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THE  
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EDWARD SOUTHAM,

SOLDIER IN THE RUTLAND LIGHT DRAGOONS.

*The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Rom. vi. 25.*

*Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. 1 Tim. iv. 8.*

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Dundee,

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# INTRODUCTION.

DEAR FRIEND,

I Now have ta'en my pen in hand,  
To write, that you may plainly understand,  
Which way I came, and in what path I trod,  
And how directed by Almighty God.  
How often have I miss'd my way,  
And travel'd onwards day by day,  
Until I met some friend I knew,  
That kindly unto me would shew,  
The way I ought to travel in,  
To please my God, and serve my King.  
This put me somewhat to a stand;  
For I was then in such a land,  
And such a road, where thousands were,  
Which made my soul to quake and fear;  
For millions in this road were slain,  
And never did return again.  
But what was worse, they did me tell,  
That these poor souls were gone to hell!  
Oh! then, I cry'd, what must I do,  
For I'm undone, if on I go?  
I am resolved to return,  
My sinful conduct to reform.  
A thought just then came in my mind,  
That God was merciful and kind.

For

My spirits then began to chear;  
 For thus my soul a voice did hear,  
 That unto me did plainly say,  
 Come, come, ye Sinners, come away.  
 Pardon I will, and freely take  
 You to myself, a Son to make.  
 I'll wash you clean, and make you bright,  
 And in my law you shall delight.  
 This oft-times makes me sing and say,  
*Christ Jesus is the living way†.*

† John x.

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# THE LIFE OF EDWARD SOUTHAM.

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**I** Was born at Knapton, near Southam, in Warwickshire, in the year of our Lord 1764. My parents were poor†, but honest and industrious, and careful to bring up their family in an honest and comfortable way, which they did, and gave their children what education they could, which was decent. My father was a gardener, at which calling he laboured very hard, to supply his family with the necessary comforts of life. Some little time after I was born, my father removed, with his family, to Stretton upon Dunsmore, near Coventry, in the same county, and lived there near five years, part of which time I was put to school.

About 1769, my father returned to Knapton, where I was put to school near twelve months, and my mother taught me to work, by which I gained 10d. per. week, which paid my schooling and something more; also my brothers and sisters worked at the same, as far as they were able. Thus did my parents exercise their children, which greatly contributed to their good; as it not only learned them to read, and bring something towards their support, but also kept them from learning that which is but too common for children to learn, viz. to curse and swear, and take the Lord's name in vain, among other vices which children, when not kept under subjection, are too apt to learn. It would be well for all parents to keep their children from playing in the streets, as children seldom learn good one of another.

About 1770, my father being acquainted with one Mr Hall, minister at Harborough magna, and justice of peace. This gentleman persuaded my father to come and live with him as gardener, which he did in 1772. After Mr Hall's death, one Mr Newsom succeeded: my father was also gardener to him. So with my father and mother's industry, and the help of his children, six in number, we lived very comfortably. Mr Newsom was very kind to us; also his lady took one of my brothers, and gave him a liberal education; may the Lord reward her for the same, and give her the blessings of the upper and nether springs, not only for a year, but for ever and ever†. My father always kept his children under his eye as much as possible, that he might observe their conduct. If ever he heard any evil report of his children, and it proved true, he would severely chastise them for it; and this made us afraid to do evil, even when out of his sight; though sometimes I would play, instead of going to school, yet when night came, I would go home trembling, for fear of the punishment I deserved, and which I could not escape, because my father loved his children, and would not spare the rod‡.

My mother was a woman that feared God, and of course did not spare her good advice to her children; and when I was put out to service, I visited my mother as often as possible, for the sake of her good advice, and while in her presence, she would use all her endeavours to instill into our young minds the fear of the Lord, of our lost state by original and actual sin, and of our redemption by our Lord Jesus Christ, for in him her soul delighted; and when at home, I would often hear her rise out of bed in the night, in the anguish of her soul, and earnestly cry for help to the Lord her God! My father being a tender loving husband, would endeavour to comfort her, and would not cease till he had refreshed her soul with some cheering passages of scripture: this I have often

† Joshua xv. 19.

‡ Prov. xiii. 24.

often heard and seen, though at that time I did not understand the cause. I also remember to have heard her frequently pouring out her soul to the Lord her God at a throne of grace, 1 Sam. i. 10, 11. and night and morning would not cease to pray for me as well as herself; and I now believe the Lord has answered her prayer. My mother learned her children to pray to God as soon as they were capable. I always was very fond of my mother, and I believe our love was mutual, which might lead her to think I was a better son than I was; for I was guilty of many sins when out of her sight, though my heart would be sorrowful because of sin, and my conscience would never fail to accuse and condemn me; for I knew it was sin, though I had not strength to resist the temptation of Satan. Thus was I "like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt†;" and I found this to be a true saying, "there is no peace for the wicked, saith my God." Still I did not forget the lesson my mother taught me, namely to pray night and morning. Let me be at home or abroad, by myself, or with others, I durst not leave off praying to God; for I believed the words of my mother. I lived near my mother for several years. I seldom was fond of company; the reason must arise from this, my parents keeping me so close in my younger years, which made me bashful when I could not act as others did; though I could not at all times help joining them; and Satan has sometimes tempted me to join in company with profane swearers, and to act and do as they did, by taking the Lord's name in vain, and using profane oaths, thinking it made me look manly; but was soon brought to see the error of my foolish conduct, and my conscience would say, "come ye out from among them, for the soul that sinneth shall die," Ezek. xviii. 2; and these thoughts would bring to mind the sayings of my mother, keep "fast hold of instruction,

let

† Isa. lvii. 20, 21.

Let her not go; keep her, for she is thy life†." These words would my mother oftentimes say, ye ought to be "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves||." Thus I went on despising the advice of my mother, and breaking the commandments of God, for which cause God might have justly destroyed me in a moment, as the just reward of my perfidy. The terrors of the wrath of God for sin lay heavy on my mind at times, but would soon wear off, and I would return to my former wicked ways, but had no sooner fallen to work for my old master§, than my conscience would warn me of the danger, and I was constrained to leave off, and would be sorrowful; but this was like a shower of rain in the spring, which is soon over, and has made but little impression on the dry ground; for I could not withstand the temptations of Satan. Though I might not appear so open and so vile a sinner as some, yet my secret sins were as great as their open ones. The all-piercing eye of God sees men in secret, and will reward them openly\*. This would strike a terror to my mind, and did often make me say, I surely was the greatest sinner upon earth; for I was sinning against light and knowledge. My mother had so often told me of the evil of sin, and how much it grieved the Spirit of the holy One, that I could not forget her sayings, though I could not keep them, by reason of my wicked heart. Those that could curse and swear, and delight to do wickedly, they, I thought, did not know what they were doing, which made my sins the greater; for he that knoweth the will of his master, and doeth it not, is worthy of many stripes: this made me say to myself, "Thou art the man†." Thus I continued, sometimes up, sometimes down; one time I would sin, another time repent, but not that repentance I needed. I was very subject to passion, which has caused me to shed many tears, and has suffered much in my body

† Prov. iv. 13.

|| Matt. x. 16.

§ The Devil.

\* Matt. vi. 4.

† 2 Sam. xii. 7.

body and mind, by the commission of this sin: This is one of the leading sins man is subject to; it would be well for every man to guard much against it; for it is a great enemy to poor souls: for what is it but the Devil.

I now pass on to 1784. I this year lived with a widow woman of a very creditable family, of a sweet temper and disposition: I was servant to her, but was seduced by some to much vice. This year my mind was much loaded with guilt; for I had lent a deaf ear to the instruction of my father, and forsook the law of my mother ‡; therefore I could not rest. In November 1785 I took a journey to London, where I staid three months, in which time I had the small-pox. I staid about six weeks after I recovered, but could not rest quietly in London; for I was much troubled at the wickedness of the place! I had never seen the like before. I thought I had not mended the matter in coming to London, for I durst not join with the vices of the place; so I resolved to return to the country from whence I came, which I did, though at that time I thought to return to London; but after conversing with my mother, she prevailed on me to stop at home, which I did: Still I had a wicked and sinful heart, which would often lead me captive to its will, which gave me always a troubled spirit, and made me unhappy in life, and I was ready to say I had no hope, though betimes I had thoughts of comfort; for if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do ||? I often heard this passage, "All that the Father hath given me I have not lost one." Again, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life §."

I now thought to take unto me a wife, for two would be stronger than one, and then I could keep more from sin, and serve God better, and live more happy than I now did, after I had conquered those enemies

‡ Prov. i. 8.

|| Psal. xi. 3, 7.

§ John iii. 16.

enemies I had so long fought with, but could not prevail. I now built much upon this new plan, which caused me soon to bring it into execution. September 1785, I married a wife with a small portion, and we both went up to London, to see her friends, and to keep the wedding; afterward we returned to Harborough magna, near Rugby, Warwickshire, where we began housekeeping, and lived untill August 1786. Now I had entered upon this happy life, which I had so much spoke of before. O how often are men disappointed of the object they sometimes have in view, even the rich man Dives! Now I thought I had not been wise in this plan; for I could serve God no better then I did before, which made me sometimes to say, I wished I had not married; but I found this to be a sin rising from the temptations of Satan, therefore I resolved not to let it rest in my bosom; for since I had my lot, I ought to be content; for God had gave me ten thousand times more then I deserved, for even at that time I deserved nothing less than the wrath of a sin-revenging God. Then I would pray that God would forgive me my past offences, and give me grace to overcome the wicked thoughts of my heart, and give me to love my wife more than I then did. I have reason to think God heard my prayer, for my love to my wife began to encrease daily, and hath continued even to this day.

In 1789 I went to live at Bradford, near Coventry: My wife, at that time, had a legacy left her by one Mr Adnitt of Hackney, near London, which I received. I then endeavoured to take a small farm, in which I thought to live comfortably; but this attempt was in vain, for the great men there are so covetous, that a poor man, though he have a little money, and would wish to have a piece of ground, on which he might bring his family up decently; nay, if it would save his life, he could not have it: no more is allotted to him then a small bit, in which to lay his dead body, when brought down to the grave with hard labour.

But

But why need I mention these things, seeing there is no new thing under the sun. "The way of the wicked is darkness; they know not at what they stumble ¶." "If thou art wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself; but if thou scornest thou alone shalt bear it." Solomon says, "the poor is hated of his own neighbour; but the rich hath many friends\*;" so happy is the man that feareth the Lord, it shall go well with him, whether he be poor or whether he be rich in the world. The poor man that loves God and his laws, the same has great riches the world knows not of. It is said, "the sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eateth little or much ‡;" for he says, "the Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup; thou, O God, maintainest my lot;" and may truly say with David, the "lines are fallen to me in pleasant places †." Thus he goes on his way rejoicing, believing the words of the Lord. God says, none shall seek my face in vain: and again he saith, "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in ||." Soon after I adapted a new plan of exercising myself, by drawing coals from Griff colliery, up Oxford river to Banbury. Thus I laboured for sometime, but was spending my strength for nought, and learning that which was bad, being accompanied with many of the baser sort of men; I was much affected, and hurt, by joining with them in several vices. This again broke my peace of mind, by grieving for my folly; for though I was easily drawn into sin, I could not so easily pacify my conscience, as I knew it offended God, and was hurtful to my soul; and I did not do it in enmity to God, nor because I loved sin, for I hated it, though I was as one bewitched to do it. This would make me cry out when alone, "Lord, what must I do to be saved?" my lot is hard, my way different from any other man, full of briers and thorns, full of trouble and sorrow.

Indeed

¶ Prov. iv. 19.

\* xiv. 20.

† Eccles. v. 12.

‡ Psal. xvi. 5, 6.

|| Isa. xxvi. 2.

Indeed it was so, for I had no pleasure in any thing I did : this I would alledge, was on account of the sine of my youth, which I thought were greater than those of others, and God was more angry with me. One sin lay heavy on my mind, which I thought was the cause of much of my trouble : When I was about twenty years of age, I courted a woman near twelve months; several vows I made that I would marry her, which I did not fulfill : I wished I might not prosper in this world, if I did not perform my promise. When I spoke these words I thought of so doing; but how changeable is the mind of young men; I soon broke my promise. I also courted another at the same time, whom I loved much, although I courted the woman I now have married. Oh how many nights have I spent in sin and folly, which makes me now lament ! I had no sooner married my wife, than the two above-mentioned fell sick and died. I do not say my forsaking them was the occasion of their death ; but indeed this lay heavy on my heart ; for it often brought into my mind my former vows, that I wished I might not prosper ; and I now thought the Lord had given me my wish, for all I took in hand went against me. But what was a second trouble, I was afraid that after all my sorrow in this world, I must go to hell when I died : This broke my peace of mind, and made me very peevish ; and a little thing would put me out of temper, which made me more unhappy : and I would sometimes think, it would have been better for me if I had never been born, or had died when I sucked at my mother's breast ; for I thought I was surely born to be an enemy to God, and a plague to mankind, and troublesome to myself ; but in the midst of all I had some hopes that God would pardon me, if I could truly repent ; but I thought I did not repent, while I could commit such hainous sins as I was guilty of. I would often read in the Scriptures of our Saviour's crucifixion, which would melt my eyes to tears, to think how Christ died  
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for sin, and I was still living in it, and (as my mother told me) crucifying the Lord of glory afresh. Thus I thought I was as bad as the Jews who put him to death, and I was no better than dead while I lived, unless I could have power to repent, and forsake my sins. Though I read my Bible, yet I did not know what I did read; yet I would get hold of some words that would revive my spirits; one in the 11th chapter of John, 25th verse, as follows; "I am the resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live," though I did not then know which way I could live.

I now left my business I spoke of, and took a journey to London, to learn the art of sawing wood: I worked with one Mr Howet, Little Vine Street, Piccadilly; but I soon left my master, and came home again. I worked near home sometime, and then returned to London. I all this time was growing worse in the world, and much troubled in mind. I staid in London about six weeks, and returned into the country, sold all, and took my wife up to London, though much against her will. I did not continue long in London, through the restlessness of my mind, but went about seven miles out into the country, to a place called Baw's Farm; here I staid the summer with my parents; here I enjoyed rather more ease in mind, as I frequently went up to the house of God \* with my mother, to hear the glad tidings of salvation through Jesus Christ, which was some alleviation to my sorrows, though I did not understand, nor feel the power of the word; for the Bible was a sealed book to me; yet I liked to hear it preached, and often would go to church on that account, as I knew it was well to be in the way of duty. I was then longing after something, but I could not tell what, for I was like one blind as to spiritual things.

In September I returned to London, and worked  
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\* Ma. ii. 3.

with my old master, with some who were given to drinking and other vices, and by them was led to do many things that are sinful. I remember my having a religious book with me, and when I could get by myself, would, by reading in it, often shed tears for my sin and folly, as I knew I had greatly offended God; and I would often walk in Lambeth church-yard, to read the grave-stones: this would put me in mind of my latter-end, which I thought would surely come; and this added new trouble to me, as I knew I was not fit to die: and when I saw a corpse come along the street, I thought I might probably be the next that would fall under the power of the pale horse and his rider; and this almost deprived me of reason: and I was ready to give way to the temptations of Satan, which suggested to me, that I might as well join with my companions, and take my cup; for what better was I for all my care: Nay I thought it was so. I gave way to this temptation for about a fortnight, till my conscience haunted me so strongly, that it would not let me rest, and was a thorn in my flesh, to think I had gratified my wicked companions, whom I feared to offend more than Almighty God, who ought to be feared above all.

I began to think I was not a person fit to live in London, seeing I could not resist the temptations of the place, and therefore thought of returning into Warwickshire, from whence I came: I put the question to my wife; but I had so wearied her with moving about so much, that she was quite averse to it; but I was determined to leave London, which I did, and left my wife and child with her friends, and went to Oxford, from thence to Warwickshire, where I fell in with a Mr Vernon, a man that feared God: I engaged myself to him, to learn the art of a joiner and carpenter. This good man always made a rule to call his family to prayers every night. This I liked very well, and always joined, though I considered it only as a duty; for I was quite blind as to spiritual things.

things. I did not forget my wife and child all this time, though I was absent, for I loved her in my heart, and the thoughts of the trouble and uneasiness my conduct had caused her, gave me much sorrow; for I many times had used her very ill. One instance of this lay very heavy on my mind. Soon after I was married, while living at Harborough, I struck her when in one of my ill humours; this grieved me so much, that I would often cry, O wretched man that I am. I borrowed a book called the Death of Abel; and the blow Cain gave his brother, that caused his death, often came into my mind, as I considered it was the providential hand of God saved me from killing my wife when I struck her: had it been so, I had been of all men most miserable, and I might have said with Cain, "my punishment is greater than I can bear," Gen. iv. 13: This I thought would have been my case, if God had dealt with me according to my desert; but God delighteth in showing mercy; he delighteth not in the death of a sinner, but rather that he would turn and live; and happy is the man that remembereth his Creator in the days of his youth †; for he shall avoid all the troubles which those endure who wear the galling yoke of sin, instead of the easy yoke of Christ, which is easy indeed, and his burden which is light indeed, Matt. xi. O how foolish is man, to live in the bondage of sin and the slave of Satan's power, when Christ would give him the freedom and riches of his grace, and break the brazen gates of sin, and cut the iron bars of Satan's power, as under that he may flee from the pursuer of blood to the city of refuge (Josh. xx). Many are the promises Christ holds out, to encourage sinners to come unto him: See the following invitations of our blessed Lord, 1 John i. 7. iii. 2, 23, 24.—John vi. 37.—Isaiah xlv. 22.—Heb. viii. 5.—Matt. vii. 14.—John x. 9.—Rom. x. 15.—2 Cor. iv. 17.

While I was with this man, one night as I return-

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† Eccles. xii. 1.

ed from my work, I was taken very ill before I reached home: As soon as I came home, I took my bed, from which I never expected to rise. I was seized with a cold sweat, and shivering in my limbs. My master kindly asked if I would have a doctor, but I refused, thinking it was of no use, for I thought I was struck with death, which much troubled my soul: I then breke into crying; and he asked me if I was afraid to die? I told him I was, which was the cause of my distress. Well might I be afraid to die, for I am sensible if I had died then, I must now have been with those that go down into the pit; God would have been just in sending me there; but glory be to his name for restoring me to my health, and sparing me another year. When I recovered my strength, my master asked me what I thought would have been the consequence of my dying then? I told him it must have been bad enough; for how could it be good, when I was so bad. He then told me to take warning, and flee from the wrath to come. Live no longer in sin, said he, but serve God; for now is the day of salvation; we cannot tell when God may require our souls. I do not recollect his saying any more at that time. I told him I did not like sin, and hoped I might live a better life. I am sorry to say, there was little or no reformation in me, after I got into the world again, though I could not forget that illness, but would often think God was merciful in saving my life; and I would often look at the people of God, and wish I was like them; though whenever they gave me any offence, I would swear, because I knew it grieved their spirits, so foolish was I: Still the Lord had pity on me, a poor miserable sinner.

How gently doth the Lord chastise  
His children, though they him despise.  
When children from their God do roam,  
He sends his rod to call them home.

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His rod I felt, but did not mind;  
 But God, who is merciful and kind,  
 In his good time, is pleas'd to say,  
 Come, come ye sinners, come away.

In about four months after my wife came to me, then I took to housekeeping again, at Bradford, following my old employment of sawing wood, until I caught a violent cold in my back, which made me leave my work. I then went to London again, and from thence to the salt water, but it proved ineffectual, and I feel it to this day. Sometime after, I took up sawing again, though I could not do much myself, by reason of the pain in my back. I continued working near-home for about three months; I then went to Leicester: there I staid three weeks. On my return home I fell in with a job of work at Blaby, where I staid near two years: I worked for one Mr Varley, overseer of the Union Canal. In 1795 I went up to London with a brother-in-law I had working with me, to see our friends. Soon after my return, I fell sick, and also my brother, and my wife and child. Surely this was the voice of the Lord saying unto me, Turn ye; for why will ye die. I rather understood the voice, but could not answer nor repent. I had enough to do with my illness, but this was my thoughts, that if I had my strength again, I would serve God. I perceived I could not do it on a sick bed; then I would pray that God would restore me to my health, and give me power to repent. It pleased the Lord to give me my health, and spare me yet another year. This is a clear evidence the Lord is not willing to destroy: he is a long-suffering God, slow to anger, and of great kindness. "Who-soever will come unto me," says our heavenly Father, "I will in nowise cast out. I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be cleansed from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you: a new heart also will I give you, and a new

spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the hard and stoney heart, and I will give you a heart of flesh, and ye shall keep my statutes†." Oh what encouragement is there for sinners to come unto God, who giveth liberally and upbraideth none. Oh then let the greatest sinners come boldly unto a throne of grace, seeing that "the blood of Jesus cleanseeth from all Sin‡."

Come, come to Christ, and do not fear;  
Ye hungry souls, he will you chear.  
Though you have wand'ed far away,  
The voice cries, Sinner, come away.

Happy is the man that feareth always; but he that hardeneth his heart, shall fall into mischief," Prov. xxviii. 14. Now God was pleased to try me once more, by restoring me to my health. I now thought of the promise I made to God when on my bed, and began to pray to God to work a reformation in me by his holy Spirit, and give me to conquer my evil passions, to which I had so long been in bondage. I now began to read my Bible more, and go to church every Sabbath; and there appeared a reformation-work in me; and people might think me a Christian, tho' I did not think myself one; for I could not yet govern my temper, which made me to think I was worse than an heathen; for I had the gospel preached to me, which they had not, nor ever heard of a Saviour. Such thoughts as these would trouble my mind, because I could not embrace the Saviour I so often heard spoke of, by reason of the enemy, that would still get between me and Christ, whom I now began to love.

One day as I was at work, I fell out with my brother, and beat him very much, before I could govern my passion; but afterwards was troubled for what I had done, to think I was caught in the snare again. I now strove to comfort my brother, and begged his pardon,

† Ezek. xxxvii. 24.

‡ 1 John i. 7.

pardon. I sat down and wept over him, for I loved him much, though Satan had caused me to do so wickedly. I hope the Lord will bless the lad, and grant me his and my brother's pardon for this sin.

This trouble concerning my brother lay heavy on my mind; and the anguish of my conscience would make me cry out in the night, Oh, my brother. My wife would strive to comfort me, and enquire the cause of my distress: I told her my sin against her, my brother, and my God. This lay more heavy on my soul, because I could not leave off, nor repent as I wished. Thus was I like a ship in distress, tossed upon a stormy sea, in a raging tempest, expecting every minute to strike upon a rock, where I must inevitably perish: for I was ready to think God had given me up to the hardness of my heart, though it cannot be said God hath given a man up whilst in life; for he desireth not the death of a sinner. While I was thus bemoaning myself, I met with a Christian friend, who began to discourse with me concerning my soul: I told him my soul was in a sad case, for I had been such a sinner against God, I was afraid my soul was lost. He then spoke of the goodness of God, and said, "the blood of Christ cleanse from all sin." I believed he could pardon, but I was afraid he would not pardon me; for I thought I had committed such sins as no other man did. I could not but think on some passages of scripture comfortable to my case, such as, "he that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." For sometime I was reading the darkest side of the book, as if I refused to be comforted; but meeting with my friend, he cheered my spirits with comfortable passages of scripture, so that I began to think there was pardon for me, if I would seek and accept it. Still I could see but little reformation in myself, for I feared my conduct was not like this man's; and he had a good Christian to his wife, who would often visit mine, which made me take notice of her behaviour.

behaviour. I saw something in her countenance different from ours. She seemed to be concerned for her soul, but chearful in her hope in Christ. This added another trouble to me; for I was still in the bond of sin; I perceived the difference then of being in an unregenerate state, and a man that was endowed with the spirit of God; the one in a peaceful calm, and the other in a tempestuous storm of carnal things. Theirs was a life more to be desired than fine gold, mine full of trouble, sorrow, and the cares of this world. This made me look more into my wicked heart, which I found to be full of all manner of evils. I was now resolved to enquire which way I might find that comfort they enjoyed, and get red of my doubts and temptations. I heard of some Christians that lived in the same town with me, and went by the denomination of Runaways, belonging to the Church of England; and their name was truly consistent with their profession; for they had run away from the evil of sin, and the slavery of Satan, and had taken refuge in the merits of a dying Redeemer: and as this would give great offence to the grand adversary of their souls, he, no doubt, made use of his poor deluded votaries, to say all manner of evil against them: and so stupidly ignorant was I, that I was ready to give ear to the false report raised against them. I nevertheless resolved to see them.

It happened their ministers came to preach to them on a day appointed: my wife urged me to go and hear them; but the temptation of Satan made me object to it, on the same ground I mentioned before, namely, because they were evil spoken of. However, with much persuation, I went; and what I heard compleatly removed all the ill judged prejudice I had entertained of them. I now began to associate with them more closely; their conversation was edifying. I frequently heard their ministers preach the gospel. Two of them would take it in rotation to come to  
Blaby:



Blaby: and once a Mr Brunton came and preached on the Almost Christian and his true character, shewing how inconsistent it must be from the character of a true Christian, however it may look as to outward appearances. I was more pricked at the heart at this sermon than any I ever before heard; for he plainly showed the Almost Christian that died so, was cast out from God. I now began to be alarmed; for I thought this was my true case, and thought if I had died then I had, like him, been miserable for ever; so that I was not right yet, but far from it. I now resolved to stick to my Bible more closely, and to persevere in the duty of a true Christian. I was very fond of the scriptures, and delighted to read them every opportunity; and I likewise attended their fellowship-meetings; for them "that feared the Lord, spake often one to another\*." I now began to grow stronger in the Lord; and although Satan would not leave me, nor let me rest, I nevertheless could conquer some of my evil passions, those enemies of my soul and its peace, though Satan would suggest to me I should not have the Lord Jesus to be my guide. I found much comfort by a sermon preached by a Mr Love, from these words; "Ye shall know if you follow on to know the Lord:" and this text is of great comfort to me even now. In the midst of my trouble and temptations, I had a sincere friend, like a Jonathan, viz. William Blason, of whom I before spoke: I now found the grace of God so strong in me, that I could resist many of those sins that did so easily beset me, which made me rejoice in God that giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh let the Lord be praised, for by grace we are saved, through faith, not of works, least any man boast. I now began to see as with new eyes; and I might truly say, that I was once carnally blind, but could now discern spiritually. I then took a view of my past mispent life, which struck me in amaze, to see how

\* Malachi iii. 16.

how the Lord had worked in me to my spiritual advantage, and now had given me hopes of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, notwithstanding the sins of my youth. Now I had both joy and sorrow; joy, because I had an interest in Christ, and sorrow, for having so long offended a just and merciful God. Sin was now become hateful to me, because it offended my dear Redeemer, for I loved him much; and the terrors of hell waxed little on my mind, for my hopes were fixed on Christ my shepherd, the chiefest among ten thousand. I might say, as in Song viii. 7. "many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned." I was like a young lover running too fast, for I did not take good heed to my ways, so that I many times went wrong for want of care. The word says, "Wait on the Lord, and keep his ways, and he shall exalt thee."

All this time Satan still followed me close at the heels, with every temptation to seduce me from my duty; and I started with fear of being brought into bondage again; but God was pleased to draw me with cords of love, so that all his traps were in vain, for the Lord was pleased to make a way for my escape; for the grace of God did abound towards me with faith and love, which made me rejoice and be exceeding glad. Seeing we have a great high priest sitting at the right hand of power, oh then let us hold fast the profession of our faith; let us put on the whole armour of God, that we may be able to stand in the day of battle. I may say that I began my journey towards the new Jerusalem, to the house built without hands, eternal in the heavens, whose King is the king of glory. But what was more encouragement to me, I read in the Bible, that he cast none out who came to him, tho' the enemy might pursue even to the gate of the city; for he is a King mighty and able to save: but Satan not only attacked me himself, but employed

employed his instruments, which proves him to be, as he was originally, a coward.

I now resolved to mend my pace toward the heavenly land; but this caused me another struggle with my spiritual enemy, in which I fell. This made me cry for help, when I heard, as it were, a voice saying unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee. This revived my spirits, so that I ventured to assault him by the armour of prayer, which he could not stand, but was forced to give way, so that he never attacked me with such violence any more, altho' he strained every nerve; and I may truly say, the road was lined on both sides of the way to assault the citizens, and displease the rulers; but God ruled all for the best.

This puts me in mind of the words of our blessed Saviour (Mat. x. 22.) where he says, "Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; for I came not to send peace upon the earth, but a sword, and a man's foes shall be they of his own household; but blessed are ye if ye shall be reviled for my name's sake; rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God: therefore strive to enter in at the strait gate, for broad is the way, and wide is the gate that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that find it; but narrow is the gate that leadeth to eternal life, and few there be that find it\*." I now determined, by the grace of God, to set my face toward Zion, and to travel with all my might, tho' it should cost me my life: I therefore made a covenant with God, and promised to be his servant, for it was better with me now than in times past.

I now joined society with a congregation of people at Leicetter, who was united as one man to serve the living and true God; but my old master being enraged at my conduct, caused his servants to throw the arrows of spite around me, if probably one might enter

\* Mat. v.

enter my heart and destroy me; and I have reason to fear this might have been the case, had not God given me the shield of faith, whereby I was enabled to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. This I had from some of their own mouths; but my heart trusted in God my saviour, who judgeth the poor of his people, and breaketh in pieces the rod of the oppressor; for if the Lord had not been on my side, when men rose up against me, they would quickly have swallowed me up; then the proud waters had gone over me; but blessed be God, my soul escaped as a bird out of the fowler's snare.—Many critical circumstances happened about this time, the recital of which would only weary your patience: I therefore pass on to September, 8, 1795, on which day I listed for a soldier in the Rutland Light Dragoons, which much grieved my Christian brethren, fearing I should fall away from the truth, since being in the army is so dangerous to a lover of Christ. Indeed I was much afraid of myself, after I had listed, of being corrupted by the common vices of soldiers. Still I had a desire to be a soldier, and I comforted myself with this, if I was a child of God, I should be safe, whether I was a soldier or sailor; God can take care of his people wherever they may be: I therefore trusted in the promises of God in the 91st Psalm, viz. that “a thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right-hand, yet shall it not come near thee.” This is a psalm every believing soldier may call his own; for though God may suffer him to fall, yet he shall rise again, even to sit with princes, never to fall more. If a man die a believer, it will not be asked of him, whether he was a soldier or a sailor, or what country he was brought up in. I believe God has some that will serve him in all countries, and always had witnesses from the beginning, and will have to the end. Blessed be God that the gospel is preserved, and that salvation is held out to all who

who will receive it, which is life to them that receive it, but death to them that refuse it.

As I did not repent of being a soldier, tho' I did not like the conduct of some of my fellow-soldiers, especially when I heard them swear, and take the name of the Lord in vain, whose name I delighted to honour, this troubled me much; for many there be which despise God's righteous laws, break the statutes of our king, and despise the good laws of our country. This troubled me, tho' it was not in my power to prevent it: the only way I could use, being a private, was to tell them privately of the evil of their sin, how it offended God, who fed them with the necessities of life, and how they must shortly stand at the bar of God's justice, to answer for the deeds done in the body, and then the wicked would have their portion in the lake that burneth for ever and ever. Thus I would reprove them in a loving manner, hoping by that means to reclaim them. I do not remember ever giving offence to any of my comrades, though I reprov'd them, for I was very careful how I did it, lest I should cause them to swear more, for this would have grieved my spirit, as well as add to their sins.

In 1798, our regiment was ordered to Aberdeen. I had not as yet met with one Christian friend; and I was in a cloud of doubts, for fear I should deceive myself with false hopes; but God was pleased to keep me safe from presumptuous sins. It happened one day, as I sat writing a small pamphlet, which I soon after published, a female christian friend came and asked me what religion I was of. I not being acquainted with different party names of religion, nor did I understand the reason of Christians having so many different names; for as there is but one God, one Saviour, one Bible, so there is but one name given under heaven, whereby men can be saved, namely our Lord Jesus Christ, the answer I made to the woman was this, By the grace of God I am a Christian. I

not knowing what she was in reality, made my answer so short. She not being offended, spoke in such a manner as delighted my soul. I resolved to pay her a visit, which I did, and we soon became better acquainted, and she proved a sincere friend to me, and the greatest comforter I ever found in my travels. She was a great help to me in guiding me in my Bible. She was a lively Christian, a lover of Christ from her youth, and a zealous promoter of our Redeemer's cause.

Many a sweet hour have I spent with this woman speaking of Christ. We often spoke of the glory that shall be revealed in his saints in heaven after this life. I still bear her in my heart; I still carry her in the arms of love to the throne of grace and mercy; and she does me, though I never expect to see her any more in the flesh; but this is my hope, that I shall meet her in heaven, where we shall not see as in a glass darkly, but we shall see him of whom we speak, him who was pleased to make us the sons and daughters of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; and every man that hath this hope, purifieth himself as Christ is pure. Hereby we may be certain that we know him, if we keep his commandments (John ii. 3)

In March 1797, it pleased God to pour that powerful grace into one of our comrades, and to snatch him as a brand from the fire, and caused him to flee from the wrath to come. Now the Lord was pleased to give me a companion. I was in better spirits, and several of the ministers of the gospel in Aberdeen were very useful to us.

In April and May I was very ill, and thought this would have been my last illness. I wrote a letter of advice to my wife, as I thought I should see her no more in the flesh. The pain in my back was very violent, and I tried many remedies to remove it, but

all

all proved ineffectual at that time. I resolved to give over taking medicines, and trust myself to the living God; but one day being in company with a doctor in Aberdeen, he told me to take a spoonful of mustard seed night and morning: I did so, and found immediate relief.

On the 2d of June 1797, we went to camp on Don Links, near Old Aberdeen, and I got much better. We staid at camp till the 3d of October, when we marched to Perth. I now began to be better acquainted with my fellow soldiers, so that I could speak more freely to them; and several of them were convinced of what I said, and of the necessity they had of a Saviour, and that I was a well-wisher to their souls. The Lord was pleased to bless my endeavours, and constrained them to call upon the Lord Jesus Christ for mercy. The drunkard now became sober, and the prophane swearer now delighted to honour the laws of God; the whoremonger and adulterer forsook his evil ways, and fled to the ways of wisdom, which are the ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace; and the persecutor of God's people now became a partaker of God's grace, and better soldiers, and would heartily join in singing the Redeemer's praise. Such was the working of the Holy Spirit at this time, and it rejoiced my heart to see it; and it is my earnest prayer, that every man in our regiment, and all others, may become wise unto salvation; and that they may make good soldiers of Jesus Christ, that when they have accomplished their warfare here on earth, they may rise to the life immortal, where all sorrow shall cease, where they will see the innumerable battalions of Christ's soldiers who are gone before, and join with the united armies of heaven, in singing the praises of the King of kings to all eternity.

Since God has brought me to this length,  
My prayer is, that he'll give me strength

To persevere in the right way,  
 And never let me go astray :  
 But like a valiant soldier brave,  
 Unto my God and King behave.  
 My Captain shall my leader be,  
 My Pilot, when I'm on the sea.  
 Tho' waves of trouble round me roar,  
 My God will guide me to his shore.  
 If I should in some desert be,  
 And there no eye to pity me;  
 I will not fear, but here will boast  
 In the bright Captain of the host.  
 My Captain is of royal blood,  
 And takes delight in doing good.  
 He loves the valiant soldier bold,  
 Who serves for more than love of gold.  
 Then why should I e'er be dismay'd,  
 Or of my en'mies be afraid,  
 Since I have one to take my part,  
 And bears me always on his heart :  
 I never read in holy writ,  
 That Christ e'er lost a battle yet.  
 I wish you'd all this regiment join,  
 And serve the Lord, then heaven's thine.

My dear friends, I hope this will have the desired effect; and if it be the instrument of pointing out the road to happiness to any of you, it answers the end for which it was designed, as happiness is what all have been seeking after for near 6000 years, yet it has never been found but in wisdom's ways; for if there is a happy man on earth, it is a christian. I once read the life of a happy man, which was as follows :

" The happy man was born in the city of Regeneration, in the parish of Repentance unto Life; was educated in the school of Obedience, and now lives in  
 the



the plain of Perseverance. He works at the trade of Diligence, notwithstanding he has a large estate in the county of Contentment. He many times does jobs of self-denial. He wears the plain garment of humility, and has a better suit to put on when he goes to court, called the robe of Christ's righteousness. He often walks in the valley of self-abasement, and sometimes climbs the mountains of spiritual-mindedness. He breakfasts every morning on spiritual prayers, and sups every evening on the same. He has meat to eat the world knows not of; and his drink is the sincere milk of the word. Happy is the life of such a man, and happy will be the death of such a man. Happy is he who has gospel submission to be his guide, and due order in his affections, sound peace in his conscience, sanctifying grace in his soul, real divinity in his breast, true humility in his heart, the Redeemer's yoke on his neck, a vain world under his feet, and a crown of glory on his head.—My dear souls, if you would attain to such a life, you must pray fervently, believe firmly in Christ, wait patiently, work abundantly, live holy, die daily to sin, watch your heart lest it deceive you with false hopes, guard your senses, redeem your time, love Christ, and hope for glory, and you will be happy here and to all eternity: you will then find that the king of terrors, and terror of kings, will be no terror to you, come when he will. 'Tis the hope of glory through our Lord Jesus Christ, that makes death stingless, and the grave a place of rest; therefore be faithful unto death, and you will gain a crown of life."

My dear friends, I hope ye will excuse any defects you may see in this small book, for I am a man of but slender abilities; but it comes with my warmest wishes for the welfare of your immortal souls: And I again beg of you to consider that it is but a short time

time e'er we must all appear at the bar of truth and justice, to answer for the deeds done in the body, may you therefore be found at the right-hand of the Lord of glory in that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, is the sincere prayer of your unworthy, but wellwisher in Christ,

EDWARD SOUTHAM.











