to include songs or prayer choruses as part of public prayer in worship. The leader will then use a special song or verse as an aid to concentrating the thoughts of the congregation on spiritual communion. The Charles Wesley song 'Jesus we look to thee', is particularly appropriate to this kind of use. All the verses as they are set in the Army's song book can be used in this way, but verse three can be a powerful reminder of the need to take the grace of God in the communion sense, even though the elements are not offered. It is sometimes helpful to remind the congregation that other Christians do use the elements as powerful symbols of the grace of God that is offered in Christ, and then to point out that the Salvationist tradition that grace can be received without these aids is only valid if people make a conscious effort to apply the principle in practice.

We meet, the grace to take
Which thou hast freely given;
We meet on earth for thy dear sake
That we may meet in Heaven.

Another song, this time by a Salvationist writer, Vic Ottaway, can be used in the same way.

Make me aware of thee, O Lord,
As in thy temple I give praise;
Attentive to thy holy word,
Or in glad song my voice to raise,
That I may feel thy Spirit's power,
O come, invade my soul this hour.

Make me aware of thee, O Lord,
 As supplicant, I bow the knee.
 My faith, though small, wilt thou reward
 That contact I may make with thee
 And thus obtain that inward calm
 That makes of life a living psalm.

Make me aware of thee, O Lord,
 As with thy children I unite
 To share that wondrous heritage
 Of Calvary and Easter light.
 O Master let thy people be
 Consistently aware of thee.

These approaches to prayer and worship have proved quite beneficial at the point of use, but since there is rarely any comment about such efforts it is difficult to know anything about their lasting benefits. There is certainly no guarantee that frequent repetition of these approaches will not produce dangers of complacency that are equal to anything that is found in the traditional observance of the sacraments.

The Arts in The Salvation Army

Limitations of space do not permit an examination of the place of aesthetics in the Church at large. A particularly helpful recent study of the subject is Jeremy Begbie's book *Voicing Creations Praise: Towards a Theology of the Arts*. Here, apart from music, the implicit sacramental side of The Salvation Army is perhaps at its weakest.

So far as the Army is concerned, music has played an important part in its worship and its witness. The Brass Band has been a dominant force in Salvation Army music and although some of the early attempts at making

music were crude indeed, in a very short time standards were raised and music became, primarily, the servant of evangelism. Songster Brigades (choirs) came some time later than bands, mainly because William Booth was opposed to choirs, but once started they soon became an established part of Army worship. This emphasis on music has meant that thousands of original songs and other types of music have been produced by Salvationists and the considerable skills of Salvationists song writers and composers have been acknowledged well beyond the confines of Salvationist circles.

Drama and poetry have not enjoyed the same high profile as bands and songster brigades but they are acquiring a place in the Army. During the past ten years a theatre and training centre has been opened in Marylebone to encourage a more professional approach to musical theatre, dance and drama. The Army has also published a number of collections of poetry written by Salvationists, these include *Book of Salvationist Verse* (1963) compiled by Catherine Baird; *With Sword and Song* (1975) by Will J. Brand, and *Pilgrims* (1988) compiled by Peter M. Cooke.

Visual art, such as painting, has had much less of a place in the organisation. Army halls have generally been very plain buildings. For many years the only decoration would be a painted text or exhortation on the walls or on the Mercy Seat. As for pictures, until the late 1930s the only examples to be found in an Army hall would be large framed photographs of William and Catherine Booth, the founders of the movement. These have now largely disappeared but apart from the occasional use of stained glass very few other art forms are used in modern Army buildings.

Officers do not wear gowns or vestments but they do wear uniform and the sections of regulations for officers which deal with this subject tend to treat the uniform as a kind of vestment in that a required standard of uniform is laid down for officers conducting meetings. There is however, a contrast with other churches in that members of the congregation (soldiers) are encouraged to wear uniform. There can be no doubt that those forms which have been employed have influenced the character of the Army, but it is not possible to discern the extent to which they have become overtly sacramental. Nonetheless, there is a certain ironic connection with the sacrament, in that one of the original meanings of the Latin word sacramentum upon which Tertullian laid particular stress, was that of a military oath.

Towards a deeper understanding of symbols

However, an aspect of sacramental influence which seems to have been neglected by Salvationist writers and teachers, and which would help in evaluating the Army's understanding of the importance of symbolism, is that the communication of ideas necessarily involves symbolism in some form or another. When this realisation is applied to the transmission of spiritual truth the symbols assume some sacramental dimension. Because of the unique nature of human consciousness, ideas and values can be conveyed in various ways - by means of symbols such as bread and wine, water-baptism, flags, drawings and the symbolic use of letters such as those used in the early Church, as well as by language itself.

This association of symbols and sacramental ideas can be traced within the historical development of The Salvation Army. In all the attempts that have

been made to express and explain the non-sacramental position there has been a woeful failure to understand the symbolic nature of language itself. It has somehow been assumed that material symbols are crude forms of communication which are especially susceptible to perversion, while language is purer and more reliable. However, it has to be noted that it is only certain material symbols that are thus regarded, namely the ancient and traditional symbols of baptism and communion. Symbols relating to the Army's mission and militarism are treated as quite acceptable. There has also been a failure to recognise that the very use of language has an effect upon those who hear or read the words and in the transmission of spiritual truth it can assume sacramental significance.

A further factor the Army has not fully appreciated is the extent to which its own symbols have become something more than neutral representations of spiritual principles. To speak of the 'mercy seat' as a means of grace, as many Salvationists do, is to begin to invest it with sacramental meaning. Salvation Army uniform also assumes the same kind of significance because it is designed to speak of the Christian truths which those who wear it should exemplify.

In this same category, the Army flag has become something more than a rallying point which encourages *esprit de corps* amongst Salvationists. For many years, Cadets who were being commissioned as Salvation Army officers have worn a small flag draped across the front of the body, and another custom which is also growing in the Army is that of wrapping the child of Salvationists in the folds of the flag during the ceremony of dedication. In the case of dedication, when officiating officers are questioned about their action, part of

the reasoning is that it serves to signify the fact that the child is claimed for God and the Army. These actions surely amount to treating the flag in a sacramental way.

This development in the significance of symbols is something that Paul Tillich has traced in a number of his works. He wrote: 'Symbols cannot be produced intentionally ... they grow and die out of the individual or collective unconscious'.²⁰ Whatever the original intentions were for the Army flag, the unconscious aspect of this development had already begun to appear within the lifetime of the founder figures of the movement. An example was provided in an earlier chapter where we noted that Catherine Booth insisted that the Army colours should be fixed above her bed during the last days of her life.

It is also significant that when Tillich comes to illustrate the difference between a symbol and a sign that he regards a national flag as an example of a symbol, but he refers to traffic lights as signs. He makes an important comment on the nature of religious symbols when he says that, 'a real symbol points to an object which never can become an object. Religious symbols represent the transcendent but do not make the transcendent immanent. They do not make God a part of the empirical world'.²¹ On this point, Stephen W. Need comments: 'By this Tillich does not mean that the symbol does not enable God to be known in the world, but that God cannot be reduced to the empirical order'.²²

Symbols therefore need not be feared as necessarily idolatrous: they should point beyond themselves. But this is not to say that they cannot be abused, as Catherine Booth and other Salvationists claimed. But the dangers of

abuse do not cause Tillich to want to abandon religious symbols. He recognises their value in helping people to know and perceive God, and calls instead for respect and care in their use.

This is an area which Salvationists need to explore in their attempt to understand their own spirituality, and to give adequate expression to it. A negative attitude to things sacramental, or an attempt to reduce symbolism to nothing more than words or arguments limits Christian experience and understanding instead of exploring and expanding it.

NOTES

1. SANDALL, R. *The History of The Salvation Army*, Vol II, pp. 228-234.
2. *Ibid*, p. 237.
3. An example of this statement can be found in an article entitled, 'Marching Orders for The Salvation Army' by John Tindale and published in the Dalesman, April 1994, p.72.
4. SANDALL, R. *The History of The Salvation Army*, Vol II, p. 43.
5. *Ibid*, p. 39
6. *Ibid*, p. 39
7. BOOTH-TUCKER, F de L. *Catherine Booth* Vol II, pp. 134 - 136.

8. All the World, January 1891, p. 80.
9. SANDALL, R. *The History of The Salvation Army*, Vol II, p. 45.
10. Reported in Salvationist 25 November, 1995, p.1
11. The War Cry, 17 January 1883, p. 4, Col 3.
12. *Salvation Army Ceremonies*, (1989 Edition) pp. 10,11.
13. Unpublished article by Ian Cutmore obtained from Officer archives.
14. Ibid
15. Salvationist, 26 November 1994, p.4, column 3.
16. CARSE, H.R. Article in Theology, January, 1996, (By permission of the Editor)
17. Officer, March 1995, p.118
18. Ibid, October 1994, pp. 457, 458.
19. Ibid, January 1995, p.21.
20. TILLICH, P. *Dynamics of Faith* New York (1957) p.44
21. HOOK, S. (Ed). *Religious Experience and Truth* London, (1962) article by Tillich entitled 'The Religious Symbol' pp. 301f
22. NEED, S.W. 'Holiness and Idolatry' article in Theology January, 1996 (By permission of the Editor)

CHAPTER 6

THE SACRAMENTALITY OF THE 'NON-SACRAMENTAL'

Early Salvationist spirituality and its origins

In his book, *The Salvationists*, John Coutts comments that 'any study of Salvationist spirituality must consider its relationship, both negative and positive, with the Wesleyan doctrine of entire sanctification'.¹ As has already been shown in an earlier chapter of this work sanctification, or holiness as it is now more frequently called, has an important bearing upon Salvationist worship and teaching. The extent to which this particular doctrine has influenced Salvation Army attitudes to the sacraments, or replaced them as a dynamic spiritual force in the movement, is one of the important issues which must now be addressed. Following the opposition and persecution of what was often called 'the lawless years [1878-1886]',² the calmer atmosphere and growth of the movement made greater demands upon the nurturing and teaching skills of the Army's leaders. In these circumstances the emphasis on holiness assumed greater importance. But is it true that the holiness experience took the place of the sacraments in the spiritual understanding of Salvationists?

R.D. Rightmire is the latest author to propound this theory, and the main thrust of his thesis is that the traditional Salvationist emphasis on the spirit-filled life, especially as exemplified by Booth and Brengle, turned the whole of existence into a form of sacramental observance. He then goes on to claim that although for many years this proved to be a satisfactory alternative to the sacraments, recent developments in the Army's holiness teaching have moved

away from the crisis or pneumatological emphasis, thus making the re-introduction of the sacraments an important issue. Rightmire argues:

Although moulded by pragmatic concerns, Booth's decision to abandon sacramental practice in 1883 was based on pneumatological priority that emphasized the spiritual communion with Christ through the baptism of the Holy Spirit in entire sanctification Subsequent interpretation of Booth's sacramental decision has been quick to identify the spiritual meaning behind the Lord's Supper (spiritual communion) and baptism (Spirit baptism), but has failed to draw out the connection between ... Booth's spiritualized sacramental thought and his holiness theology.³

Interesting as Rightmire's theory is, his point about the failure of subsequent writers and teachers to make the connection between Booth's spiritualised thought, (and his holiness theology), and his attitude to the sacraments could be accounted for by the fact that the connection was never present in the minds of those who influenced the Army's decision and its holiness doctrine. The general absence in almost all Salvationist literature can be used against Rightmire's argument as well as for it. Apart from some references in Phil Needham's *Community in Mission*,⁴ no evidence of this idea has been found in Army literature.

Early holiness teaching emphasised

From the earliest days of William Booth's links with the Christian Revival Association (later The Salvation Army) he insisted on a 'definite decision for Christ and out-and-out consecration to his [Christ's] service as essential'.⁵ In fact, it is recorded that some of the personnel who had been involved in the work of the association before Booth took charge of it in 1865 left, because they objected to 'his teaching the truth of sanctification' and because 'he laid too much emphasis on repentance and good works'.⁶ For eighteen years these

emphases co-existed with the use of the sacraments and without any hint that the traditional Christian rites were being replaced by holiness doctrine.

George Scott Railton was probably the strongest advocate of the Army's non-sacramental position and he acknowledged the importance of holiness teaching in the development of the movement. He wrote:

The teaching and enjoyment of this great blessing, with all the deliverance from self-seeking; and pride which it brings, has made it possible to go on imposing more and more regulation and discipline on all sorts of men and women without either souring their spirit or transforming the Army's system into mere machinery.⁷

Railton's spirituality was always practical and an experience of holiness that did not render a person amenable to discipline and completely surrendered to Christ would not appeal to him. His dislike of anything that had a savour of 'churchiness' about it makes it unlikely that he even thought of holiness as a substitute for sacramental rites.

When Bramwell Booth began to preach after a long period in which he was quite sure he had no calling and no gift for the task, he organised a series of holiness meetings at Whitechapel in 1879 and in a very short time established a reputation as a holiness teacher. It should be noted that these meetings were held before the sacraments were abandoned by the Army and at a time when, by his own admission, Bramwell was still finding spiritual enrichment in the celebration of the Lord's Supper.⁸

In the years immediately following the Army's decision to abandon the use of the sacraments in its worship the most influential holiness teacher was Samuel Logan Brengle, an American Methodist minister who, in 1887, decided to join The Salvation Army. Whilst Brengle was a student at the

Boston Theological Seminary, he experienced an infilling of the Holy Spirit which would probably now be described as a charismatic experience. He told how, in search of the experience of sanctification, he had been led to understand that he must accept it in simple faith, and how, three days later, the experience overwhelmed him. He described it as a gift of love that flooded into his life; love of Christ, and love for the whole of God's creation.

It was out of that experience that Brengle's holiness teaching emerged. He emphasised that this was a blessing which came subsequent to conversion and that it was the product of the individual's total surrender to Christ.

Brengle was a trained theologian, a gifted preacher and writer, and as a Salvation Army officer he toured the world preaching and teaching holiness. The titles of the many books he produced included *Helps to Holiness*, *Heart-talks on Holiness*, *The way of Holiness*, *When the Holy Ghost is comè*, *Love Slaves*, and *Resurrection Life and Power*, and these indicate the way in which the subject was central to his religious thought.

Here again, in the work of this significant holiness teacher, there is no evidence that he saw the experience as a substitute for the sacraments, and the most probable explanation for this is that Brengle did not think in that way.

Twentieth century holiness teaching in the Army

Apart from Rightmire and some references in Phil Needham's *Community in Mission*, Frederick Couatts comes nearest to making a link between Salvationist experience and the Eucharist when he speaks of

experiencing 'the "Real Presence" in our meetings for worship, our private devotions, and in our public activities'. He writes:

Our witness is simply that the presence of Christ may be fully realized, and his grace freely received, without the aid of any material elements That is to say, we believe in the spiritual realities which the sacraments are declared to mediate. As ardently as the next man we believe in the Real Presence.⁹

Whether the term 'Real Presence' has been used in a way other than its correct technical sense is a debatable point which cannot be pursued here. It is perhaps sufficient to note that the notion defended by Thomas Cranmer of 'true presence' in and outside communion would have been better fitted to the emphasis which Couetts intended.¹⁰

Even allowing for the emphasis that Frederick Couetts gave to this realisation of the presence of Christ, it is interesting to observe that this teacher of holiness, who was also fascinated by the history of the Army, did not go as far as Rightmire in claiming that pneumatological experience proved to be a satisfactory substitute for the sacraments.

It is also difficult to find experiential evidence amongst Salvationists to support Rightmire's thesis. Any discussion of the subject has to avoid planting ideas in the interviewee's mind by asking a direct question such as: "To what extent do you find holiness in The Salvation Army a satisfactory substitute for the formal sacraments?" To avoid this trap evidence has been drawn from more general conversations with Salvationists, collected over many years. Close pastoral relationships with more than two thousand Salvationists over a period of fifty years have not produced one person who has made the specific suggestion that holiness replaces the sacraments within the Army. Some have

expressed the view that the Sunday morning Holiness Meeting was a spiritual highlight for them. The sentiments were similar to those experienced by people who find intense spiritual satisfaction in receiving communion, but these conversations have not produced anyone who made the actual comparison that Rightmire suggests.

The legacy the Army received from Methodism

Reference was made in chapter four of this research to the fact that John Kent claimed that the Army's success was largely due to the influence of Robert Pearsall Smith and his connection with the holiness movement. It was also pointed out that this notion had been challenged. But if holiness in the Army cannot be attributed to this source, what were the main influences which led to the doctrine gaining such importance in the movement? I think that the answer to that question is to be found in the emphasis that the Methodists gave to holiness, and to the fact that the three influential personalities who shaped the Army - William and Catherine Booth, and George Scott Railton - had all come under the influence of Methodism at some point in their lives. And, as has already been mentioned earlier in this chapter, Brengle, the Army's leading exponent of the holiness doctrine, was from a Methodist background.

Salvationist writers and historians have been careful to acknowledge this dependence on Methodism in general and on John and Charles Wesley in particular. This can be seen by reference to some of the authors who have been quoted in this research: Robert Sandall,¹¹ Frederick Coutts,¹² John Coutts,¹³ and Chick Yuill¹⁴.

Wesley was careful to point out that he did not use the term 'sinless perfection' because he recognised that involuntary transgressions were naturally consequent on the ignorance and mistakes inseparable from mortality. He also insisted on holiness as a 'second blessing'. He claimed that he did not know of any instance in which a person received remission of sins, the abiding witness of the Spirit, and a new and clean heart at the same moment. This emphasis on the 'second blessing' has been challenged by H. Maldwyn Hughes, a former Principal of Wesley House, Cambridge, who has shown that Wesley allowed for a process that both preceded and followed the crisis. Hughes claims that this is a more realistic account of the situation in which a person becomes 'fully conscious of the might of the resources which the gospel places at his disposal'.¹⁵ H.D. Rack has also shown that Wesley's own conversion experience of 1738 was not, as it has sometimes been portrayed, the single crisis of his spiritual life.¹⁶ Wesley's position is described as follows:

Wesley did not abandon the doctrine of justification but the picture he favoured more and more was that it was the beginning of a process of sanctification culminating in perfection - a perfection which could be received in a moment ... but was also susceptible to further growth by faith and discipline.¹⁷

However, a summary based on John Wesley's holiness teaching in his book *A Plain account of Christian Perfection*, shows no trace of the gradualism which Hughes and Rack found elsewhere in Wesley. The four main points of this early Methodist teaching are:

1. That Christian Perfection is that love of God and our neighbour which implies deliverance from all sin;
2. that it is received merely by faith;
3. that it is given instantaneously, in a moment;
4. that we are to expect it, not at death but every moment; that now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.

These points have a close and significant relationship to the ideas found in Salvation Army publications. Some statements from the Army's *Handbook of Doctrine* (1940 edition), indicate the nature of teaching within the movement before the influence of Frederick Couetts and his successors began to be felt. The following extracts indicate the general tenor of that teaching.

1. Sanctification is complete deliverance from sin and the dedication of the whole being, with all its gifts and capacities, to the love and will of God.
2. Sanctification does not usually take place at regeneration ... most people ... only later ... discover the true nature and power of inborn sin ... realise further need ... then earnestly seek deliverance, and God sanctifies them.
3. Sanctification is not absolute perfection, Adamic perfection, infallibility, freedom from bodily or mental infirmities, or freedom from temptation. It is not a state of grace from which it is impossible to fall, nor a state in which further advance is not possible.
4. The idea that sanctification cannot take place until near or at the time of death is contrary to the teaching of the Bible.
5. Faith is a condition of sanctification
6. Sanctification is the work of God. ¹⁸

Point 3 in the Army statement represents an attempt to reconcile Wesley's understanding that 'Christian perfection' did not mean 'sinless perfection' (see the first paragraph and point 1 on the previous page). Comparisons between the two statements provide evidence that holiness, especially in Methodism, pre-dates its emphasis in The Salvation Army, and the Army's doctrinal position was largely dependent on Methodism. Holiness coexisted with the sacraments in both movements until the Army changed its policy in 1883.

An important contrast between Methodism and The Salvation Army can be seen in the fact that the Methodists maintained a strong link between holiness and the use of the sacraments, whereas the Army emphasised holiness

and abandoned the sacraments. William Booth, like Wesley, had been baptised in the Anglican Church and Bramwell Booth claimed that his father's early training as an Anglican predisposed him to attach importance to ceremonial.¹⁹ However, the Anglican influence was not so strong as to bind him to the sacraments in the same way as it bound Wesley. In 1788, just three years before his death, Wesley emphasised his loyalty to the Church of England. He said:

I declare once more, that I live and die a member of the Church of England; and that none who regard my judgement will ever separate from it.²⁰

Rupert E. Davies has pointed out that John Wesley's insistence on the regenerative work of the Holy Spirit which issues in the assurance of salvation and the experience of holiness in no way caused him to neglect the sacraments.

Davies comments:

Wesley brings the doctrine of the Holy Spirit to life, and makes it strikingly concrete. To him, it is the Holy Spirit who converts the sinner and regenerates him; it is the Holy Spirit who witnesses to his spirit that he is a child of God; it is the Holy Spirit who enables and assists the believer's growth in holiness and brings him by stages to Perfect Love But the emphasis on the Holy Spirit did not, with Wesley mean any disparagement of the Church and its sacraments.²¹

This devotion to the sacraments by the Wesleys was quite exceptional in the context of their times. Davies has also shown that in the eighteenth century even in well run parishes it was rare for the sacrament of Holy Communion to be celebrated more than once a quarter.²² This is further confirmed by Bowmer, who in an extended passage lists some eight reasons why the sacrament of communion was so lightly regarded.²³ He also quotes N. Sykes,

Church and State in England in the Eighteenth Century, who makes the observation:

Of the 836 Churches represented in the returns to Herring's visitation articles at York in 1743, only 72 attained the standard of monthly celebrations, 363 had quarterly Sacraments, and 208 fell below this standard, whilst 193 varied between four and six Sacrament days a year ... The infrequent celebration of Holy Communion by no means implied paucity of communicants. ²⁴

Bowmer's analysis of John Wesley's Journal shows that he was an exception to this general pattern. 'Throughout his lifetime Wesley probably communicated at least from seventy to ninety times a year, that is an average of once every four or five days.' ²⁵

The Wesleys insisted that Christians must wait upon God by using the means He ordained, not by abstaining from them; for in view of our Lord's command, "Do this", abstention is tantamount to disobedience. The Methodists thus retained the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper as an essential feature of their worship. ²⁶

In Methodism the emphasis on holiness and the regular use of the sacraments did not simply exist together, they provided mutual benefit for believers. Growth in the experience of holiness was sustained by the regular access to communion as a means of grace. The fact that the leaders of The Salvation Army took a different decision regarding the sacraments does not mean that holiness was regarded in such an elevated manner as to replace the sacraments, and Rightmire's claim that this was so goes well beyond the evidence.

Developments in the Army's holiness teaching after 1883

Rightmire's evaluation of the developments in the Army's holiness teaching is perhaps the most valuable part of his book. He presents this as evidence for his claim that the Army has moved away from the pneumatological nature of holiness, and as a result has lost something of the sense of the sacramental in the whole of life. He also claims that these changes mean that the Army has a responsibility to re-think its attitudes to the sacraments. He sums up this development as follows:

Continued reflection on pneumatological concerns in the late 1970s and early 1980s led Army writers to de-emphasize the ontological change wrought by the Holy Spirit in the crisis of entire sanctification, and to stress the importance of growth in grace.²⁷

The changes which Rightmire traces in theological thinking and writing about holiness which lead to changes of emphasis were eventually reflected in the Army's *Handbook of Doctrine* when it was revised in 1969. The fact that change has taken place cannot be denied but what Rightmire seems to have failed to notice is the influence of the experience of ordinary Salvationists in effecting this change. As John Coutts has pointed out, many Salvationists as early as the 1950s were becoming dissatisfied with state of holiness teaching within the movement.²⁸ He wrote:

Among the Salvationists of the 1950s, to whom the idea of a 'second blessing' is as outdated as the dear old Brigadier's concertina,²⁹ some new interpretation was called for.³⁰

In fact, Frederick Coutts, John's father, had expressed his own unease with the manner and content of holiness teaching long before the 1950s. He

said, 'I remembered my own silent bewilderment on Sunday mornings and purposed in my heart to speak of the experience of holiness as honestly and as intelligently as God should help me'.³¹ Another leading officer from whom material was collected in preparation for this research described the confusion and frustration he experienced as a young Salvationist when he was exhorted to seek the 'second blessing'. He recounted that the holiness songs used and the sermons preached constantly called for more dedication and introspective self-examination as the means of receiving the blessing. In spite of his frequent public decisions at the Army mercy seat no startling new experience came to him. It was only when, after some years, he realised that the Holy Spirit does not deal with everyone in the same way, and that the spiritual experience that he sought could come to him just as readily by a process as by a crisis, that he began to make real progress in his Christian life.

When it came to addressing the unease that he and many of his contemporaries felt regarding the Army's holiness teaching, Frederick Coutts moved the emphasis from an over zealous stress on the 'crisis' or 'second blessing' experience towards the ideas of crisis and process. He explained that he was indebted to Bishop Handley Moule of Durham for this understanding of holiness.

In this approach, Frederick Coutts recognised a wider possible variety of experience than Brengle's crisis doctrine allowed. However, the two Salvationist writers still had this in common, they insisted that a personal crisis experience is essential.

The subtle change of emphasis which was characteristic of Frederick Cou tts meant that he became the outstanding Salvationist holiness teacher of the mid-twentieth century. But a question remains as to whether his 'crisis/process' approach satisfied the spiritual aspirations of those Salvationists who did not experience anything that they would describe as a crisis, no matter how much they sought it. It is true that during the ministry of Frederick Cou tts the religious language of crisis had been re-introduced into the Christian vocabulary through the charismatic movement, but there were still many Christians who remained untouched by it. What had the 'crisis/process' doctrine to say to them?

In Frederick Cou tts' own exposition he claims:

Separate crisis from process, and the value of the doctrine in which both are united is destroyed. There can be no experience without a beginning, *but no beginning can be maintained without growth.* So here is no paradox: these two aspects of the life of holiness do not deny but compliment each other. ³²

The experience which comes as a result of full surrender is regarded as the 'crisis' or starting point, and spiritual growth the process. Cou tts may have stated the holiness experience in a slightly different way from that of Brengle but the principles of crisis and further development were present in the earlier teaching. ³³

The contribution that Cou tts made to holiness teaching was to give stronger emphasis to the divine dimension in sanctification and to recognise that the crisis experience could be interpreted in a number of ways - a dramatic experience, a turning point, or a quiet awakening. However the 'crisis/process' formula does not really meet the needs of those people who have difficulty in

recognising the point at which they reach 'first base'. The term 'second blessing' may have almost disappeared from the holiness vocabulary but the point of crisis has still to be reached somehow. There is a need to recognise that for many Christians there is a process that precedes crisis as well as one that follows. It is impossible to establish a blueprint for every individual since there might be a multiplicity of causes involved in the initial process. The experience, when it comes, may not resemble anything that could be understood as a crisis, so some other term, such as spiritual awakening, may be preferred. Such re-interpretation does not move the Army away from the spiritual vitality of its holiness teaching but it shows that Christian experience is a thing of infinite variety.

The latest Salvation Army publications on the subject of holiness have gone some way to meeting the difficulties which have been raised in the previous paragraphs. Chick Yuill in his book *We Need Saints* and Clifford Kew in *The Good Life* start from a different premise to that of that of earlier writers, especially Brengle who saw the crisis experience as 'the fiery pentecostal baptism with the Holy Spirit which is promised'. It is true that Brengle acknowledged that unless a person had the Holy Spirit in some measure conversion would be impossible, but it was his emphasis on the baptism of the Holy Spirit which confused many people. They were encouraged to see this baptism as a second instalment in God's redeeming work. Yuill and Kew move away from that idea and make the gift of the Holy Spirit at conversion the key to their understanding of holiness. They argue from Scripture and from experience that whatever 'baptism in the Spirit' may mean, and however one becomes aware of the experience, it is NOT a second instalment in the work of divine grace which God withholds when conversion takes place. They

emphasise the fact that holiness is not so much a matter of the individual having more of the Spirit, but of the Spirit having greater freedom in individual lives.

The reality of the Holy Spirit's presence from conversion has always been an essential part of Salvationist belief, as the seventh point of doctrine makes clear:

We believe that repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit are necessary to salvation.

The emphasis of Yuill, Kew, and other recent Salvationist writers and teachers, has removed the artificial wedge which had been driven between the conversion and holiness experiences. This means that the rigid framework which was often attached to holiness doctrine has also been removed. The experience is no longer a matter of a traumatic crisis experience or nothing. Nor is it only the 'crisis/process' route. Allowance is now made for factors which fit the experience of many Christians more accurately. There is a recognition that, following conversion, learning to respond to the Holy Spirit is also a process - a way in which new understanding may come quickly or slowly, but which is a continuing work of grace in the life of the believer. The awareness of the 'baptism of the Spirit' may come quietly or in some dramatic moment, but however it comes, the experience of the Spirit's monopoly in our lives is more important than the drama or otherwise of the actual awakening.

This later development in Salvationist teaching means that no experience is barred whether it is described as crisis, process, or in some other way. This

emphasis on the variety of experience is particularly important now that there has been a resurgence of interest in the charismatic experience. There is a renewed danger that people who make quieter spiritual progress may feel, or be regarded as, sub-standard Christians.

In this important area of holiness teaching the foregoing survey leaves no doubt about the developing spirituality within the Army during its non-sacramental period. The teaching has been under constant review and the literature on the subject shows that ideas have been tested and re-tested by reference to the teaching of Scripture. There has also been a sensitivity to the needs of Salvationists of the third and fourth generation for whom the conversion experience was not so dramatic as that of earlier converts, and who subsequently found the concept of 'crisis' or 'second blessing' unhelpful for their understanding of holiness.

The need for a re-evaluation of the Army's sacramental theology in the light of these changes in holiness doctrine, as Rightmire suggests,³⁴ is not the main source of internal discontent with the Army's present position. As has already been pointed out in this research, the contact with the sacraments through fellowship with other churches has proved a more potent force in the demand for change.

However, this does not invalidate Rightmire's call for re-evaluation by the Army of its attitude to the sacraments. The emphasis on growth and development which is so much a part of later holiness teaching in the Army is more than matched by the developmental theology built into the present understanding of the sacraments of baptism and communion. Thus, far from

undermining the essentials of Christian experience as early Salvationist leaders maintained, the re-introduction of the sacraments as means of grace would be appropriate to the needs and expectations which are a part of present Salvationist spirituality.

The developmental element in the sacraments is emphasised by David Brown and Ann Loades in their introduction to an edited volume of essays *The Sense of the Sacramental*. They recognise the dangers which are inherent in thinking of the sacramental 'in essentially static, instantaneous terms', and they argue that such fixed attitudes represent a serious misconception. They write:

Take the case of baptism. To suppose that everything is done in that one act belies all the facts of human experience. The image of adoption that is employed both in Scripture and in the baptismal service surely provides a more reliable guide.

The authors then draw on an Anglican report which uses the analogy of the adoption of children to show that whilst the legal act has an immediate effect on the status of the parent and the child, integration into the family and the establishment of true relationships takes much longer. 'So' claims the report, 'likewise with baptism'. David Brown and Ann Loades then continue:

Baptism is thus the beginning of a movement of the Spirit, a dynamic process whereby, should we continue to respond to that divine initiative, then all our lives will be a matter of continued growth into closer conformity with Christ, whose inheritance as sons and daughters we now share through adoption.

Much the same could be said about other sacramental acts

The sacraments are about development and growth ('movement') within certain specified parameters or boundaries ('measure'); so wherever such movement and measure occur elsewhere in the wider field of God's creation, it becomes plausible to view such a dynamic as enabling us to participate in grace, and to share sacramentally in the life of the Creator from whom this dynamic takes its origin. ³⁵

Two things are remarkable in the above quotations from a Salvationist point of view. First, there is a close resemblance between what is said about the development which should accompany and follow the use of the sacraments and the emphasis we noticed in holiness teaching. Secondly, the concept of the sacramental in 'the wider field of God's creation' is in line with what Catherine Booth and other Salvationist taught. The development of these ideas as they are traced by the contributors to *The Sense of the Sacramental* in 'Sacred Space', 'Sacred Art', 'Sacred Music' and 'Sacred Time', would amaze the Army pioneers. Here is the spiritual emphasis that Army leaders sought to establish when they abandoned the sacraments, but with the essential difference that the traditional sacraments are seen as means of enhancing the sacramental nature of the whole of life. The editors and the contributors show that there is positive reason why holiness and sacramental observance should go together.

A similar emphasis is found in K. B. Osborne. ³⁶ who examines the influence that Tillich's understanding of symbols has had on Roman Catholic sacramental theology. He relates what he describes as Tillich's 'pan-sacramentalism' to the fascination that some Roman Catholic scholars have had with Tillich's thought during recent decades. He also shows how Roman Catholic sacramental thought relates both positively and negatively to Tillich's understanding of sacrament, ecclesiology, ministry, and faith. As the early Salvationist pioneers insisted, so also the above named writers recognise that there are dangers in the observance of the sacramental rites and there is a need

to make the whole of life sacramental, but there is no reason why sacramental rites have to become ends in themselves, nor why they should restrict the meaning of the sacramental to the altar.

Non-sacramental spirituality

In the earliest years of The Salvation Army's existence their methods of worship and evangelism were often misunderstood, but as Robert Sandall, the Army's historian has shown, there was considerable appreciation of the spiritual impact that the movement made upon the Church and society of the late nineteenth century.³⁷

The spiritual impact of Salvation Army meetings was graphically described by Professor J. Stuart Blackie who published an account of his impressions of a gathering he attended in Edinburgh, in 1883. He described the firmness and good humour with which hecklers were dealt with, and the fact that showers of missiles which were hurled through the windows of the meeting room failed to disrupt the gathering. 'I felt', he said, 'intensely interested in the spectacle, not only on account of its novelty but of the honesty, directness and smoking fervour of the whole proceedings'.

When he came to describe the climax of the meeting as people came to kneel at the penitent-form the professor said:

I certainly have never witnessed in our regular church ministrations - not even in the solemn gatherings of a highland sacramental occasion - a sight more sweetly human and more spiritually impressive than when the fair sergeants, or whatever the title of the female ministers of this devout Army, came softly up to the kneeling converts at the base of the dais and,

bending gently over them, whispered sisterly welcome into their ears. Surely the Spirit of God was not far from where such things were done. ³⁸

Professor Blakie's observations belong to the period in which the Army had just decided to abandon the use of the sacraments but the continuing evidence of spirituality in its worship is confirmed by Norman Snaith who, in 1957 wrote:

There are those who hold that the observance of the Sacraments is an essential mark of the Church, the Sacraments being Baptism and the Lord's Supper. This would exclude both the Society of Friends and the Salvation Army. No one can deny that the gifts of the Spirit are manifest in both these communities. I have been in meetings of both, and nowhere could the presence of the Living God have been more evident. Wherever men meet together in true fellowship, united in common love ... for God, and a full trust in Him, there is the Church. ³⁹

Spirituality in Salvationist literature

The spirituality which has been evident in Salvationist worship throughout its history is also reflected in the literature which it has published. William and Catherine Booth, the Army's founders, made their individual contributions to this corpus, and subsequent generations have produced writers who have developed and continued the tradition. William Booth's writings tended to deal with practical matters which affected new converts and the mission in which he sought to get them engaged. Catherine Booth's books were generally transcripts of addresses which she delivered during a very successful ministry in the West End of London (1880-1884). In assessing the influence of Mrs Booth during this period of the Army's history Robert Sandall claims that these series of addresses and their subsequent publication had a profound affect on the public at large and on the spiritual development of The Salvation Army.

This assessment of the influence of the two founding figures of the Army through their public ministry and their writings covers a period from 1865 to well beyond the time when the use of the sacraments was abandoned in 1883. The spiritual impact of such work is clearly established. However, it is less easy to decide the extent to which their backgrounds, that were nurtured in sacramental worship, fed and informed their later work. William Booth had an Anglican and Methodist heritage, and Catherine was nurtured in Methodism. As has already been shown in an earlier part of this chapter, Methodist influences are to be found in the Army's doctrine and teaching, especially in respect of the understanding of holiness. In spite of these influences there is little reference to the sacraments or their significance in the writings of these two leaders except in the defence of their decision to abandon them. On the other hand, the truths which are enshrined in the sacraments, the shed blood and the broken body of Jesus, and the commitment of baptism are themes which are constantly repeated in their ministry.

Bramwell Booth's published work was no less prolific than that of either of his parents but is perhaps now less well known, even amongst Salvationists. Most of his books were published after the death of Catherine (1890) and William (1912). There was variety in Bramwell's output and his reflections on aspects of the Army's early struggles recorded in *Echoes and Memories* have proved a valuable resource for those who study the history of the movement. But this book also contains references to occasions of intense spiritual experience. One such encounter involved a converted costermonger named Cornish, who took an interest in Bramwell when the latter was about fourteen years old. Bramwell tells of visits he made to Cornish's room, a bare garret up three flights of rickety stairs:

We began by praying together, and then I would read to him a little.... Before long I found the most gracious influence coming into my life through this drunkard's prayers, and my visits to him became a kind of institution. He would fry me a piece of bacon, and with some potatoes I often made a meal with him. It was a *veritable sacrament* When we knelt down together and when he began to pray he was so uplifted that it often seemed to me that he was another man, a man with a heavenly mind and an angel tongue

Among the days of greatest progress I have known were those days in association with that strange old man. ⁴⁰ (My italics)

The fact that the influences on Salvationist spirituality cannot be confined within the movement is confirmed by Bramwell Booth's acknowledgement in the preface of his book *Our Master*. The book contains a series of studies on the life and work of Jesus Christ, and the author says:

Much in them has, I do not doubt, come to me directly or indirectly by inspiration or suggestion of other writers and speakers, and I desire therefore to acknowledge my indebtedness to the living, both inside and outside our borders, as well as to the holy dead. ⁴¹

Bramwell Booth does not actually name the sources that influenced him but, as we shall see later, many subsequent Salvationist authors do, and their indebtedness to the sacramental tradition then becomes obvious.

Professor A.E. Taylor dealt with the whole subject of what we may call 'the cross-fertilisation', not only of ideas but of spirituality, in his Gifford Lectures (1926-1928). These were subsequently published in two volumes under the title, *The Faith of a Moralist*. An extensive quotation is required to illustrate the professor's point but it is a matter that has important bearing on the topic which is under review in this research. Taylor writes:

It would ... not be dealing with the question on a sufficiently large scale ... to study and compare the types of spiritual life provided, within the limits of the Christian religious tradition, by a highly sacramental community, like the Roman Catholic Church, and a non-sacramental body, like the Society of Friends. If one relied simply on that comparison, there would, I think, be serious risk of overestimating the spirituality compatible with rejection of the sacramental One needs to remember that the Society of Friends sprang up and has continued to flourish in the midst of a wider Christian community which is sacramental in practice, and that the type of religion which the Society seeks to cultivate was from the first conditioned and prescribed by the existing and powerful tradition, and has ever since been more or less fed by the great devotional literature of this wider community Hence, though Fox and the Society he founded may not practise the Christian sacraments, his life and theirs could not be what they were and are but for the living influence of the sacramental tradition of the Church at large. When one is, so to say, within the 'sphere of influence', even if one is outside the 'occupied territory' of the organised historic Christian Church, one is never really far away from the operation of the Christian sacraments. ⁴²

No doubt there would be some Quakers and some Salvationists who would want to argue with Taylor's conclusions, but if his argument achieves nothing else it serves to remind everyone just how difficult it is to speak of a totally non-sacramental spirituality. The effect of writers from other traditions on Bramwell Booth is an obvious case in point.

Some of the more recent publications have already been mentioned in this chapter and there are too many others to discuss in detail, but one or two selected references give an indication of the areas of Christian life and experience which are dealt with. *The Picture of Happiness*, and *The Eleven Commandments* both by David Guy, are volumes developed from the author's Bible Studies. The first of these is based on the Beatitudes and the second on the Ten Commandments plus the commandment of Jesus that we should love one another. These books are packed with sound spiritual teaching which is

biblically based and supported by illustrations from life, as well as a wealth of quotations from religious and secular writers. No claim is made here to have listed all the authorities that David Guy quotes but the following authors from various sacramental traditions are certainly represented: John Bunyan, W.E. Sangster, Leslie Weatherhead, William Barclay, Charles Raven, Studdert Kennedy, C.S. Lewis, S. Kierkegaard, Thomas Cranmer, Thomas Campion, H.E. Fosdick, and J.B. Phillips - an intriguing mixture of Baptists, Presbyterians, Anglicans, Methodists and Roman Catholics. If evidence were needed that sacramentalists feed and inform non-sacramentalists, surely it is found in such a list which could be greatly extended by reference to other Salvationist writers.

The traffic of spiritual enlightenment has not, however, been all one way. A series of daily Bible readings with comment was launched by The Salvation Army in 1955 under the title *The Soldiers Armoury*. This gained an extensive readership outside the ranks of the Army and earned widespread commendation throughout the religious press. It was frequently recommended as eminently suitable reading for Christians who were looking for material for personal devotional use. Responsibility for the production of this work on a regular basis has been in the hands of some ten writers over the period of its existence. Its title was recently changed to *Words of Life*, but it has retained a faithful readership. All the authors responsible for its production have, of course, drawn widely from the insights of other writers and would acknowledge their indebtedness to such sources.

Sacramental imagery in Salvationist hymnology

Salvationists 'songs' are collected from a wide Christian tradition, and the person who has contributed the greatest number of songs to the Army's current Song Book is Charles Wesley. This probably reflects the Methodist background of many early Army leaders as well as the holiness influence which is so prominent in Wesley's work. However, from the movement's foundation Salvationists have written their own songs, set to original music or to secular Music Hall tunes of the day, and reflecting a Christian optimism which is almost frightening when seen from a distance of over a hundred years. One such song from the pen of William Pearson, who was perhaps the Army's leading song writer in the 1870s and 80s, illustrates the optimism which seized the Army. The poetry is far from classical but it is a kind of marching song which would be familiar in military circles of the day. The verses and chorus read as follows:

God is keeping his soldiers fighting,
 Ever more we shall conquerors be;
 All the hosts of Hell are uniting,
 But we're sure to have victory.
 Though to beat us they've been trying,
 Our colours still are flying,
 And our flag shall wave for ever,
 For we never will give in.

*No, we never, never, never will give in,
 No we won't! No we won't!
 No, we never, never, never will give in,
 For we mean to have the victory for ever.*

We will follow our conquering Saviour,
 From before him Hell's legions shall fly;
 Our battalions never shall waver,
 They're determined to conquer or die.
 From holiness and Heaven we never will be driven;
 We will stand our ground for ever,
 For we never will give in.

With salvation for every nation,
 To the ends of the earth we will go,
 With a free and a full salvation,
 All the power of the cross we'll show.
 We'll tear Hell's throne to pieces,
 And win the world for Jesus,
 We'll be conquerors for ever,
 For we never will give in. ⁴³

There is not too much to quarrel with in the idea of following the 'conquering Saviour' or with the sense of world-wide mission expressed in verse three, but that the Army would 'tear Hell's throne to pieces, And win the world for Jesus,' single-handed, so to speak, has more than a touch of arrogance about it. In viewing the song we have to keep in mind the climate in which it was written. This was an era when the Army was persecuted and was also growing at a rapid rate in Great Britain and overseas. It seemed that the forward rush was unstoppable and the song reflects the confidence which the early Salvationists had. What is a little incongruous is to enter a Salvation Army meeting in Great Britain in the late twentieth century, after a period of decline and entrenchment, and hear the congregation still singing, 'We'll tear Hell's throne to pieces'. Such sentiments have more to do with nostalgia than with spiritual awareness and a sense of reality.

Another song by Pearson which reflects the militarism of the Army is a kind of recruiting, marching, song. Set to the tune 'Ring the bell, watchman' he wrote:

Come, join our Army, to battle we go,
 Jesus will help us to conquer the foe;
 Fighting for right and opposing the wrong,
 The Salvation Army is marching along.

*Marching along, marching along,
 The Salvation Army is marching along;
 Soldiers of Jesus be valiant and strong;
 The Salvation Army is marching along.* ⁴⁴

The spiritual militancy of the early Army is seen in the fact they were not adverse to changing the whole nature of a hymn in order to provide the emphasis they desired. For example, four verses of Frederick W. Faber's hymn, 'Hark, hark, my soul!' have been altered by George Scott Railton as the comparison of the first verse and chorus shows:

Hark, hark, my soul! angelic songs are swelling
 O'er earth's green fields and ocean's wave-beat shore:
 How sweet the truth those blessed strains are telling
 Of that new life when sin shall be no more.

*Angels of Jesus, angels of light,
 Singing to welcome the pilgrims of the night.*
 (F. W. Faber)

Hark, hark, my soul, what warlike songs are swelling
 Through all the land and on from door to door;
 How grand the truths those burning strains are telling
 Of that great war till sin shall be no more.

*Salvation Army, Army of God,
 Onward to conquer the world with fire and blood.*
 (As altered by G.S. Railton) ⁴⁵

Fortunately, there were other early Army songs which reflected a more devotional type of spirituality. Herbert Booth, the third son of William and Catherine, produced a number of these songs and the following is a typical example:

My mind upon thee, Lord, is stayed,
My all upon thy altar laid,
 O hear my prayer!
 And since, in singleness of aim,
 I part with all, thy power to gain,
 O God, draw near!

*Saviour, dear Saviour, draw nearer,
 Humble in spirit I kneel at thy cross;
 Speak out thy wishes still clearer,
 And I will obey at all cost.*

By every promise thou hast made
 And by the price thy love has paid
 For my release,
 I claim the power to make me whole,
 And keep through every hour my soul
 In perfect peace.

And now by faith the deed is done,
 And thou again to live hast come
 Within my heart.
 And rising now with thee, my Lord,
 To lose the world I can afford,
 For mine thou art. ⁴⁶

No definite claim can be made for direct sacramental influences within the verses of this song. However, the line, 'My all is on thy altar laid' in verse one uses the sacrificial language of the Old Testament. It is also worthy of note that 'And rising now with thee, my Lord' is strongly reminiscent of Romans 6:4, where Paul writes: 'We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the father, we too may live a new life'. At the very least, this shows that it is difficult even for non-sacramentalists to avoid sacramentalist ideas in the expression of their understanding of the faith.

Another song by William Pearson shows that he wrote material other than marching songs to which reference has been made earlier, though even here certain military metaphors come through in the last verse. There is also some interesting sacramental imagery in the lines which have been italicised.

I'm set apart for Jesus,
To be a king and priest,
 His life in me increases,
Upon his love I feast.
 From evil separated,
Made holy by his blood,
 My all is consecrated
 Unto the living God.

I'm set apart for Jesus,
 His goodness I have seen,
He makes my heart his altar,
He keeps his temple clean.
 Our union none can sever,
 Together every hour,
 His life is mine for ever
 With resurrection power.

I'm set apart for Jesus,
 With him to ever stay,
 My spirit he releases,
 He drives my foes away.
 He gives full strength for trial
 And shields when darts are hurled;
 With him and self-denial
 I overcome the world. ⁴⁷

The last two songs quoted reflect the strong holiness tradition within the Army, and this has already been discussed in earlier paragraphs of this chapter. As for Salvationist songs which directly refer to a sacramental context, only two have been included in the current Song Book. Both relate to the Lord's Supper and interpret the event in different ways. Catherine Baird, a prolific Salvationist poet, has provided verses which speak powerfully of Christ's

sacrificial work and of the spiritual resources he has made available to believers. The song which concentrates on the broken bread and the broken body of Jesus reads as follows:

Spirit of God, thou art the bread of Heaven
 Come for my need in Jesus Christ the Lord;
 Broken in him whose life was freely given
 In deathless love he only could afford.

Thou art the bread that satisfies for ever,
 The inward health that overcomes disease,
 Thy love that lives through death, subsiding never,
 My secret fortress and my soul's release.

O bread of God, I choose thee now with gladness,
 Though sweet the taste of earthly gain may be;
 My spirit pines in poverty and sadness
 Unless my sustenance be found in thee.

Lord God, I come, thy life in mine is waking;
 Whate'er I am I bring into thy care.
 Thy loving hands will bless me in the breaking
 Of bread thou gavest and I long to share. ⁴⁸

That this song reflects the deep spiritual approach to communion which The Salvation Army has always emphasised, cannot be gainsaid, but it is also a song that would grace any communion service in any Christian tradition. It could also be argued that its spiritual depth would be enhanced in a situation in which the elements were visible and available to the congregation.

The second example also comes from the pen of a prolific Salvationist song writer. Albert Orsborn, who became the sixth General of The Salvation Army had a particular gift for writing devotional songs to popular tunes. This particular song was set to the hymn tune 'Spohr' and has often been described

as 'The Salvation Army's own sacramental song'. Again the concentration is on Christ as the broken bread, but as the verses show, the emphasis is different:

My life must be Christ's broken bread,
 My love his outpoured wine,
 A cup o'erfilled, a table spread
 Beneath his name and sign,
 That other souls, refreshed and fed,
 May share his life through mine.

My all is in the Master's hands
 For him to bless and break;
 Beyond the brook his winepress stands
 And thence my way I take,
 Resolved the whole of love's demands
 To give, for his dear sake.

Lord, let me share that grace of thine
 Wherewith thou didst sustain
 The burden of the fruitful vine,
 The gift of buried grain.
 Who dies with thee, O Word divine,
 Shall rise and live again.⁴⁹

This song also enshrines an important aspect of Salvationist emphasis, namely that the whole of life should be sacramental and has in it the element of living sacrificially for others. However, it lacks the specific focus upon the sacrificial work of Christ that was found in Catherine Baird's song. It is true that certain lines, such as the reference to the broken bread, the cup, and the grace of God in Christ should evoke, in those who use the song, a realisation of the significance of Christ's saving work, but the question arises as to whether that is adequate in a work which is acclaimed as 'the Army's sacramental song'. Sacramentalists would accept the fact that the sacramental life should involve the dimension of service to others, but they would want to begin with a more objective view of the work of Christ which Holy Communion celebrates.

In fairness to Orsborn it has to be noted that many of his other songs concentrate almost entirely on Calvary and the saving work of Christ. Two verses from one particular song will illustrate this point:

I have no claim on grace;
 I have no right to plead;
 I stand before my maker's face
 Condemned in thought and deed.
 But since there died a Lamb
 Who, guiltless, my guilt bore,
 I lay fast hold on Jesus' name,
 And sin is mine no more,

 O pardon-speaking blood!
 O soul renewing grace!
 Through Christ I know the love of God
 And see the Father's face.
 I now set forth thy praise,
 Thy loyal servant I,
 And gladly dedicate my days
 My God to glorify. ⁵⁰

The four major editions of *The Song Book of The Salvation Army* (1899, 1930, 1953, and 1986) do not contain any recognisable sacramental hymns with the possible exception of 'The King of Love my shepherd is'. This was not included until 1953 and then with the omission of the verse which refers to the Lord's Supper, and that omission continues in the latest revision of the book. It is noticeable that when this hymn is used in services of other denominations the fifth verse is often omitted. However, it seems probable that the reference to the chalice, in the verse as quoted below, proved too much for the compilers of the Army's books.

Thou spread'st a table in my sight;
 Thy unction grace bestoweth;
 And O what transport of delight
 From thy pure chalice floweth!

Although the evidence which has been presented in this chapter has had to be selective it shows that The Salvation Army has, throughout its history, displayed a deep and developing spirituality. This is equally true of its early sacramental years and of its long non-sacramental period, while of both periods it is true that sacramental imagery and thought has continued, either directly or indirectly, to enrich that developing spirituality.

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1. COUTTS, J. *The Salvationists*, London, (1978) pp. 53,54
2. BOOTH, BRAMWELL *Echoes and Memories* p.25
3. RIGHTMIRE, R.D. *Sacraments and The Salvation Army: Pneumatological Foundations* p.257
4. NEEDHAM, P. *Community in Mission* pp.26,27
5. SANDALL, R. *The History of The Salvation Army*, Vol.I, London, (1947) p. 47
6. RAILTON, G.S. *General Booth*, London, (1912) p.34
7. *Ibid* p.71
8. BOOTH, BRAMWELL *Echoes and Memories* p.194
9. COUTTS, F. *In Good Company* London (1980) p.50
10. cf. BROOKS P.N. *Thomas Cranmer's Doctrine of the Eucharist* London (1992), Chapter IV pp.72-111

- 11 SANDALL, R. *The History of The Salvation Army*, Vol.II
p. 126
12. COUTTS, F. *No Continuing City* London (1967) p.56
13. COUTTS, J. *The Salvationists* p.54f.
14. YUILL, C. *We need Saints* London (1988) chapters 8, 9, and
10
deal with Wesley and Methodism in relation to The Salvation
Army.
15. HUGHES, H.M. *Christian Foundations*, London (1936)
p.164
16. RACK, H.D. *Reasonable Enthusiast* London (1989) p.157
17. Ibid p.158
18. *The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine* (1940 edition)
p.122f.
19. BOOTH, BRAMWELL *Echoes and Memories* p.191
20. BOWMER, J.C. *The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in
Early Methodism* London (1951) p.61
21. DAVIES, R.E. *Methodism* London (1964) p.108
22. Ibid p.31
23. BOWMER, J.C. *The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in
Early Methodism* pp.2-5
24. Bowmer p.7 quoting Sykes p.251
25. BOWMER, J.C. *The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in
Early Methodism* p.55
26. Ibid p.47
27. RIGHTMIRE, R.D. *Sacraments and The Salvation Army:
Pneumatological Foundations*, p.265

28. COUTTS, J. *The Salvationists* p.58
29. The reference to 'the Brigadier's concertina' is to a period when many Salvation Army officers used the instrument to accompany singing in open-air and indoor meetings. The popularity of the concertina began to decline in the 1940s and officers who continued to use them were regarded as somewhat old-fashioned.
30. COUTTS, J. *The Salvationists* p.59
31. COUTTS, F. *No Continuing City* p.25
32. COUTTS, F. *The Call to Holiness* London (1958) p.34
33. BRENGLE, S.L. *Heart Talks on Holiness* London (1925) p.10
34. RIGHTMIRE, R.D. *Sacraments in the Salvation Army* p.267f
35. BROWN, D., LOADES, A. (Editors) *The Sense of the Sacramental* London (1995) pp.1,2
36. OSBORNE, K.B. 'Tillich's Understanding of Symbols and Roman Catholic Sacramental Theology' in *Paul Tillich: A New Catholic Assessment* edited by R.F. Bulman and F.J. Parrella Minnesota (1984)
37. SANDALL, R. *The History of The Salvation Army* Vol 2 p.199f and 136f
38. Ibid pp.144,145
39. SNAITH, N. *I believe in ...* London (1957) pp.108,109
40. BOOTH, BRAMWELL *Echoes and Memories* pp.154,155
41. BOOTH, BRAMWELL *Our Master* London (1908) p. xi
42. Taylor A.E. *The Faith of A Moralist*, (Two volumes) Macmillan, London, (1932) Vol.II pp.314,315

43. *The Song Book of The Salvation Army, Salvationist
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Song No. 800
44. *Ibid Song No. 681*
45. *Ibid Song No. 802*
46. *Ibid Song No. 513*
47. *Ibid Song No. 495*
48. *Ibid Song No. 631*
49. *Ibid Song No. 512*
50. *Ibid Song No. 29*

CHAPTER 7

THE PRESENT STATE OF SALVATIONIST DEBATE

Until relatively recent times, any published material on the subject of The Salvation Army's attitude to the sacraments followed the official line taken by William Booth in 1883. Research in the Army's archives in London has shown that the same is true of unpublished material in the form of books, articles, notes, and internal memos. It is also part of this researcher's experience that discussions on the subject were relatively rare among Salvationists until the late nineteen-fifties and early sixties. Such discussion as did take place tended to rehearse the official statements.

As already suggested in this work, the contact which Salvationists had with other Christians through the ecumenical movement gave rise to new attitudes to the sacraments. Not only did they find their position challenged by sacramentalists but they were also given opportunities to take part in sacramental worship. In this new climate many Salvationists found themselves ill-informed about the grounds on which the decision to abandon the sacraments had been taken, and when offered communion some others were faced with a dilemma - should they accept the offer or refuse it?

The first evidence that a thaw was beginning to affect Salvationist opinions appeared in informal discussions which took place when Salvationists met in small groups over a meal table or during an interval between large public meetings. These discussions became much more critical of the official arguments which had been advanced to support the Army's stance.

In these informal discussions the possibility that the sacraments could be helpful in worship and the development of spirituality was often debated but the principal Army claim that they were not essential to salvation was not questioned. Some people dared to suggest that the symbols which Salvationists used were inadequate. On one occasion an officer said that 'in Army worship we have, in the Penitent Form or Mercy Seat, a symbol of man's approach to God, but no symbols of God's approach to man'. He then went on to claim that the re-introduction of the Lord's Supper would make good that deficiency.

It would be a mistake to suggest that the emergence of this spirit of debate means that all Salvationists are involved in regular discussions on the sacraments. What surveys in connection with this research have revealed is that the majority of officers and soldiers show no interest in the subject at all. Among those who expressed opinions, about a third said they held no strong views either way; they were quite comfortable with the Army's official position. However, it has to be added that in all but two of these cases they took part in communion when there was an open invitation to do so.

The debate in Salvation Army publications

In spite of these unofficial changes the official attitude remained quite inflexible. One Salvationist writer had a series of articles rejected at proof-page stage because the then Editor-in-Chief objected to the assertion that Salvationists were 'challenged' regarding their attitude to the sacraments. This decision was taken even though the general tenor of the series supported the official line. The leader concerned in this decision insisted that Salvationists were not 'challenged' but they were sometimes 'questioned'. This seemed like

perverse hair-splitting at the time. However, official power to prevent publication of material which raised even moderate questions about the official position could not stifle informal discussion.

The most open printed debate on the Army's attitude to the sacraments appeared in Salvationist during the period 1993 to 1995. This was a time when the letters column of the Army's official newspaper contained frequent references to the subject. The extent to which this correspondence reflected opinions throughout the Army is difficult to determine. We cannot be sure of the extent to which the editor has been selective in the letters published. What we can see is that the letters provided a forum for those with strong opinions on both sides of the debate who were also ready to write to the paper. Whatever limitations may have been imposed on this correspondence, it is remarkable in that it reflects the breadth of opinion found in material collected from soldiers, officers, and ex-Salvationists during the course of this research.

Of some twenty-two letters and articles published between 20 February 1993 and 12 February, 1995, nine supported the Army's official position whilst thirteen called for some kind of change or urgent review.

Most of the Salvationist correspondence was sparked-off by an article by Max Ryan in his regular 'Deep and Wide' column. He addressed the subject of 'The Eucharist by the back door?'¹ His contention was that in some Salvation Army corps the love feast was being used as a means of introducing communion 'by the back door'. He supported his arguments by claiming that the love feast was primarily intended as a means of effecting reconciliation when divisions had occurred within the corps. In this article Max Ryan showed

some of the fears and misunderstandings which have come to be associated with the love feast. First, there is a feeling in some quarters that the love feast has lost its original emphasis and become nothing more than a 'poor man's' type of communion and is now simply an attempt to introduce communion under another name. (Some evidence to support this view has already been provided in this work.) Secondly, there is a hazy understanding of the proper nature of the love feast.

Three correspondents took Ryan to task on the points that he made.² They showed that in Methodist and early Salvationist tradition, as well as in the New Testament, the love feast was not restricted to reconciliation. It was also used to strengthen and deepen the existing bonds of fellowship.

C.T. Robinson and David Guy also questioned directly the idea that attempts were being made to introduce the 'Eucharist by the back door'. David Guy took the matter further by showing that, historically, changes in the Army have taken place because Salvationists chose to alter things and not because decisions were made at top administrative level. He then went on to suggest that 'the re-employment of the love feast points to a growing awareness that something is missing from Army worship and that more is needed than a diet consisting almost entirely of hymns and homilies'. He also challenged Max Ryan and readers of *Salvationist* to face the question that since 'administration bows to pressure from the secular world; why should it not also accept the evolutionary impellings of the Christian laity?'

The third correspondent, Kenneth Hawkins, takes Max Ryan to task on the grounds that his article about the love feast contradicts an earlier call Ryan

had made for relevant and improved worship. This correspondent then takes up Ryan's acknowledgement that the Army has already employed a diversity of non-biblical symbols which make our particular Christian work and worship meaningful. Hawkins then makes the point:

In the present climate of hope for closer fellowship with other Christians, surely we can equally draw upon other means of grace which enhance, rather than damage, our basic emphasis upon holiness.

....As the [Scriptural] context of the Last Supper passages clearly indicates, Jesus offered his bread to weak, fickle, argumentative disciples.

The desire to 'make visible' the meal fellowship of Jesus in this way, until he returns, can only serve to enliven Army worship. We cannot seek a variety of Spirit-led improvements while at the same time clamping down within the arbitrary limits of an historic tradition.³

Much of the remaining correspondence which questions the Army position is a call to consider the points raised in these three letters and to debate and review the whole issue of the sacraments.

These claims for change did not have universal support in the correspondence columns of Salvationist. W. Peverell put it curtly when he wrote:

Concerning the subject of communion and baptism - I cannot see what the problem is. If people want to take communion and be baptised, they can go to a church that practises the sacraments. The Army doesn't and that's that! ⁴

Not everyone who opposed change in the Army put their case quite so tersely but they were no less firm in their views. Joy Emmons, writing from Chile argued, that 'the something missing' from Salvationist worship that David

Guy had mentioned was not the use of the sacraments, nor yet the moving of the Holy Spirit amongst the worshippers, but an obedient response to the revelation given by the Spirit.

Emmons then produces standard Salvationist arguments in support of her position. She insists that 'the altar call [a call for public commitment usually registered at the mercy seat] is *our* communion service'. She also takes the view that we should remember the broken body of Jesus every time we take a family meal. She claims: 'It is not through the communion service that we obtain communion with him, but by a broken and contrite spirit. The institution of the sacraments will serve only to divide, not unite us.'⁵

Another supporter of the present Army position was Wesley Harris, who at the time of writing was territorial commander of The Salvation Army in Canada. He was concerned that 'an undue emphasis on rituals might be as divisive in the Army as it has sometimes been elsewhere. He quoted an Anglican Bishop who had declared that communion with unfermented wine was invalid. Harris judged that to be 'an expression of externalism which most Salvationists would find it impossible to accept'. He continued: 'It is not what is in the chalice but what is in the heart that counts'.

Harris also claimed that the biblical basis for the Army's long established position had been recently set out in a booklet, *The Sacraments - a biblical/historical perspective*. In fact, this Canadian publication simply restates the arguments which have been set out in the more substantial books mentioned earlier in this research, namely, *The Sacraments: the Salvationists viewpoint*, *Closer Communion*, *The Salvationist and the Sacraments*, and

Community in Mission. Harris then also falls back on Salvation Army tradition without any further examination of the arguments. His parting shot demonstrates either extreme naivety or a dangerous brand of Salvationist arrogance when he says:

I would be sorry if, in the Army, ecclesiastical correctness ever seemed more important than evangelical effectiveness.⁶

The writer implies that ecclesiastical correctness and evangelical effectiveness cannot possibly exist together - a piece of flawed reasoning if ever there was one. Even worse, he suggests that a non-sacramental Army has preserved its evangelical effectiveness which, at least in large areas of the Western world, is just not true.

Another correspondent, Frank Pascoe, came to the debate from the angle of personal experience and arrived at the traditional Army position, but not by the traditional Army route. He told how he and his wife came to the Army and to officership as a result of a divine call which took them from a congregation that practised communion. He claimed that during the time they were members of that congregation they never felt it necessary to receive the bread and wine. For Pascoe the essential thing is 'to remember Christ in *all* we do and not just at one particular moment of worship, however meaningful such a moment may be to many'.⁷

Another significant comment on the subject of communion in the Army appeared in an account of an interview with The Right Reverend Stanley Booth-Clibborn, retired Bishop of Manchester, and a great-grandson of William and Catherine Booth. The Bishop said that he thought some aspects of

Salvation Army organisation and methods would be different if William Booth was starting his work in the late twentieth century. On the matter of the sacraments he observed:

The Army's position on the Sacraments might be different too. This is no longer the divisive issue that it was in the last century and I do think the Army ought to look at this once again. The sacrament of Holy Communion is such a tremendous influence on the lives of so many Christians. Perhaps a possible way forward will be for the Army in these days to encourage its soldiers to do as they did in the early years - to go to Communion in their own local churches. This might be a way of meeting with this difficulty rather than the Army having Communion itself. But, on the other hand, I would understand if many Salvationists would prefer their own communion services because it is such an important part of Christian worship.⁸

Booth-Clibborn speaks from outside The Salvation Army but with an obvious sensitivity for the movement's history and traditions. The call for the Army to reconsider its position on the sacraments highlights the fact that since Railton questioned the value of sacraments in worship, the official line taken by the Army has been to follow the 1883 decision with plenty of apologetic argument to support the non-sacramental position, but without too much heart searching.

Frederick Coutts who was General of the Army from 1963 to 1969 was probably the leader who wrote most widely on the subject, but he was so thoroughly convinced of the rightness of the Army's teaching that his considerable scholarship was devoted to marshalling authorities which gave support to the official position. When he found in Norman Snaith and John Macquarrie authorities that confirmed the reality of Salvationist spirituality without sacramental practice he said, 'With two such judgments we Salvationists can rest content'.⁹

More recently, Eva Burrows, who was General from 1986 to 1993, took a largely uncritical view of the Army's sacramental position. She endorsed Phil Needham's *Community in Mission* (which was regarded as a supplement to the Army's response to the Lima Document, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*) by saying: 'I believe he has produced a volume which will become a standard work giving a sound and convincing view of The Salvation Army's role and purpose in the Christian Church today'.¹⁰ Her ready acceptance of the traditional Army position can be seen in her address to the Swiss Evangelical Alliance in Bern when she said of the occasion: 'I gave my presentation with a confidence borne of the Spirit, and with an assurance of the rightness of our non-sacramental position; also in the belief that The Salvation Army is part of the church, the body of Christ'.¹¹ The same kind of acceptance can be seen in her explanation of the Army's withdrawal from full membership of the World Council of Churches. This decision was made during the command of a previous General but she explained it thus:

The Salvation Army moved from full membership in the World Council of Churches to what we call 'fraternal status' for several reasons. One was that we felt the WCC was too much involved in the politicization of its activity. Also, the stress on eucharistic fellowship made us wonder if perhaps The Salvation Army were being pushed out of the Christian family. We also thought that the World Council was not giving enough significance to the evangelical purpose of the Church.¹²

There is no hint here that Burrows was aware of the sacramental issues that were troubling some Salvationists, but this can hardly be true because, on the occasion of her farewell meeting to attend the High Council which was to elect her General in 1986, an Australian Salvationist made a public call for her to raise the issue of the sacraments in the Leaders' Conference which was to follow the election. An observer who was present on that occasion said that the

congregation erupted in spontaneous applause. It was also during the period of her generalship that the greatest freedom was given to the discussion of these matters in the Army's press. She seems to have taken the attitude that if the official arguments were advanced with sufficient frequency all the problems would be solved.

One Salvationist leader who has an obvious grasp of some of the problems arising from the Army's position is Commissioner Earle Maxwell. He was appointed Chief of the Staff (the second-in-command in the Army) in 1993 and in an interview given to Salvationist when he was asked: 'Is the Army's sacramental position tenable?', he replied:

I don't have any difficulty in understanding and accepting the Army's present position. But I have served in some countries where our work has come under pressure, particularly with new converts. I think of my experience in the Singapore and Malaysia Command where people with a wonderful experience of conversion would seek to get to know other Christians. Because these new converts had not had the opportunity to understand the Army's position, some of them turned to other branches of the Christian Church on this very issue. ¹³

Maxwell's experience in this matter of converts can be supported from the findings of this research. One officer working in South America said that the Army's evangelical work would be much more successful and more generally accepted if it allowed the use of baptism and the Lord's Supper. This opinion was also confirmed by two officers who have served in Africa. A more recent correspondent who is working at a new opening in England is experiencing similar problems. He has no difficulty with the Army's position on the Eucharist but baptism is a different matter. In 1995 he wrote:

Many of our new Christians here have been baptised, not by myself although that has been hard not to do, simply because they say 'the Bible tells me to be baptised'. I cannot argue with that! I long for the day when I could and would baptise my people. ¹⁴

As with many other aspects of this subject, the above opinions do not represent the whole story. I was given a verbal account of a discussion which took place at a meeting of Salvation Army international leaders at which an Indian delegate pleaded with those assembled not to introduce the sacraments, saying that in India there were already too many rituals which had come to have little impact on the population at large. To introduce the sacraments into Army worship would not make its work in India easier, but harder.

Summing up the sacrament debate that had been conducted in Salvationist during 1993, Ray Caddy replied on behalf of the Army's International Headquarters. The argument he put forward followed familiar ground. He maintained that the sacraments are not necessary to salvation and the Army, following the Quakers, at least in some degree, had decided to abandon their use. He also applied the argument that the Army frequently uses, that a critical examination of Scripture does not require Christians to celebrate the supper or to include baptism as an initiation ceremony. When it comes to the matter of tradition he argues that considerable abuse of the sacraments in Victorian England was one factor that led the Army to discontinue their use. He gives much more weight to the doctrinal differences which exist between the churches than does Bishop Booth-Clibborn for example, and he contends that those Salvationists who call for the re-introduction of the sacraments have not given sufficient attention to this aspect of the subject. In an attempt to give serious consideration to this he writes:

Of course there is ecumenical pressure for us to show solidarity with those who are wanting us to join them in the name of a common baptismal and

eucharistic unity, but fudging reality does little to promote the unity of the Church. It is unhelpful to pretend agreement where little exists. There is a perfectly valid bond between all churches which confess Jesus Christ as Lord, without pretending that churches share the same sacraments. If sacramental unity existed to provide a common bond between Christians, there would be no longer exclusions from each other's tables either as communicants or celebrants. ¹⁵

The differences in sacramental theology are, of course, important, but Caddy fails to recognise the things that sacramentalists have in common: namely that baptism, however it is observed, has in itself fundamental significance as a rite of initiation and commissioning; also that the Lord's Supper is recognised throughout the Church as a symbol of Christ's atoning sacrifice. If unity is only by theological agreement there are whole areas of the faith which are potentially divisive, not only in the Church at large but also within the Army. An example of this is found in a letter that challenged Caddy's use of Scripture. Trevor Lynes wrote, 'The Army is traditionally a fundamentalist body, and I hope that a corrective statement can be issued confirming our first Article of Faith [that is belief in the inspiration and authority of Scripture]' .¹⁶ As Ray Caddy pointed out in footnote to this letter the infallibility of Scripture has never been the official Army position, but Lynes is not untypical of a significant body of opinion among Salvationists. The point is that the Army, like the Church at large, contains all shades of opinion on Scripture from inerrancy to extreme liberalism, and Caddy himself recognises that our first Article of Faith should not be used as a 'means test' to enable Salvationists to accuse one another of heresy .¹⁷ If such freedom is allowed in attitudes to Scripture how can the Army possibly argue that there can be no common meeting ground amongst those who hold differing views on the theology of the sacraments?

An important point which seems to have been missed in the various traditional responses to the challenges to the Army's non-sacramental position was raised by André Collette in a letter to Salvationist published on 20 November, 1993. He wrote:

May I say how glad I am to see the issue of the sacraments being debated among us at long last. However, it would seem that so far the debate has centred on the point 'Are the sacraments essential?' The theological debate is vital, but I wish to make one very pragmatic point.

For us as a church the issue may not be whether or not the sacraments are essential but, rather, whether they are desirable. The great majority of church-goers world wide seems to believe they are, and we need to sit up and take notice. Baptism and communion are wonderful channels of God's grace as are other aspects of worship such as Scripture reading, music-making and the preaching of God's prophetic wordShould we not now take the wonderful opportunity to institute the sacraments within our movement, our church, to the glory of God and the enrichment of his Salvationists? ¹⁸

Barbara Bolton took up this point when she wrote to The Officer:

I do not regard the sacraments as essential for salvation. *I do think they can be of great assistance in living a life of faith.* I hope the Army will keep this matter under review. ¹⁹ (My italics)

In her letter she also highlights a number of other issues which have been raised at various points in this research. She understands the reasons which prompted Catherine Booth and George Scott Railton to think as they did and William Booth to write as he did when he announced that the Army was to become non-sacramental and she continues:

I think the Army's non-sacramental stance has certain value, particularly the insistence that no symbol may replace a personal experience of Jesus Christ, based on repentance from sin and faith in God's saving grace.

But the fact remains that the universally accepted symbol of belonging to Christ's Church is baptism, the symbol of fellowship in that Church is holy

communion. It is true that different churches administer these sacraments differently and indeed hold varying theological positions on them. But the sacraments are, in the main, a unifying bond today.²⁰

Barbara Bolton also thinks that the respect that many other Christians express for the Army's attitude to the sacraments may owe more to 'their generosity than to the validity of our position'. 'We would', she claims, 'be in a stronger position if we eschewed symbols completely. But we don't. The Army has many symbols.' As for the Army's attitude she says, 'for a long time we have argued that Salvationists are the only soldiers in the Army of Christ who are marching in step regarding this issue. (I take note of the Quakers but in certain areas we and the Quakers think quite differently.)' She also sees the danger that can be associated with symbols but recognises that anything can be abused, including things which are essentially Salvationist.

Bolton had her spiritual roots in the Anglican Church and in some measure this may account for her sentiment when she says: 'I left the sacraments behind with scarcely a thought when, at seventeen, I became a Salvationist. But for many years now I have felt some regret for them'. But Anglican influence or not the recent debate shows that she obviously speaks for a significant number of other Salvationists in that desire for sacramental worship.

Another aspect of sacramental worship which has generally been ignored by the official Salvationist position is the fact that we all have a need for symbols. Alan Coward addressed this point in reply to an earlier letter which had suggested that since we have the presence of the risen Christ we do not need symbols. Coward wrote:

Few theologians would now suggest that partaking in Holy Communion is necessary to salvation, but a number might take issue with the statement 'We have the "real presence", why bother with the symbol?'

Religious worship cannot be undertaken without focus. The 'presence' has to be symbolised whether by a physical substance, and activity or a concept of the mind. The Christian experience of the "real presence" is indefinable and profoundly personal, but by definition congregational worship requires a God-given dynamic crystallisation of faith, or we would have nothing to say and nothing to do.

All denominations find symbols important, whether they be the passing of grapejuice as a symbol of Christ's death, stringing together words as sermons or testimonies, using picture-stories or playing carols. That some are considered practical and others not is irrelevant - the significance is in the spiritual intensity of the act. ²¹

The writer does not call for the Army to introduce the traditional sacraments into its worship but rather for Salvationists to have a greater appreciation of the effectiveness of sacramental worship as used by other Christians

Views collected from other sources

As I have already indicated, the views I have collected by means of interviews and conversations with Salvationists and others show a marked similarity to the correspondence reviewed in the foregoing paragraphs. There are, however, one or two significant experiences which add to the debate.

Conversations with some Norwegian officers revealed a situation which is quite different from that of Salvationists in most other countries. In Norway The Salvation Army does not have or claim the status of a church but is regarded as a religious organisation. Consequently, Salvationists are generally members of the Lutheran Church. They are baptised and confirmed as

Lutherans and can, if they desire to do so, receive communion in the church to which they belong. In such circumstances one might expect to that there would be a certain indifference to the problem of sacramental worship. But the fact that Salvationists had to go elsewhere for baptism and confirmation was seen as a disadvantage because it led to a number of losses from the movement. Many officers were beginning to introduce a kind of confirmation service into their own programme. They were keen that the Army should accept church status and should have its own sacraments. The one area of the Norwegian Territory of The Salvation Army where there was said to be serious opposition to this view was the Faeroe Islands, where many people had become Salvationists following serious disputes about communion.

Opinions collected from Australia, New Zealand, and the United States are generally in line with those found in the United Kingdom. There is a growing interest in the sacraments and a strong body of opinion calling for a reconsideration of the Army's position. Joseph Viola writing to The Officer from the United States commented on the introduction of the word 'ordain' into the Army's commissioning ceremony. There had been some previous reference to the fact that 'ordained' and 'ordained ministry' were 'becoming necessary to give The Salvation Army and its officers a place in Church and state relationships which we rightly claim'.²² Viola's personal view was:

If this is the only reason for the term 'ordained' being used, we might as well recommend that we begin practising baptism and administering communion. This would instantly, and without debate, give us 'the place ... which we rightly claim'. To incorporate these sacraments into our meeting structure would take the stuffing out of any argument that any church or state might give to make us less than what we are. In fact I am convinced they would welcome us with open arms, for the observance of sacraments would impress them much more than the use of words.²³

This comment was prompted by the practical experience that the Army in America was not seriously regarded as a church, and the use of 'ordained' and 'ordained ministry' had not influenced the situation in the slightest.

Another officer, working in Britain, described how a number of people from a Pentecostal background came to worship for a short time with Salvationists in the corps where he was stationed and that it was not long before the Army's attitude to the sacraments was raised. He reported that in the discussions which followed Salvationists were woefully ignorant of the grounds on which the original decision had been taken by William Booth. It was also evident that they had not read any of the subsequent Salvationist literature dealing with the subject. This would seem to confirm a view that people who have been brought up in the Army tend to take little interest in the sacraments until they are faced with questions or exposed to sacramental experience through contact with other Christian bodies.

NOTES

1. Salvationist, 'Deep and Wide' an article by Lieutenant Colonel Max Ryan, 15 May 1993, p.5
2. Ibid, Letters Column, 19 June, 1993, p.12
3. Ibid, Letters Column, 19 June, 1993, p.12
4. Ibid, Letters Column, 27 November, 1993, p.12
5. Ibid, Letters Column, 18 September, 1993, p.13
6. Ibid, Letters Column, 18 December, 1993, pp. 12,13
7. Ibid, Letters Column, 16 October, 1993, p.12
8. Ibid, Interview with Bishop Stanley Booth-Clibborn 20 February, 1993, p.10

9. COUTTS, F. *In Good Company*, p.57
(see also *No Continuing City*, pp.140,141)
10. NEEDHAM, P. *Community in Mission*, Foreword p.v
(see also Chapter 7 of this research)
11. GARIEPY, H. *General of God's Army*, p.338
12. *Ibid*, p.208
13. Salvationist, Interview with Commissioner Earle
Maxwell 16 October, 1993, p.9
14. Personal letter to me (K. Lawson) dated
20 April, 1995
15. Salvationist, 'The Army's Valid Position' by
Major Ray Caddy, 18 December, 1993, p.13
16. *Ibid*, Letters Column, 12 February, 1994, p.12
17. *Ibid*, Letters Column, 12 February, 1994, p.12
18. *Ibid*, Letters Column, 20 November, 1993, p.12
19. The Officer, November 1992, p.511
20. *Ibid*, p.510
21. Salvationist, Letters Column, 23 October, 1993,
p.12
22. The Officer, Article by Victor Keanie, February,
1986
23. *Ibid*, 'Dimensions' May 1988, pp.222,223

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

What has been described in this research gives some indication of the problems which arise from The Salvation Army's attitude to sacraments and symbols and of the debate that is now going on within the Army. The weight of evidence also suggests that the majority of those who think about the issue at all are in favour of a serious examination of the matter. However, there is also a body of opinion which is against change. Some are convinced that the introduction of sacraments would bring division into the Army and others are simply happy to abide by the one-hundred-year-old Salvationist tradition. As a result of these conflicting views it is impossible to quantify the strength of Army opinion which is in favour of change.

The work also highlights a number of issues that Army officialdom needs to address. These include a serious examination of the value that the sacraments could add to Salvationists worship, and the influence such introduction would have on its evangelism as well as its standing in ecumenical circles. There is also a need for a serious reappraisal of the Army's understanding of symbols. The fact that it has disposed of what it regards as the dreaded words 'transubstantiation' and 'consubstantiation' does not mean that it has dealt with symbolism. What it fails to understand is the inherent need for symbolism and for the idea that symbols are more than empty objects. Such works as F.W. Dillistone, *Christianity and Symbolism*, Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, E. Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist*, and Horton Davies, *Bread of Life and Cup of Joy*, could help in re-assessing both the understanding of the

sacramental symbols and the Army's developing attitude to its own symbols which have themselves acquired more than mere representational meaning.

Many of the practical reasons for the abandonment of the use of sacraments in the Army have ceased to be important and changes in theological climate have removed most of the doctrinal objections. A broader appraisal of what the Bible teaches about the sacraments, together with a more balanced view of history and scholarship, would ensure that the arguments which are presented by various Army writers are better informed.

The Army's apologetic approach to the literature which seeks to explain its attitude to the sacraments has generally kept its thinking on the subject at a standstill since 1883. This is in sharp contrast with the Church at large where there has been continued exploration and reinterpretation of the traditional views. Such lively debate is a sign of spiritual health and the correspondence which has been reviewed in chapter seven of this research shows that Salvationists have a vital interest in the subject. What is now required is that Army leaders will be equally forward looking.

It would be naive to suggest that there are easy solutions to the problems which the debate raises, although it does seem that some of the objections to change could be met if it was recognised that no Salvationist would be compelled to take communion or to receive baptism against their will, and it was also established that the Army's insistence that the sacraments are not essential to salvation would not be changed. Any barriers that would exist would be caused by setting a one-hundred-year-old tradition against a tradition that has lasted for almost two thousand years. If the Army made the transition

from the sacramental to the non-sacramental without too many dramas, it is difficult to see why anything, other than extreme prejudice, should hinder a change in the other direction.

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APPENDIX A

Articles of marriage for Salvationists

1 We do solemnly declare that we have not sought this marriage for the sake of our own happiness and interests only, although we hope these will be furthered thereby; but because we believe that the union will enable us better to please and serve God, and more earnestly and successfully fight and work in The Salvation Army.

2 We here promise that we will not allow our marriage in any way to lessen our devotion to God, our affection for our comrades, or our faithfulness to the Army.

3 We each individually promise that we will never do anything likely to prevent the other's doing or giving or suffering anything that is in his or her power to do, give, or suffer to assist the Army; believing that in so doing we shall best promote the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

4 We also promise that we will use all our influence with each other to promote our constant and entire self-sacrifice in fighting in the ranks of the Army for the salvation of the world.

5 We also promise always to regard our home in every way as a Salvation Army Soldier's (or Officer's) quarters, and to arrange it accordingly, and to train all in it, who may be under our influence and authority, for faithful and efficient service in the Army.

6 We promise, whether together or apart, always to do our utmost as true Soldiers of Jesus Christ to carry on and sustain the war, and never to allow the Army to be injured or hindered in any of its interests without doing our utmost to prevent it.

7 Should either of us from sickness, death, or any other cause cease to be efficient soldiers, we engage that the remaining one shall continue to the best of his or her ability to fulfil all these promises.

(From *The History of The Salvation Army*, Vol II, by Robert Sandall, p 314)

Revised articles of marriage (1989)

We do solemnly declare that, although we enter into this marriage for reasons of personal happiness and fulfilment, we will do our utmost to ensure that our married status and relationship will deepen our commitment to God and enhance the effectiveness of our service as soldiers of Jesus Christ in The Salvation Army.

We promise to make our home a place where all shall be aware of the abiding presence of God, and where those under our influence shall be taught the truths of the gospel, encouraged to seek Christ as Saviour, and supported in the commitment of their lives to the service of God.

We declare our intention to be to each other, by the help of God, true Christian examples and, through times of joy, difficulty or loss, to encourage each other to 'grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ'.

(From *Salvation Army Ceremonies*, 1989 Edition.)

Articles of War

A Soldier's Covenant

HAVING accepted Jesus Christ as my Saviour and Lord, and desiring to fulfil my membership of his Church on earth as a soldier of The Salvation Army, I now by God's grace enter into a sacred covenant.

I believe and will live by the truths of the word of God expressed in The Salvation Army's eleven articles of faith.

We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God; and that they only constitute the Divine rule of Christian faith and practice.

We believe that there is only one God, who is infinitely perfect, the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things, and who is the only proper object of religious worship.

We believe that there are three persons in the Godhead - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost - undivided in essence and co-equal in power and glory.

We believe that in the person of Jesus Christ the Divine and human natures are united, so that he is truly and properly God and truly and properly man.

We believe that our first parents were created in a state of innocency, but by their disobedience they lost their purity and happiness; and that in consequence of their fall all men have become sinners, totally depraved, and as such are justly exposed to the wrath of God.

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has, by his suffering and death, made an atonement for the whole world so that whosoever will may be saved.

We believe that repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit are necessary to salvation.

We believe that we are justified by grace, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; and that he that believeth hath the witness in himself.

We believe that continuance in a state of salvation depends upon continued obedient faith in Christ.

We believe that it is the privilege of all believers to be wholly sanctified, and that their whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We believe in the immortality of the soul; in the resurrection of the body; in the general judgment at the end of the world; in the eternal happiness of the righteous; and in the endless punishment of the wicked.

I will be responsive to the Holy Spirit's work and obedient to his leading in my life; growing in grace through worship, prayer, service and the reading of the Bible.

I will make the values of the Kingdom of God and not the values of the world the standard for my life.

I will uphold Christian integrity in every area of my life, allowing nothing in thought, word or deed that is unworthy, unclean, untrue, profane, dishonest or immoral.

I will maintain Christian ideals in all my relationships with others; my family and neighbours, my colleagues and fellow Salvationists, those to whom and for whom I am responsible, and the wider community.

I will uphold the sanctity of marriage and of family life.

I will be a faithful steward of my time and gifts, my money and possessions, my body, my mind, and my spirit, knowing that I am accountable to God.

I will abstain from alcoholic drink, tobacco, the non-medical use of addictive drugs, gambling, pornography, the occult, and all else that could enslave the body or spirit.

I will be faithful to the purposes for which God raised up The Salvation Army, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ, endeavouring to win others to him, and in his name caring for the needy and disadvantaged.

I will be actively involved, as I am able, in the life, work, worship and witness of the corps, giving as large a proportion of my income as possible to support its ministries and the worldwide work of the Army.

I will be true to the principles and practices of The Salvation Army, loyal to its leaders, and I will show the spirit of salvationism whether in times of popularity or persecution.

I now call upon all present to witness that I enter into this covenant and sign these articles of war of my own free will, convinced that the love of Christ, who died and now lives to save me, requires from me this devotion of my life to his service for the salvation of the whole world; and therefore do here declare my full determination, by God's help, to be a true soldier of The Salvation Army.

Signed Corps

Signature of corps officer Date

