

SAMUEL L. BRENGLE'S HOLY LIFE SERIES

Helps to Holiness



SAMUEL L. BRENGLE

BOB HOSTETLER, GENERAL EDITOR

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HELPS TO HOLINESS

Dr. Brenner

Bob Hostetler, General Editor

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Preface



Samuel Logan Brengle was an influential author, teacher, and preacher on the doctrine of holiness in the late nineteenth to early twentieth century, serving from 1887–1931 as an active officer (minister) in The Salvation Army. In 1889 while he and his wife, Elizabeth Swift Brengle, were serving as corps officers (pastors) in Boston, Massachusetts, a brick thrown by a street “tough” smashed Brengle’s head against a door frame and caused an injury severe enough to require more than nineteen months of convalescence. During that treatment and recuperation period, he began writing articles on holiness for The Salvation Army’s publication, *The War Cry*, which were later collected and published as a “little red book” under the title *Helps to Holiness*. That book’s success led to eight others over the next forty-five years: *Heart Talks on Holiness*, *The Way of Holiness*, *The Soul-Winner’s Secret*, *When the Holy Ghost Is Come*, *Love-Slaves*, *Resurrection Life and Power*,

Ancient Prophets and Modern Problems, and *The Guest of the Soul* (published in his retirement in 1934).

By the time of his death in 1936, Commissioner Brengle was an internationally renowned preacher and worldwide ambassador of holiness. His influence continues today, perhaps more than any Salvationist in history besides the founders, William and Catherine Booth.

I hope that the revised and updated editions of his books that comprise the Samuel L. Brengle's Holy Life Series will enhance and enlarge that influence, introduce these writings to new readers, and create fresh interest in those who already know the godly wisdom and life-changing power of these volumes.

While I have taken care to preserve the integrity, impact, and voice of the original writing, I have carefully and prayerfully made changes that I hope will facilitate greater understanding and appreciation of Brengle's words for modern readers. These changes include:

- Revising archaic terms (such as the use of King James English) and updating the language to reflect more contemporary usage (such as occasionally employing more inclusive gender references);
- Shortening and simplifying sentence structure and revising punctuation to conform more closely to contemporary practice;
- Explaining specific references of The Salvation Army that will not be familiar to the general population;
- Updating Scripture references (when possible retaining the King James Version—used exclusively in Brengle's writings—but frequently incorporating modern versions, especially when doing so will aid the reader's comprehension and enjoyment);

- Replacing Roman numerals with Arabic numerals and spelled out Scripture references for the sake of those who are less familiar with the Bible;
- Citing Scripture quotes not referenced in the original and noting the sources for quotes, lines from hymns, etc.;
- Aligning all quoted material to the source (Brenkle, who often quoted not only Scripture, but also poetry from memory, often quoted loosely in speaking and writing);
- Adding occasional explanatory phrases or endnotes to identify people or events that might not be familiar to modern readers;
- Revising or replacing some chapter titles, and (in *Ancient Prophets and Modern Problems*) moving one chapter to later in the book; and
- Deleting the prefaces that introduced each book and epigraphs that preceded some chapters.

In the preface to Brenkle's first book, Commissioner (later General) Bramwell Booth wrote, "This book is intended to help every reader of its pages into the immediate enjoyment of Bible holiness. Its writer is an officer of The Salvation Army who, having a gracious experience of the things whereof he writes, has been signally used of God, both in life and testimony, to the sanctifying of the Lord's people, as well as in the salvation of sinners. I commend him and what he has here written down to every lover of God and His kingdom here on earth."

In the preface to Brenkle's last book, *The Guest of the Soul*, The Salvation Army's third general (and successor to Bramwell Booth) wrote: "These choice contributions . . . will, I am sure, serve to



strengthen the faith of the readers of this book and impress upon them the joyousness of life when the heart has been opened to the Holy Guest of the Soul.”

I hope and pray that this updated version of Brengle’s writings will further those aims.

—Bob Hostetler
general editor

Introduction



On January 9, 1885, at about nine o'clock in the morning, God sanctified my soul. I was in my own room at the time, but in a few minutes I went out and met a man and told him what God had done for me. The next morning, I met another friend on the street and told him the story. He shouted and praised God and urged me to preach full salvation and confess it everywhere. God used him to encourage and help me. So the following day I preached on the subject as clearly and forcibly as I could, and ended with my testimony.

God mightily blessed the Word to others, but I think He blessed it most to me. That confession put me on record. It cut down the bridges behind me. Three worlds were now looking at me as one who professed that God had given him a clean heart. I could not go back now. I had to go forward. God saw that I meant to be true till death. So two mornings after that, just as I got out of bed and was reading some of Jesus' words,

He gave me such a blessing as I never had dreamed a man could have this side of heaven: a heaven of love came into my heart. I walked out over Boston Common before breakfast weeping for joy and praising God. Oh, how I loved! In that hour I knew Jesus, and I loved Him till it seemed my heart would break with love. I loved the sparrows; I loved the dogs; I loved the horses; I loved the little urchins on the streets; I loved the strangers who hurried past me; I loved the whole world.

Do you want to know what holiness is? It is pure love. Do you want to know what the baptism of the Holy Spirit is? It is not a mere sentiment. It is not a happy sensation that passes away in a night. It is a baptism of love that brings every thought into captivity to the Lord Jesus (see 2 Cor. 10:5); casts out all fear (see 1 John 4:18); burns up doubt and unbelief as fire burns flax; makes you “meek and lowly in heart” (Matt. 11:29 KJV); makes you hate uncleanness, lying and deceit, a flattering tongue, and every evil way with a perfect hatred; makes heaven and hell eternal realities; makes you patient and gentle with the disobedient and sinful; makes you “pure . . . peaceable . . . open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere” (James 3:17 ESV), and brings you into perfect and unbroken sympathy with the Lord Jesus Christ in His toil and travail to bring a lost and rebellious world back to God.

Oh, how I had longed to be pure! Oh, how I had hungered and thirsted for God—the living God! And He did all that for me. He gave me the desire of my heart. He satisfied me—I weigh my words—He satisfied me!

All the years since then have been wonderful. God has become my teacher, my guide, my counselor, and my all in all.

He has allowed me to be perplexed and tempted, but it has been for my good. I have no complaint to make against Him. Sometimes it has seemed that He left me alone, but it has been as the mother who stands away from her little child to teach him to use his own legs that he may walk. He has not suffered me to fall.

He has helped me to speak of Jesus and His great salvation in such a way so as to instruct, comfort, and save other souls. He has been light to my darkness, strength to my weakness, wisdom in my foolishness, and knowledge in my ignorance.

When my way has been hedged up and it seemed that no way could be found out of my temptations and difficulties, He has cut a way through for me, just as He opened the Red Sea for Israel.

When my heart has ached, He has comforted me. When my feet have nearly slipped, He has held me up. When my faith has trembled, He has encouraged me. When I have been in desperate need, He has supplied every necessity. When I have been hungry, He has fed me. When I have thirsted, He has given me living water.

What has He not done for me? What has He not been to me? I recommend Him to the world. He has taught me that sin is the only thing that can harm me, and that the only thing that can profit me is “faith working through love” (Gal. 5:6 ESV). He has taught me to hang upon Jesus by faith for my salvation from all sin and fear and shame, and to show my love by obeying Him in all things and by seeking in all ways to lead others to obey Him.

I praise Him! I adore Him! I love Him! My whole being is His for time and eternity. I am not my own. He can do with me as He pleases, for I am His. I know that what He chooses must work out for my eternal good.

He is too wise to make mistakes and too good to do me evil. I trust Him, I trust Him, I trust Him! “My hope is from him” (Ps. 62:5 *ESV*), not from others, not from myself, but from Him. I know He will never fail me.

Since that long-past January day, God has enabled me to keep a perfect, unbroken purpose to serve Him with my whole heart. No temptation has caused me to swerve from that steadfast purpose. No worldly or ecclesiastical ambition has had an atom of weight to allure me. My whole heart has cried within me, as Ephraim’s did, “What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard him, and observed him” (Hos. 14:8 *KJV*).

“Holiness to the LORD” (Ex. 28:36 *KJV*) has been my motto. In fact, it has been the only motto that could express the deep desire and aspiration of my soul.

For a year and a half at a stretch, I have been laid aside from work by physical weakness. At one time, I would have thought this to be a cross too heavy to bear. But in this, as in all things, God’s grace was sufficient.

Lately, God has been blessing me even more. My heart pants after Him and, as I seek Him in fervent, patient, believing prayer and in diligent searching of His Word, He is deepening the work of grace in my soul.

—Samuel L. Brengle

Holiness—What Is It?

God’s Word commands His people: “Be holy!” (1 Pet. 1:16 NIV). It says, “It is God’s will that you should be sanctified. . . . For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life” (1 Thess. 4:3, 7 NIV). It goes so far as to say, “Without holiness no one will see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14 NIV).

Anyone who reads the Bible in sincerity, not “handling the word of God deceitfully” (2 Cor. 4:2 KJV), will see that it plainly teaches that God expects His people to be holy, and that we must be holy to be happy and useful here and to enter the kingdom of heaven hereafter. Once a Christian is convinced that the Bible teaches these facts and that this is God’s will, he or she will next inquire, “What is this holiness? When can I get it, and how?”

There is much difference of opinion on all these points, although the Bible is simple and plain on each one to every honest seeker of truth.

The Bible tells us that holiness is perfect deliverance from sin. “The blood of Jesus . . . cleanses us from *all* sin” (1 John 1:7 NLT, emphasis added). Not one bit of sin is left, for your old self is crucified with Him, “that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin” (Rom. 6:6 ESV), for we have “been set free from sin” (Rom. 6:18 ESV). And we are henceforth to count ourselves “dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 6:11 ESV).

The Bible also tells us that holiness is “perfect love,” a love which must expel from the heart all hatred and every evil disposition contrary to love, just as you must first empty a cup of all oil that may be in it before you can fill it with water.

Thus, holiness is a state in which there is no anger, malice, blasphemy, hypocrisy, envy, love of ease, selfish desire for good opinion of others, shame of the cross, worldliness, deceit, debate, contention, covetousness, nor any evil desire or tendency in the heart.

It is a state in which there is no longer any doubt or fear.

It is a state in which God is loved and trusted with a perfect heart.

But though the heart may be perfect, the head may be very imperfect, and through such imperfections of memory, judgment, or reason, the holy man or woman may make many mistakes. But God looks at the sincerity of that person’s purpose, at the love and faith of the heart rather than the imperfections of the head, and calls him or her holy.

Holiness is not absolute perfection, which belongs to God only. Nor is it angelic perfection. Nor is it Adamic perfection for, no doubt, Adam had a perfect head as well as a perfect heart before he sinned

against God. But it is Christian perfection—such perfection and obedience of the heart as a poor fallen creature, aided by almighty power and boundless grace, can give.

It is that state of heart and life which consists of being and doing all the time—not by fits and starts, but steadily—just what God wants us to be and do.

Jesus said, “Make the tree good and its fruit good” (Matt. 12:33 ESV). Now, an apple tree is an apple tree all the time and can bring forth nothing but apples. So holiness is that perfect renewal of our nature that makes us essentially good, so that we continually bring forth fruit unto God—“the fruit of the Spirit [which] is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, [and] self-control” (Gal. 5:22–23 ESV)—with never a single work of the flesh grafted in among this heavenly fruit.

It is possible, right down here, where sin and Satan have once ruined us, for the Son of God thus to transform us, by enabling us to “put off the old self” with its deceitful desires and to “put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness” (Eph. 4:22, 24 ESV), being “renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator” (Col. 3:10 ESV).

But someone may object: “Yes, all you say is true, but I don’t believe we can be holy until the hour of death. The Christian life is a war, and we must fight the good fight of faith until we die. And *then* I believe God will give us dying grace.”

Many honest Christians hold exactly this view and put forth no real effort to “stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured” (Col. 4:12 NIV). And though they pray daily for God’s kingdom to

come and His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven (see Matt. 6:10), they do not believe it is possible for them to do the will of God, and so they make Jesus the author of a vain prayer, which is idle mockery to repeat.

But it is as easy for me to be and to do what God wants in this life every day as it is for the archangel Gabriel to be and do what God wants of him. If this is not the case, then God is neither good nor just in His requirements of me. God requires me to love and serve Him with all my heart, and Gabriel can do no more than that. And by God's grace, it is as easy for me as for the archangel.

Besides, God promises that if we return to the Lord and obey His commands with all our heart and soul, that He will circumcise our hearts that we may love Him with heart and soul (see Deut. 30:2, 6). And He promises "to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days" (Luke 1:74–75 NIV). This promise in itself ought to convince any honest soul that God means for us to be holy in this life.

The good fight of faith is a fight to retain this blessing against the assaults of Satan, the fogs of doubt, and the attacks of an ignorant and unbelieving church and world.

It is not a fight against ourselves after we are sanctified, for Paul expressly declared that "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Eph. 6:12 NIV).

In the whole Word of God, there is not one sentence to prove that this blessing is not received before death. And surely it is only by

accepting from God's hands His offered living grace that we can hope to be granted dying grace.

But the Bible declares that “God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work” (2 Cor. 9:8 ESV)—not at death, but in this life, when grace is needed and where our good works are to be done.

Holiness—How to Get It **2**

A man more than eighty years old once said, “I believe in holiness, but I don’t think it is all got at once, as you people say. I believe we grow into it.”

This is a common mistake, second only to that which makes death the savior from sin and the giver of holiness, and it is a mistake which has kept tens of thousands out of the blessed experience. It does not recognize the exceeding sinfulness of sin (see Rom. 7:13), nor does it know the simple way of faith by which alone sin can be destroyed.

Entire sanctification is at once a process of subtraction and addition.

First, there are laid aside “all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander” (1 Pet. 2:1 ESV)—in fact, every evil inclination and selfish desire that is unlike Christ—and the soul is cleansed. This cannot be by growth, for this cleansing takes something from the soul, while growth always adds something to it. The Bible says, “Put off all

these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth” (Col. 3:8 NKJV). The apostle Paul, who penned those words, talked as though we were to put these off in much the same way as we would a coat. It is not by growth that a person puts off a coat, but by an active, voluntary, and immediate effort of the whole body. This is subtraction.

But the apostle added: “Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience” (Col. 3:12 NIV). Neither does a person put on clothing by growth, but by a similar effort of the whole body.

You may grow *in* your coat, but not *into* your coat; you must first get it on. Just so, we may grow in grace, but not into grace. We may swim in water, but not into water.

It is not by growth that you get the weeds out of your garden, but by pulling them up and vigorously using your hoe and rake. It is not by growth that you expect that dirty little boy, who has been tumbling around with the dog and cat in the backyard, to get clean. He might grow to manhood and get dirtier every day. It is by washing with much pure water that you expect to make him at all presentable. So the Bible speaks of “him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Rev. 1:5 KJV), saying, “the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7 NLT).

And it is just this we sing about:

To get this blest washing I all things forgo;
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.¹

There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath its flood
Lose all their guilty stains.²

These facts were told to the old brother mentioned above, and he was asked if, after sixty years of Christian experience, he felt any nearer to the priceless gift of a clean heart than when he first began to serve Christ. He honestly confessed that he did not. He was asked next if he thought sixty years was long enough to prove the growth theory, if it were true. He thought it was, and so was asked to come forward and seek the blessing at once.

He did so, but did not win through that night. But the next night he came forward again and had scarcely knelt five minutes before he stood up and, stretching out his arms, while tears ran down his cheeks and his face glowed with heaven's light, he cried out, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed [my] transgressions from [me]" (Ps. 103:12 NKJV). For some time after, he lived to witness to this wondrous grace of God in Christ.

"But," a man said to me, as I urged him to seek holiness at once, "I got this when I was converted. God didn't do a half work with me when He saved me. He did a thorough job."

I answered, "True, God did a thorough work, brother. When He gave you new life in Jesus Christ, He forgave all your sins, every one of them. He did not leave half of them unforgiven, but blotted out all of them, to be forgotten forever. He also adopted you into His family and sent His Holy Spirit into your heart to tell you that blessed bit of

heavenly news. And that information made you feel happier than to have been told that you had fallen heir to a million dollars or been elected governor of a state, for this made you an heir of God and a joint heir of all things with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is a great thing. But, brother, are you saved from all impatience, anger, and like sins of the heart? Do you live a holy life?"

"Well, you see," the man said, "I don't look at this matter exactly as you do. I do not believe we can be saved from all impatience and anger in this life." And so, when pressed to the point, he begged the question and contradicted his own assertion that he had received holiness when he experienced new life in Christ. As a friend wrote, he "would rather deny the sickness than take the medicine."³

The fact is, neither the Bible nor experience proves that we get a clean heart when we enter the kingdom, but just the opposite. Our sins are forgiven. We receive the witness of adoption into God's own family. Our affections are changed. But before we go very far we find our patience mixed up with some degree of impatience, our kindness with wrath, our meekness with anger, our humility with pride, our loyalty to Jesus mixed with a shame of the cross, and, in fact, the fruit of the Spirit all mixed up together with the works of the flesh, in greater or lesser degree.

But this will be done away with when we get a clean heart, and it will take a second work of grace, preceded by a wholehearted consecration and as definite an act of faith to get it as that which preceded conversion.

After conversion, we find our old sinful nature much like a tree that has been cut down, but the stump still left. The tree causes no

more bother, but the stump will still bring forth little shoots if it is not watched. The quickest and most effective way is to put some dynamite under the stump and blow it up.

Just so, God wants to put the dynamite of the Holy Spirit (the word *dynamite* comes from the Greek word for power, in Acts 1:8) into every follower of Jesus and forever do away with that old troublesome, sinful nature, so that he or she can truly say, “Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17 KJV).

This is just what God did with the apostles on the day of Pentecost. Nobody will deny that they were followers of Jesus before Pentecost, for Jesus Himself had told them to “rejoice, because your names are written in heaven” (Luke 10:20 KJV), and a person must be a true follower of Jesus before his or her name is written in heaven.

And again Jesus said of His earliest followers, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” (John 17:16 KJV), and this could not be said of the unregenerate. So we may conclude that they had entered the kingdom of God, yet did not have the blessing of a clean heart until the day of Pentecost.

That they did receive it there, Peter declared about as plainly as possible when he said, later, “God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith” (Acts 15:8–9 NIV).

Before Peter got this great blessing he was filled with presumption one day and fear the next. One day he told Jesus, “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will. . . . Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you” (Matt. 26:33, 35 NIV). And shortly after,

when the mob came to arrest his Master, he boldly attacked them with a sword; but a few hours later, when his blood had cooled and the excitement was over, he was so frightened by a maid that he cursed and swore and denied his Master three times.

He was like a good many folks, who are tremendously brave when trumpets blow and the winds are favorable—and who can even stand an attack from persecutors, where muscle and physical courage can come to the front—but who have no moral courage when they have to face the scorn of their colleagues and the jeers of strangers. These are soldiers who love dress parade, but do not want hard fighting at the front of the battle.

But Peter got over that on the day of Pentecost. He received the power of the Holy Spirit coming into him. He obtained a clean heart, from which perfect love had cast out all fear. And then, when shut in prison for preaching on the street and commanded by the supreme court of the land not to do so any more, he answered, “Whether it’s right in God’s sight to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; for we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:19–20 NRSV). And then, just as soon as he was released, into the street he went again to preach the good news of salvation “to the uttermost” (Heb. 7:25 KJV).

You could not scare Peter after that, nor could he be lifted up with spiritual pride. For one day, after God used him to heal a lame man and “all the people were astonished and came running,” Peter saw it and said, “Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? The God . . . of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. . . .

By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him" (Acts 3:12–13, 16 NIV).

Nor did Peter have any of that ugly temper he showed when he cut off that poor fellow's ear the night Jesus was arrested, but armed himself with the mind that was in Christ (see 1 Pet. 4:1) and followed Him who left us an example that we should follow His steps.

"But we cannot have what Peter obtained on the day of Pentecost," wrote someone to me recently. However, Peter himself, in that great sermon which he preached that day, declared that we can, for he said, "You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off"—nineteen hundred years from now—"for all whom the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:38–39 NIV).

Any child of God can have this. You must give yourself wholly to God and ask for it in faith. "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find. . . . If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:9, 13 ESV).

Seek Him with all your heart, and you shall find Him. You shall indeed, for God says so, and He is waiting to give Himself to you.

A dear young fellow, a candidate for Salvation Army ministry, felt his need of a clean heart. He went home from the holiness meeting,⁴ took his Bible, knelt down by his bed, read the second chapter of Acts, and then told the Lord that he would not get up from his knees till he got a clean heart, full of the Holy Spirit. He had not prayed long before the Lord came suddenly to him and filled him

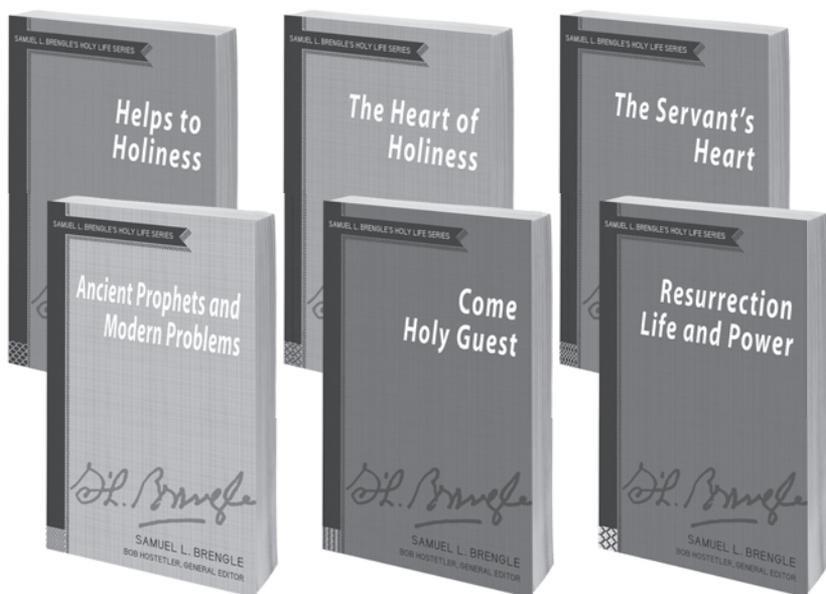
with the glory of God. And his face did shine, and his testimony did burn in people's hearts after that!

You can have it, if you will go to the Lord in the Spirit and with the faith of that brother. And the Lord will do for you “immeasurably more than all [you] ask or imagine, according to the power that is at work within [you]” (Eph. 3:20 NIV).

NOTES

1. James L. Nicholson, “Whiter Than Snow,” 1872, public domain.
2. William Cowper, “There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood,” 1772, public domain.
3. The source for this quote is unknown.
4. *Holiness meeting* in The Salvation Army has been the name for the Sunday morning or sometimes Friday night worship service when traditionally the doctrine of holiness and exhortation to holy living has taken place.

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