

which he relates in the following words:—"When I was a soldier, I, with others, was drawn out to go to such a place to besiege it: but when I was just ready to go, one of the company desired to go in my room: to which, when I had consented, he took my place; and coming to the siege, as he stood sentinel, he was shot in the head, and died." This combination of judgment and mercy made no salutary impression on his heart, for he "grew more and more rebellious against God, and careless of his own salvation."

After leaving the army, he returned to his native place, and married a woman of great excellence, by whose example, and "chaste conversation, coupled with fear," a partial reformation was produced in his conduct. She frequently enticed him to read "The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven," and "The practice of Piety," which excited in him a desire to reform his vicious life, and to fall in with the religion of the times. But the enmity of his mind against God was unsubdued by the doctrines of the cross. He was not convinced of his guilt and danger as a transgressor of the moral law; nor did he yet build his hopes of salvation on the meritorious obedience of the Son of God—nay, he was in a state of profound ignorance respecting the person and work of Jesus Christ. Temporary convictions had indeed often rendered him uneasy in the midst of his amusements and sinful gratifications—visions had haunted his imagination—he had received frequent and faithful reproofs from the Puritans of Bedford and Elstow—but he had not yet "put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness." One reformation followed another without a corresponding change of heart, and unattended with genuine repentance. Bunyan himself says, "As yet I was

nothing but a poor, painted hypocrite; yet I loved to be talked of, as one that was truly godly. I was proud of my godliness, and did all I could to be well spoken of by men. And thus I continued for about a twelve-month or more."

Providence and grace were, however, preparing to achieve his deliverance from the dominion of sin, and to bring him into the glorious liberty of the sons of God—an event most auspicious to Bunyan, and beneficial in its consequences to the whole Christian church. Let him speak for himself—"Upon a day, the good providence of God called me to Bedford, to work at my calling; and in one of the streets of that town I came where there were three or four women sitting at a door in the sun, talking about the things of God. Their talk was about the new birth—the work of God in their hearts; as also how they were convinced of their miserable state by nature. They talked how God had visited their souls with his love in the Lord Jesus, and with what promises they had been refreshed, comforted, and strengthened, against the temptations of the devil. Methought they spake as if joy made them speak, and they were to me as if I had found a new world: as if they were people that dwelt alone, and were not to be reckoned among their neighbours. By these things, my mind was now so turned, that it lay like a horse-leech at the vein, still crying out, give, give; and was so fixed on eternity, and on the things of the kingdom of heaven, that neither pleasures, nor profits, nor threats could loose it, or make it let go its hold."

Fierce and distressing conflicts with the powers of darkness followed this transition from death unto life; difficulties about election, and fears lest he had outlived the day of grace, held him a long time in bondage; while the expectation of impulses and