



The
William Booth
Collection

THE GENERAL'S LETTERS

NOTES ON THE COUNCIL.

From the "War Cry," November 29th, 1884.

DEAR COMRADES,

Nothing was more earnestly or frequently insisted upon at the recent Council than was the undeniable fact that our strength and wisdom for the War must be more than ever in the future that, and that only, which comes directly from God, creating a deep, unchanging *sympathy of man with man*.

As was expressed more than once during the meetings, it must be more than ever HEART-TO-HEART WORK. That no rules, regulations, inspections, hunting up defaulters from duty, or any other human arrangement could for a moment be put in the place of this that to trust in anything like a government of returns and red-tape would be to insure failure in every respect.

Still, the process of laying down rules for a better oversight and direction of the movement was steadily continued. Rules, laws, and regulations – what are they? Surely they are nothing more or less than the simple statement in words easily understood by everybody, of those plans and methods of doing things which are found, after thought and experience, and, we hope, Divine revelation, to be most useful and successful.

We say "Divine revelation," for why should not God reveal His mind to us? Are we not doing His business – the business that, so far as we know, or so far as we can judge, lies the nearest to His heart of any of the stupendous affairs He has on hand? And if so near His heart, and so important, having to do with the undying destinies of millions of souls whom He thought of sufficient importance to send His Son to the humiliation and agony of Calvary to redeem, why should He not give His own Holy Spirit according to His own special promise to show us the best and easiest methods for carrying out His wishes and gaining His ends? In other words, why should He not direct us in carrying on the War? However, you know this is one of the ways we look at Salvation work.



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Several very considerable improvements in our future government and operations were laid before the Council, which met with unanimous approval. One of these was that the Divisions into which the United Kingdom is at present cut up, were to be divided into Sections, each Section to be under charge of an Officer who should act as sub-Major. This sub-Major is to be held responsible for the maintenance and extension of the War in his particular Section, reporting to the chief Major and referring to him on all matters of extension, property, and finance. The present Major will still be responsible to Headquarters for the entire Division. The title of the sub-Major has not yet been decided.

By this alteration it is hoped to secure for every Corps the advantages of that personal oversight and sympathy, for even the smallest of them, which has been impossible from Majors who have had from forty to eighty Corps under their charge. The business arising out of extension and changes of Officers and acquisition of property alone has been sufficient to occupy the attention of the Majors during the present arrangements, leaving them very little time to see to the spiritual interests of their people. Now, there will be the opportunity for every Corps being visited, every Officer being personally cared for, and new departures made in every direction. God bless the Divisional Officers! Let us pray for them more than ever we have done before. When they visit you receive them with open arms, and they will help you, and you will help them, to roll the old chariot along.

The claims of the foreign work continue to increase, and to be more pressing and important day by day. By the bye, I don't like that word "foreign," and only use it to signify the work outside of Great Britain; for with The Army now no land is "foreign" and no people are aliens.

However, the claims of other countries are being urged upon us continually. From every country where the Flag is flying requests for Officers come by every mail. One Officer went to India last week, but they want eight, and are fully expecting that four are on the sea. Ten are all but ready to sail, to be divided between Canada, California, the United States, Sweden, South Africa, and Switzerland; but what are these among so many?



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But what are we to do? Officers cannot be despatched without two things. First, – one which is very important indeed to us just now – money for their outfit and passage; the second, the Officers themselves. Supposing we can get over the first by contrivance and importunity, we cannot get over the second so easily. Therefore we must have more men and women for the business whose hearts God has touched, whose tongues the Holy Ghost has fired, and whose lives are consecrated to the highest possible ends to which any being, human or Divine, can be offered up – the helping of Christ to save the world.

No spot on the wide field in which The Army is operating demands and deserves more help at the present moment than India. I suppose you have read the reports that have appeared from time to time in these columns, I suppose you have stopped to take in their mighty meaning – that a door of access to this nation of nearly 300 millions of people now stands wide open: that in the province of Gujerat and the island of Ceylon, taken alone, there are thousands of natives literally waiting and wanting to receive The Salvation Army. But to win them, and keep them when won – as with poor fallen humanity everywhere else – requires love and patience and skill; in fact men and women whose every energy is consecrated to the redeeming task – men and women who will literally lay themselves on the altar, strip themselves of all encumbrances that would hinder them in the War, adopt the Salvation of India as their life-work, go forth to practise just as much self-denial, and endure just as much suffering as may be found necessary and helpful in learning the language, conforming to the customs, becoming all things lawful and expedient to the people, and so insure their reaching that God-made, Christ-like character of saviours of India.

Soldiers of Salvation, what do you say to this demand? Stir yourselves up to inquire from the Lord about your duty.

Knock at the doors of your own hearts, and ask them what you ought to do to answer the groaning en-treaties for help that come from every quarter of the globe from these millions that are ready to perish.



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There is another thought that often intrudes itself when I get so far as this in my meditations, that is, when I am looking about me on these fields white unto harvest, and wondering, almost in despair, where the labourers are to come from to do the reaping and the garnering of this golden grain, and that thought turns my heart to the mothers of The Salvation Army. I say to myself, "Ah, hope sings in my soul! there is another generation coming along – a generation that is being nursed at the breast and rocked in the cradle on purpose to fulfil this saving mission; who, amidst their toys, and lessons, and alphabets, and arithmetic, and grammar, are being fired with a Soldier's ambition. In their boyish and girlish imaginings, and plannings, and castle building, they are being inspired with that ambition and filled with that purpose – that highest and holiest purpose of living, and fighting, and dying in the suffering track of their Master." I see in my vision that they are being taught a true Christianity, the living, literal imitation of the actual Christ. I hear those mothers telling their boys and girls that they are born for this; that their fathers and mothers have been saved to train and love and fill and fire, and offer – when trained, and fired, and filled – these blessed children at the feet of Him to whom they belong to accomplish all the purposes of His redeeming love.

Mothers! My heart turns to you. Have I forgotten the fathers? I will speak to them another day.

Meanwhile my prayers are for you all.

Yours for the Salvation of the wide, wide world,

WILLIAM BOOTH.