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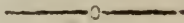
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# CONVERSATION IN A TENT.

BY A. SHERWOOD, D. D.



I had a conversation with a private in the 47th Georgia Regiment, something like the following: First, I related an anecdote which I had heard from a Revolutionary soldier. An officer was called as a witness at a Court-Martial, to whom the Judge said, "Come forward and tell us what you know.—Make way for that soldier to give in his testimony;" who answered, "I am not a soldier, but an officer." "Well," replied the Judge, "make way for that *officer*, who is not a *soldier*," much to the merriment of the company and chagrin of the man with epaulettes.

I address you as soldiers, as men that have not sought office—as men that will fight, but never run from the enemy—as those that love their country, and will contend for its rights to the death, though you wear no lace or gold on your uniform: you are privates, but men of strong arms and courageous hearts, and in the language of Burns' song, "a poor but honest sojer." Home and friends are dear to you, and rights and interests are precious, to be watched with sleepless vigilance: but all these are not of so much importance as the soul. Have you thought of this? Have you cared for the interests of your undying spirit? Have you ever been concerned about your future condition, whether it will be happy or miserable? Your love of country, your patriotism, is not questioned. If the invader comes, he will pass your threshold only over

your lifeless corpse. This is right and praise-worthy; but patriotism cannot be substituted for religion, nor save the soul.

“You say a soldier cannot be religious?” Cornelius, a Centurion, in charge of 100 Roman soldiers, was a devout man, one that feared God, and prayed to God always. [See Acts 10th.] God heard his petitions, and his alms were had in remembrance before his Maker. More temptations assailed him than can possibly affect you; yet he was a christian, and his piety approved of God. Gen. Havelock, in command of troops in India, during the mutiny, when thousands of British soldiers, women and children, were massacred, was a man of devotion. He used to pray with his regiment, and talk to them on religious subjects; many of whom became pious.—When any hazardous work was to be accomplished, any dangerous expedition undertaken, “Send Havelock’s saints” was the common word of command, for it was known they were the most courageous men in India. Gen. Stonewall Jackson is represented as a pious man, and we are told that he offered public prayer at Richmond some few weeks prior to his successful battles with Banks, Fremont and Shields.—Soldiers can be religious, and all of them ought to be. If officers in high position can find time for prayer and religious duties, much more can a private soldier. Does not Gen. Beauregard ascribe the victories both at Manassas and at Shiloh to the interposition of the Almighty?

“Religion is laughed at in the camps.” You may have

been laughed at in school, but did that prevent you learning your lessons, or render education valueless? So in the camps, duties will not hinder you from trying to understand something about the science of salvation. A laugh or sneer does not kill as does a bullet, nor do they destroy the truth of the Bible, the value of the soul, nor the hopes of the good man in God's promises to save all that fear and obey Him. No wise man, no true soldier, mocks at religion.

"Soon as the war is over, I mean to be religious." You may not live to see that day; you may fall in the first battle, or by disease, before you come in contact with the enemy: hence, be prepared for death, or you are lost forever. Now, now, not to-morrow, is the accepted period for preparation, the day of salvation. Delay is dangerous. How many thousands of our soldiers have died of disease since the beginning of the war?—five to one that have died by bullets or weapons of the enemy.

"I cannot *feel* the danger as you represent it." But God's Book so declares it: this would not be full of warnings unless it were dangerous to live in a state of irreconciliation to God and unfit to die. Repent and believe the Gospel, is a portion of the first Gospel sermon ever delivered.

Haste, O sinner—now return;  
Stay not for the morrow's sun—  
Lest thy lamp should cease to burn  
Ere salvation's work is done.

"My conscience does not condemn me." It may be asleep, but it will wake up by and by when too late, when delirium

has seized you, or you are too feeble to meditate on eternal things; it will awake refreshed by its slumbers, give you dreadful agony, and the foretaste of unutterable despair.

“My mother used to pray for me, when a child, but she is now in heaven.” This should encourage you to pray for yourself, that you may reach the same happy place. Begin to-day, soldier,—thousands are praying throughout the land for soldiers. Pray before you lay down this *Conversation in a Tent*, this word of advice and warning. Pray that God may give you a new heart, a new taste—that you may feel the danger, the imminent peril of living a foe to your Maker.

I saw a soldier on his dying bed. He was tenderly nursed by mother, sisters and other friends; but their efforts were in vain to save his valuable life. A few days prior to dissolution, delirium seized his brain. What a sad sight! He muttered incoherent sentences about the camps, the battle-field, and cars in which he came home; but not a word about Jesus or his soul. As he had given that no concern in life, as his friends understood, it is feared all is lost. He was brave amidst the showers of bullets and grape, and escaped death. But disease, soon after a mighty contest, accomplished what the weapons of the enemy could not. Such may be your end, and such the instrument used to stop your pulse and chill the warm current of your life. Believe in Jesus, repent of sin, become a soldier of the cross; then you will be prepared to live usefully and die happily.

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