



The
William Booth
Collection

THE GENERAL'S LETTERS

THE ONE SALVATION ARMY I

From the "War Cry," January 24th, 1885.

MY DEAR COMRADES,

It has been very gratifying to me of late to observe throughout our ranks the growth and strength of the idea that The Salvation Army is one. Notwithstanding all the efforts of false friends and avowed enemies, both within and without our borders, in the direction of decision and separation, the feeling that God intends us to continue for ever one Army, one family, one Kingdom, has become an enthusiastic conviction in the hearts of Officers and Soldiers, and I believe there are multitudes under our colors who are willing to suffer and die to maintain it.

By one Salvation Army I mean one body with the same head, the same government, the same head, the same government, the same laws, and substantially the same usages and methods, I mean that the principles of The Army must remain the same in whatever country it is established. There will not only be the liberty, but the necessity, to adapt its methods, so far as is consistent with truth and righteousness, to the character and habits of the people, the Salvation of whom it is there to bring about.

In carrying out this idea all the property must be so settled and owned as to belong to the one Salvation Army; every stick and stone in it must, so to speak, be nailed to the one Salvation Army Flag, and so secured that it shall be impossible to separate it from the organization to which it has been given. In reality it must be with the property as with its General, its Officers, its people – all must be consecrated and yielded up to the carrying out of the plans and purposes the Army adopts for the salvation of the world.

For this oneness, my comrades, there are an abundance of reasons indeed I never could understand how any one could for a moment think it should be otherwise; still, let me remind you of one or two considerations.

1. *Such union must be the will of God.* The Bible is full of it, Jesus Christ prayed, not that His people should be split up into different armies, one pulling one way and a second pulling



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another way, but that they should be one, as He and His Father were one. One family in Heaven and earth. One in purpose, one in plan, and one in affection, as the Holy Ghost explained by Paul, "that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

2. Union is evidently God's plan, seeing it is to prevail in Heaven. There will be one Army in the New Jerusalem. They won't say there, "I am of Paul," or, "I am of Apollos," but all will be of one heart and of one soul. This New Jerusalem model is for us down here. Let us get as near to its realization as we can.

3. If it be right and wise for the different Soldiers of the neighborhood to form one Corps to fight under one Captain – it must be equally right and wise for the different Corps throughout the world to constitute one Army – to fight under one General.

There are exactly the same arguments for every soldier in his own Corps being independent of the judgment of his comrades and for the soldiers of one country being independent of the judgment of action of the soldiers of another.

4. Unity is strength. Some Corps must necessarily be strong and some unavoidably be weak, and the strong Corps must help the weak Corps. As with different Corps, so with the armies of different nations. The Army in some nations will be weaker than in others. The strong nation must help the weak nation; and how can this be done effectively except by carrying out this principle of being ONE? How otherwise can the commandment of the Master be fulfilled?

The advantages flowing from unity apply to all modes of operation in which more than one man is employed. If two men are employed in any enterprise, let them act together – let them be of one heart and one mind in their business, and they will succeed far better than acting separately. This equally applies to a million men. If the force of two men is increased by acting together, then the force of a million must be increased in proportion to the united action of the million. Think of the difference in the result that must follow the action of a million soldiers acting separately, i.e., independently of each other, and that of a million acting in union.



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Think of the united action of a million soldiers for defense. Many think, my comrades, that a terrible time of persecution is coming on. Events seem to confirm these fears, and there are signs and gathering clouds that seem to foreshadow it in every direction. Superstition abounds. Even some Asiatic idolatries that were thought to be powerless, so far as extension was concerned, are spreading. Mahomedanism is making multitudes of converts in Africa. The great fight with superstition has yet to come off.

Infidelity is spreading on all hands. Beyond controversy it is making progress amongst those who profess to follow Christ. In the pulpit and in the pew, doubting is in fashion.

Unbelief is everywhere. You seldom meet with a man, no matter what form of Christian creed he professes, who firmly declares himself to be a believer in the cleaning Blood and in the Judgment Day and in the Heaven and Hell of the Bible.

Among the common people of every nation, Christian and idolatrous, the blackest atheism stalks abroad with barefaced impudence, and so multitudes seem to be waiting to overturn human government and to devour the Divine.

The time is not far distant when these three great forces, superstition, infidelity, and godliness, will be face to face in the great final conflict for the possession of the earth and all the people that are on the face of it. Then will the value of union be realized. When that terrible day shall come, think of the courage and the strength, and the faith that will be derived from the united action of such a million of Salvationists as we have hinted at above.

In past European conflicts, where Christianity has been concerned, if its friends had only been united – had only been of one mind – Europe could have been conquered, and an open door have been made for Salvation to the whole world. But alas! alas! they were separated by clashing interests and weakened by internal discords, and one by one they fell before the foe. The devil's great method has always been first to divide, and then to destroy. Let us cluster together.



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And then, my comrades, how advantageous union is for attacking the world. This conquest of the nations is a herculean business. The reason so little headway has been made hitherto has been largely owing to the fragmentary manner in which the attempt has been made. Every man and every penny will be required. We are weak, and are likely to be so for some time; but united, even today, The Army is not an insignificant force. Let us be faithful, and we shall be strong and go forward to victory.

But I shall have more to say about the advantages of union; and there are some difficulties which will doubtless occur to your mind that I should like to have a word about. I am afraid my letters have been too long. So I will break off immediately.

Your affectionate General,

WILLIAM BOOTH.
January 19th, 1885