



The  
*William Booth*  
Collection

# THE GENERAL'S LETTERS

## THE ONE SALVATION ARMY II

From the "War Cry," January 31st, 1885.

My DEAR COMRADES,

I hope you understand me. I plead that there should be one Army; that is, one Kingdom, one people, one family – irrespective of all earthly distinctions of wealth, education, nationality, or race. An Army actuated by one spirit, and moving forward by means and methods adapted to the circumstances and conditions of the particular peoples whom it seeks to save. To accomplish this there must of necessity be one great international centre, with one General-in-Chief, which centre would be as necessary for the maintenance of the union of The Army as it would be necessary for the direction of the universal war.

We saw in our last letter how desirable this was, and with half an eye I think any one can see it has enormous advantages. If there were no other it seems to me it would have a stupendous effect on the world. To have millions of people who had forgotten the jealousies and rivalries arising out of differences in country and politics and trade and station, all occupying one common platform of equality in spirit and purpose and affection, must be far more likely to impress the world in favour of the business we have in hand than it would be to have a separate Army for every nation, or, as far as that goes, an independent Army for every town.

Division and separation as a rule mean rivalry and contention and pulling one another to pieces, making the outsiders say, "See how these Christians hate one another." We must stand together, shoulder to shoulder, and so present the highest evidence to men and devils that we are what we represent ourselves to be – the sons and daughters of Him whose name and whose nature is love.

Then what a mighty help to faith is the comradeship of a mighty host, all aiming at the same object and struggling in the same conflict! For the Soldiers of the left wing to know that while the battle is going very much against them, and they have the greatest difficulty to hold their position, messengers are bringing them all the time the tidings that the Soldiers of the right wing – although far distant – are gaining great advantages over the foe; that the centre stands



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firm, while reinforcements are being sent them; must be calculated greatly to strengthen their wavering courage and make them rally for more desperate efforts even before the help arrives.

In still plainer words, should the Soldiers of the Salvation Army in, say China, be set upon by the Government, impoverished by famine, reduced in numbers by mutiny, and brought by all these things combined into a very poor way; yet for them all the time to know that their comrades in Australia are prospering, that in India multitudes are surrendering to their Master under the Blood-and-Fire Banner, that in America a wave of prosperity is rolling over the country, would be greatly helpful to the faith of the straitened Army in China, cheer them on to new efforts, being assured that if they failed to deliver themselves from their difficulties their comrades would come to their assistance.

I know that it may be said that the faith of a Soldier should be in God alone – that he should not rest on any arm of flesh; that the power of Jehovah alone should be the mainstay of his confidence; but I also know that the cry given to Israel of old was, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" Also that men in all wars, human and Divine, are bound to find encouragement in the numbers and the nature of the forces that are on their side; that God has decreed to deliver the world by God and man combined. And therefore that the more God manifests Himself, and the more men that respond to that manifestation, the easier it is for the exercise of faith. A world-wide Army means a mighty increase of confidence for the subjugation of the world.

But can there not be this union in *spirit* without *the form*? I have heard so, but I am inclined to think otherwise. If people are of one heart and one mind, and all speak the same thing, they must necessarily be ONE people, and that is just what I plead for in the Salvation Army.

But is not such union as this an impossibility? To say so would be the same thing as saying that the Holy Ghost was mistaken in setting up this beautiful standard of union, and giving a command, the carrying out of which was impracticable.

But would not this mean the subordination of one nation to another? There is no subordination in Love.



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But would not that nation where the international headquarters was fixed have the supremacy over other nations? Decidedly not. The United States, as everybody knows, comprise a number of small nations – and not very small, either – all bound together in one strong confederation. The seat of the Government of the whole is in the district of Columbia, but this does not give that "District" any superiority over any of the other States or Territories. But the Government must be somewhere, and Washington was chosen, I presume, because conveniently situated for this purpose. Just so, we seek a federation of all the states of all the world – a union consecrated to the love of man and the worship of God. Such a federation must have a centre, and its position would from time to time be determined upon by the needs and circumstances of all concerned.

But have not all efforts to form a world-wide kingdom for the Master failed? Doubtless they have, to a very great extent, so far, but that is no reason why we should refuse to make another – to build up a kingdom on the lines laid down by Jesus Christ, and in which the fundamental principles that He taught should be carried out.

But may not some of our comrades object to the bare possibility of the property they acquire coming under the power, or being in any shape or form dealt with for the advantage of Salvation Army Soldiers living elsewhere? Oh, yes, doubtless they will. "England for the English!" "Australia for the Australians!" "America for the Americans!" will be cries occasionally – perhaps frequently – raised. But these will only come from those who do not understand the first principles of Christianity, one of which was expressed by Paul when he said, "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh," by which he intended to say that he had been used to know and esteem and prefer men as they were of his own nation or city or kindred, but that with him the narrow walls of kindred and citizenship and nationality had been broken down, and that he now loved all men as being alike created and loved and redeemed by the one Father; in this respect all men being alike equal in his estimation. He had found out that God had made of one blood all the nations of the earth, and redeemed all alike by the same sacrifice of His dear Son, and had sent him forth with the spirit of that loving Son in his breast to teach that in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female, but all are one in



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Christ Jesus. When this truth of the brotherhood of man is fully realized by our Soldiers, and this spirit of Divine love is fully experienced, all this preferring of one nation before another because we happen to have been born in it, all this selfish boasting and rivalry will pass away. We shall no longer want to exalt our nation at the expense of other nations, to make it bigger or grander than they. We shall feel as God feels towards the peoples of the earth, and shall equally long for the salvation of all.

We should be willing not only to offer ourselves, but, if it were necessary, we should be willing to offer up our very nation as Jesus Christ offered up Himself and His nation, if thereby the salvation of the entire race could be obtained.

But, like many other bogies, this fear of the property of one nation being appropriated to the necessities of another must prove groundless. The property acquired in a nation would necessarily continue there, and any security that it might create would be very unlikely to be devoted to any other purpose than acquiring new property in the same country. Anyway, nothing in this direction could possibly be done, not only without the loving consent of its Soldiers, but the formal consecration of that branch of the Army.

I am afraid I shall have to trouble you with another letter to conclude this theme. Its importance is, I am sure, a sufficient excuse.

Let us make earth as much like Heaven as we can in this respect, by multiplying the number of loving hearts in it, whose chief care is not to protect their own rights and make others minister to their welfare, but who partake of the spirit of the Master, who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and left us the commandment that we should love one another even as He loved us.

Verify it.

Yours in the Salvation of unity,

WILLIAM BOOTH.  
January 24th, 1885.