



The
William Booth
Collection

THE GENERAL'S LETTERS

TREATIES

From the "War Cry," May 16th, 1885

MY DEAR COMRADES,

We have heard a great deal of talk about treaties of late. A treaty, you are aware, is a name given to a special agreement made between any two or more nations as to some special course of action to be pursued with respect to some particular territory or commerce, or military transaction, or the like.

There has been no end of talk about little nations making treaties with the big nations, and the big nations forming treaties with each other, in order to protect their own interests and gratify their own ambition.

In all this writing and talking about the treaties of nations my mind has been drawn to other treaties. Treaties of vast importance – some of greater significance than those so much discussed of late, and on which the peace of the world has seemed to turn. I want to have a word about them.

And first, my comrades, there are treaties with hell – agreements between men and devils – treaties in which, for certain supposed advantages of money or pleasure or fame, men do and engage to do and to get done things which they know are base and dishonourable and rotten; things which they know are conducive to the cursing with misery here and damnation hereafter of their own children and friends and neighbours in particular, and the world in general.

These treaties may not be made with the fiends in person; that is, those who make them may not sit down and sign a contract direct with the devil, engaging to do the wickedness on the understanding that he gives them these advantages, but it is done nevertheless most surely. They know that their engagements and determinations to pursue evil have his approbation and promote his interests, and consequently these are hellish treaties. And those who make them know, or might know, that they must have hellish consequences.



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Is any one reading these lines interested in such a covenant with hell, and hoping to reap any advantage from it? Let me disabuse the mind of such a one. The blighting, withering curse of God is upon all such engagements, and sooner or later the destruction of the Almighty must overtake them. Oh, let me implore every one associated in any shape or form with the kingdom of the devil, with the reign of iniquity – whether in society or trade, or in any other form – to break the alliance, come out and be separate, tear the treaty to pieces, and seek an alliance with the King of kings.

There are treaties between man and man. If these are honourable and true, my comrades, let us stand to them. Let it be known throughout the world that a Salvationist is the soul of honour; that his word is his bond. There have been individuals who have had such a reputation for truth and rectitude that it has been well known that though they have sworn to their own hurt, they would not forfeit their word or change their course of action on that account. Those who have bought and sold and transacted business with them have not wanted to bind them with bonds and deeds and legal papers. Let us be such. If the word has gone forth out of our mouths, let us fulfil it. Let us be true to every treaty we make with our fellow-men.

But the most important treaties of all are those to which Jehovah is a party – to which He sets His name; and compared with which the alliances and engagements of the greatest nations of the earth are insignificant and trifling.

My comrades, all who know anything of The Salvation Army are familiar with the high contracts which, as a people, we have thus made with our God. Have we not formed an alliance, offensive and defensive, with Him; on our part taking Him to be our King, not only to reign but to rule over us? We have pledged ourselves to love Him with all our hearts; to acknowledge Him before all the world; to devote our possessions and time and influence and talents to His service; and to lay down even our lives in the war raging between Him and His enemies. In short, we have declared that we have given ourselves living sacrifices to assist in bringing the rebel world to His feet.



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Were I to attempt to describe what He has engaged, on His part, to be unto and to do for us, I should want a hundred War Crys, and then timed space and ability would fail me in the effort. You know it in your own hearts better than I can tell you. He has engaged to be our God, and as God to give us all needed protection and provision, placing at our service all the mighty resources of His government, standing by us in life and death and judgment, and ultimately giving us victory and glory in His coming Kingdom.

My comrades, every Soldier in The Army has set his name and seal in some respects to this contract. The latest recruit is a party to this treaty; but with some, doubtless, the covenanting may have been done without that deliberation which its majesty demands. But with thousands and tens of thousands of men and women this solemn league and covenant has been entered upon with all manner of thoughtfulness and deliberation and prayer.

This treaty has been no secret. It has been made on the house-tops. The inhabitants of Heaven and earth and hell have witnessed it, and the details of it have been published to the four winds of Heaven. We have gloried in this Divine alliance. We have been proud to enjoy the privilege of having our poor little puny State included in the Divine Empire. We have not meanly made any reservations with regard to possible contingencies. We have said we would gladly rise or fall, sink or swim, with our Savior Lord, and take our lot with Him, whatever that lot might be.

Now, my comrades, is there any need that I should remind you of these treaty engagements? I need not say that Jehovah can be reckoned upon to fulfil His part of the treaty to the letter. No matter how black or foreboding appearances may be; no matter what devils may insinuate; no matter what weak-kneed, faint-hearted saints – whose despondency comes from their own past failures – may suggest, you can reckon on the Almighty God being true to every promise and declaration He has put into that treaty. You can stand on your feet and look the future in the face and say to men, angels, and devils, that "the God with Whom I have made this offensive and defensive alliance is a true God, and He is going to prove it in my own history."

The question now comes up, Are you going to be true to your part of the transaction? The fight is thickening and the hopes are rising in the bosoms of the angels that something is going to



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be done that will vindicate Jehovah and be to the credit of His cause, and they want to know if you are the people who can be reckoned upon to do it.

There is a chapter in Church history which you can look up. You will find it in 2 Kings 23 and 3, where The Salvation Army of that day came forth and made a treaty with God, and to their everlasting credit were true to it; for it is said of them, "They stood to their covenant." Will you stand to yours? You have made one. It is written and preserved among the Celestial records. Will you have it brought out in the day of reckoning with the same satisfactory endorsement which is given to that of these ancients – "This Salvationist made a treaty with God, and he stood to it"?

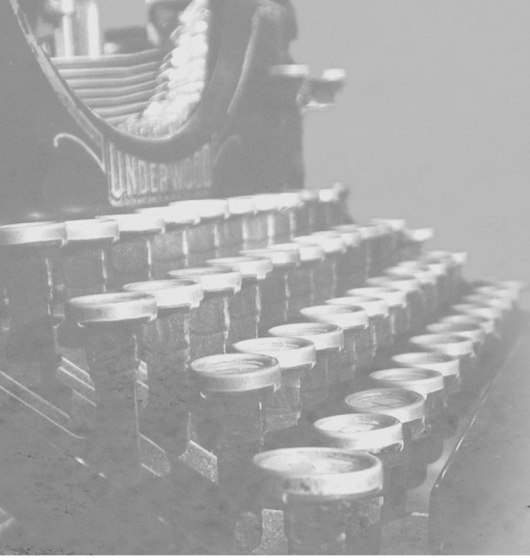
Standing to your treaty means understanding it. Let every Salvationist look up and think out what he has promised God. The flippant manner in which, alas! alas! some make their vows and break them, is, doubtless, the result of ignorance. Thoughtlessness means weakness. Surely a bargain with Jehovah that means life or death, salvation or damnation, must be worth a little consideration.

Standing by your treaty means sacrifice. Jehovah has proved His determination to carry out the engagements He has made by the sufferings He has endured on your behalf. Now go and prove that you are other than a sham and a piece of talk by carrying out your engagement when it costs you something.

Standing by your treaty means availing yourself of all the help God has placed at your disposal. You cannot succeed in this warfare if you go on your own resources only. Take hold of His arm, Jehovah's arm. Throw yourself upon His compassion. He will fight for you.

Fortify yourself with the memory of the miseries and failures that have come upon you in the past when your unfaithfulness has driven God away from you.

My comrades, let us be bolder and more courageous than ever. Bring out the treaties made in the days gone by, and renew them. Swear to them afresh. Men and women with honest hearts



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and daring purposes, in league with Jehovah should fear nothing should hope all things, and be the terror of all evil beings. Be among the number, my comrades, and believe me,

Yours in eternal covenant,

WILLIAM BOOTH.
May 12th, 1885.