



The
William Booth
Collection

THE GENERAL'S LETTERS

THE MODEL SALVATION SOLDIER

From the "War Cry," February 21st., 1885

MY DEAR COMRADES,

I said last week, that after all our Model Warrior was the Lord Jesus. His life and teaching, taken together constitute the pattern and teach the only true method in which our campaign for the deliverance of man from sin and devils is to be carried on. This was declared by Peter, a celebrated General, who fought gloriously in the early history of this War, when he said, "Even hereunto were ye called" – that is, enlisted – "because Christ also suffered for you, leaving an example that you should follow His steps." If the Holy Ghost commanded the early Salvationists to fight after the pattern of their Master, surely the same obligation is binding on us.

We must follow Him. Nothing that He has done for you in the past, or that He is able to do for you in the future, can relieve you from this obligation or excuse you neglecting to discharge it. How can we have any share in the merits of His sacrifice without fighting under His standard? If we secure His favour kneeling at His feet, can we retain it without following where those feet shall lead? My comrades, I say, "Impossible! He will be the Author of eternal Salvation to all those who obey Him – and to them only.

What is following Christ? It isn't difficult to discover. Here, anyway, a child can be on a level with the most learned divine. It simply means keeping His word and copying His example. It is to the latter that I want specially to refer you. Following means imitating. The Children of Israel followed the Pillar of Cloud, that is, they moved after it. They went in the same direction in which it went. They stopped when it stopped.

Now many make a common mistake with regard to following Christ, and I think it is a most disastrous one. They think it signifies following Him to Heaven, and that in the most comfortable way possible. Whereas the true idea – the idea which was taught by His example and explained a thousand times over by His words – shows that following Christ means



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following Him from Heaven into a world of sin by paths of sorrow and suffering; indeed, just doing as He did. To be a Christian, then, in reality is to be a Christ-man or Christ-woman. This is not only the one way of following Christ, but the only way of getting to Heaven. The prevalent notion is that Heaven can be reached without.

More particularly, then: Following Christ must mean, having the same purpose. How is it possible without? How can the marksman hit the same mark if he does not take the same aim? How will a vessel reach New York if she does not steer for that port? How can a man follow Christ if he is not moved by the same purpose? What was His purpose? The Salvation of the World. Not the humiliation and the suffering and the agony and the death. These were the means by which only the end could be reached; if the end could have been gained by any less agonizing way, doubtless it would have been followed. He wanted to reach the dying millions, and by living a Divine life before them, and pouring forth His Divine Blood for them, to make the Salvation of all possible, to make the Salvation of multitudes sure.

This was His purpose. To this, every thought and feeling and effort were offered up. His whole being was consecrated to its accomplishment.

My comrades, here is our pattern. What are you living for? What is the deep secret purpose that controls and fashions your existence? What do you eat and drink for? What is the end of your marrying and giving in marriage – your money-making, and toilings and plannings? Is it the Salvation of souls, and overthrow of the kingdom of evil, and the setting up of the kingdom of God? I am not censorious. I don't feel so just now. If I know my own heart, it is full of yearning at this moment for the happiness of all men, especially for yours, my comrades, who have vowed under our common standard to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, and therefore I must say what is in my soul in this matter. I must push this question. Have you the assurance that the ruling passion of your life is the same as that which brought Christ to the manger, led Him to fight the foul fiend of Hell in the Wilderness, bore Him onward on the back of suffering and tears and ignominy and shame, sustained Him in drinking the Cup of anguish and enduring the Baptism of Blood, bore Him through Gethsemane, nailed Him to the Cross of Calvary, and enabled Him in triumph to open the gate of the Kingdom? Is this what you are



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living for? If not, you may be religious – a very proper person amongst religionists, but I don't see how you can be a Christian.

What is the value of a shell without a kernel? What is a body without a soul? What is a Christian without a Christ inside? If any man has not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His, and the supreme purpose of Christ's spirit was, and still is, and ever will be, to save the world.

We know what is done with shells that have no kernels. We know what is done with bodies when the soul is wanting, and there is a great deal of very plain speaking in the Bible, my comrades, about what is done with men and women professing to be apostles when they are not. There are no bounds to the blessing – present and future – which God will lavish on those who are the form and the power; but the hypocrites will be cut asunder, and have their portion in the outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

My comrades, let us watch, and compare ourselves with our Divine Model; so shall it be well with us, and so shall we have prosperity.

Believe me,
Yours for carrying on the War
after the Master's fashion,

WILLIAM BOOTH.
February 16th, 1885.