



The
William Booth
Collection

THE GENERAL'S LETTERS

GOING TOO FAST

From the "War Cry," March 28th, 1885.

MY DEAR COMRADES,

They say we go too fast! This accusation is brought against us in all directions. Our enemies do not like our speed. Our friends are afraid of it. What do they mean? I am a little puzzled to know.

If they had complained that we did not go fast enough, I could understand them. If our enemies had argued that, if after all we say about the evils of sin, the terrors of the Judgment Day, and the damnation of hell, we do not believe in these things ourselves, or we should risk everything and spend everything and work and toil and pray all night and all day until we spread ourselves everywhere, killing ourselves in the undertaking with our terrible earnestness, I could understand that, and feel humbled under the indictment.

If our *friends* came together and said, "Why don't you increase the speed? Look at the dying millions at home and abroad. You have evidently got a wonderful way of reaching the masses. You have accomplished what no other organization has. You can make them listen and repent and fight and give and suffer and win. You can adapt yourselves to all peoples and countries and climates. Why don't you push on faster – train more Cadets – build more Barracks – send out more Officers – deal with more slums – hunt up more criminals and drunkards and fallen women? Go faster; get up more steam! We will help you. What can we do? We will give you money, publish your principles, build you Barracks, and give you our children! Only go on! For God's sake, and for the sake of a dying world – Go ON !!"

Now, this seems to me would be the natural way of talking for both foes and friends. Anyhow, the latter describes the way I think I should have felt and acted had I been an outsider and fallen in with The Salvation Army.

But no! The cry is not "Go faster!" but, "You go too fast!" What do they mean? Speed is a good thing, and, if combined with safety, the faster the better.



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It is reckoned good in travelling. I know no "Flying Dutchman" or "Flying Scotchman," or any other kind of flying railway train that goes fast enough for me. Time is so precious that, unless it can be spent in sleeping or working, every minute of it is begrudged, and my feeling whenever I seat myself in a train – be the journey long or short – is, "Now, engine-driver, do your best, and fly away!"

Speed is reckoned good in money-making. Who would complain of it in us if we were a Limited Liability Company working some gold mine or any other mine which manufactured gold rapidly? The people who complain of our speed in spreading Salvation and saving men would all want to take shares then – to become directors – to buy us up – vulgar or not.

If we were a killing army, no one would complain of our going too fast on the line of victory, slaughtering Arabs, or Afghans, or Zulus, or anybody else who did not live on our side of the sea, or who lived over the boundary line, or spoke another language. If we killed plenty of them, burnt plenty of houses, took plenty of spoil, we should fascinate the world again as Napoleon did the world of his day by the rapidity of his successes. Painters and poets and newspaper men would fill the whole earth with our fame.

But because God has given us a little success in saving men and women from endless damnation, and extending the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, there is a great outcry – especially from those who every morning pray "Thy Kingdom come!" – that we are going too fast; they say we are ambitious, seek great things, and are not content to be

"Little and unknown,
Loved and prized by God alone."

But can we go too fast, my comrades, in saving souls? I will not attempt to answer that question. No Soldier in The Salvation Army would put it. It is an insult to the Bible – to the teachers of Christianity. The man must be an atheist who proposes it. I refuse to reply to it.



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If any one still wants a reply, let him ask the lost souls in hell whose brothers and sisters are following them there. Let him go and ask the Blood-washed throng in Heaven, whose eyes are wide open at last, to the value of Salvation. Let him anticipate the judgment day, and in spirit stand before the Throne and propose, if he dare, the question to Him who sits thereon. Methinks from Hell and Heaven, and from the Great White Throne, the answer would come back, "More speed! go faster!" If it should entail the stopping of legislature, pleasure, business, war, and all the employments and occupations of time, push forwards! Hurry onwards! Save the world!

"But there is danger with great speed." Well, perhaps there is, but that is not certain; and if there is I decline to abate the speed to avoid the risk. If this thing is worth doing, let us do it with all our might. "But if you go on the smash will come." Well, perhaps it will, Perhaps God will let the devil and those who help him smash The Salvation Army. They smashed Jesus Christ. There were hatreds and slanders and riots and injuries terminating with the Crucifixion then, and a great number looked on and said, "I told you so!" And if they smash the Salvation Army, there will also be a great number looking on and telling them to do it, and saying the same thing.

But, my comrades, there are no very striking signs of this terrible danger. For twenty years we have gone on paying our debts, breaking up and taking possession of new ground, and holding it when occupied; and, thank God! we are more closely bound together – more wrapped up in the spirit of sympathy and unity today than ever we were before.

But is our speed too great after all? Is not all this talk a delusion? Speed is a comparative thing, and the correctness of the estimate depends upon the standard you measure it by. The coach is a rapid conveyance compared with the old carrier's cart, but it is very slow when put alongside a royal express.

What do our objectors *measure us by*? Anyhow, I object to be measured by the standard of the carrier's cart.



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DOES SALVATION TRAVEL AS FAST AS SIN? See how wickedness spreads. Talk about a prairie fire – it is nothing to it! How it devours everything before it.

Does Salvation keep pace with the increase of population? Make the calculation in your most favoured Christian cities, and you will find we are terribly behind in the race.

Do we keep pace with the devils in energetic and untiring labour?

Do we go as fast as death? Is he not always stealing a march on us?

Oh, say no more! We'll close our ears, my comrades, to this cold, unfeeling, stony-hearted utterance of unbelief.

LET US GO FASTER!

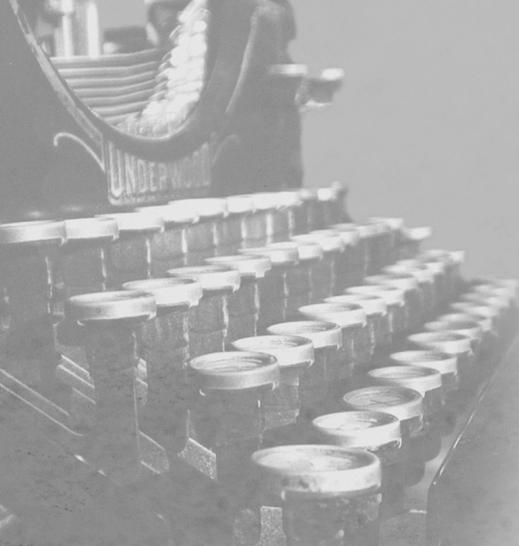
We must increase the speed if we are to keep pace with the yearnings of the Almighty Heart of Love that would have all men to be saved.

We must go faster if we are to have a hand in the fulfilment of the prophecies. Read the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah, and think of the speed that must be reached before all that comes true.

We must go faster if we would wipe out the reproach and stop the taunts of the mocking infidels who are ever asking for living proofs of God's existence.

We must increase our pace before our own prayers are answered, our own expectations realized, our own relations converted, and our own consistency proved.

My comrades, the General issues the command to every Country, and to every Division, and to every Corps, and to every Soldier – to advance. The pace of the past is to be no standard for the future. We must go faster. Obstacles, difficulties, and enemies shall be swept before us, and the mouths of those who condemn us shall be for ever stopped before the Lord.



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Your General for the leadership of the advance,

WILLIAM BOOTH