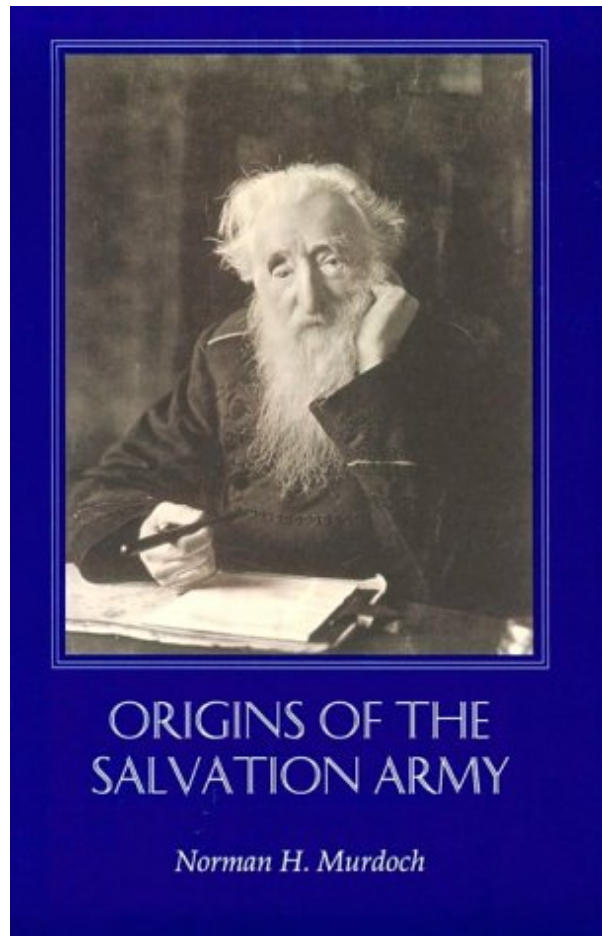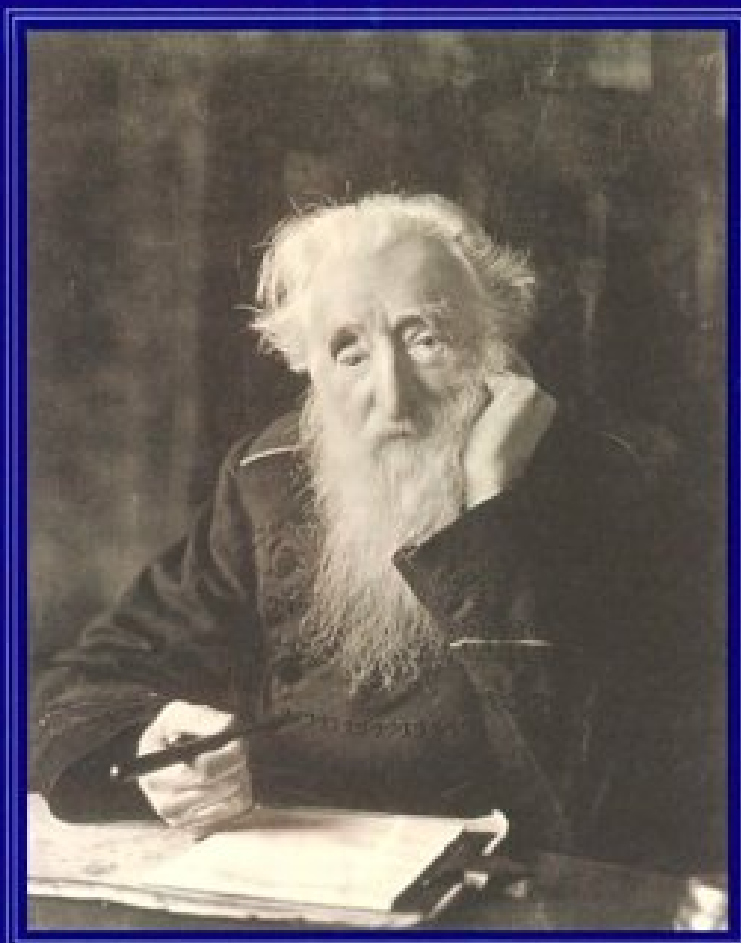# ORIGINS OF SALVATION ARMY BY NORMAN H. MURDOCH

ORIGINS OF THE
SALVATION ARMY

Norman H. Murdoch

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Even-handed, gentle tempered critique
By Robert H. Nunnally Jr.
The Salvation Army in the United States has galvanized into an incredibly successful fund-raising and social work organization. Murdoch's work explores the historic origins of its social justice mission. His portrayal of the Booths, the husband and wife team who founded the Army, is largely sympathetic if sometimes critical. His thesis throughout this book, convincingly demonstrated, is that the Salvation Army's social work among the urban poor was not an outgrowth of successful evangelical work among these folks, but instead a substitute in light of a ministry that consistently succeeded among suburban English Methodists rather than those in the most impoverished parts of London. Murdoch creditably seeks to distance himself from the Salvation Army apologist biographers, yet a few of his own images--Ms. Booth preaching in the West End while Mr. Booth toils in the East End, seem a bit too literary (albeit sometimes the literary is also the true). Murdoch's treatment of the autocratic, nepotic nature of the early Salvation Army is not heavy-handed, and his appreciation of the Booths' desire to make a difference rather than merely form a denomination is well-portrayed. Throughout this work, the Salvation Army seems an interesting experiment in pure Wesleyanism, leading to unpredicted failures and unlooked for success. This book is a consistently interesting read about a people from a time which, though relatively recent, seems remote now.

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