



**“Sam,
Step
Forward!”**



Sam was the son of Christian parents, and in early youth he had given his heart to the Lord. At school, he had already learned that God hears and answers the prayers of His children. This knowledge had taught him never to start the day without prayer to God.

It was a difficult step for him to go from his peaceful home to the rough reality of camp life. But he was no coward. With a joyful heart, he fulfilled his duties as a soldier. His comrades thought well of him, but gradually their attitude changed because he wouldn't join them in their filthy jokes and conversations. To listen was very painful to him and caused him to turn to the Lord for strength to remain faithful. His fellow soldiers started to tease him and before long they openly ridiculed him.

Gradually, the number of those who were against him increased. As a Christian, his path became more and more lonely. Eventually this came to the notice of the Captain, who knew Sam was one of his best soldiers. But it annoyed him to hear that Sam was so "religious," and so he decided to have a little bit of fun with him.

One morning when the Captain reviewed his company, his attention was drawn to Sam. Suddenly the Captain ordered, "Sam, step forward!" Sam stood before the Captain, who commanded, "Sing your favorite song in the presence of the company." The unusual command startled him, but he must obey--not only his Captain, but also his Saviour and Lord. After a silent prayer he began singing:

"When peace like a river attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul."

The first verse was finished. Sam was happy knowing his song was pleasing before God. "Continue!" ordered the Captain.

"Tho' Satan should buffet, tho' trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul."
"My sin--oh, the bliss of this glorious tho't -
My sin not in part but the whole,
Was borne on the cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!"

The Captain remained silent and tears rolled down his cheeks. With joyful heart, gazing heavenward, Sam continued:

"And, Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
The trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend,
Even so--it is well with my soul."

"Sam, step back!" the Captain said in a subdued voice. He was deeply touched, for he also knew the hymn and used to sing it himself. The memory of his departed mother came before him now. He knew the way of salvation but had failed to accept it. He could not stand to be ridiculed. In reality the brave Captain had been a coward. Sam, his subordinate, had indeed done better, and what folly to think of trying to make him a

laughing stock. Now the Captain was the defeated one and was not ashamed of his tears. He decided that this day would be the turning point in his life.

The whole company had seen his tears and no one was laughing. The hymn Sam had sung had touched them all deeply. From this day on, there was a marked change in the esteem of his comrades, and God blessed his faithfulness in testifying for the Lord Jesus. There was no more scorn or derision for Sam, and by his testimony for his Saviour, he became a guide to salvation for many of his comrades.

How is it with you, dear unsaved friend? Are you going on without Christ because you do not have the courage to receive Him into your life and make a definite stand for Him? Is it not true that deep down in your heart you know you are not right with God? You know that you need Christ as your Saviour, but you are ashamed to take a stand for Him before your fellow men. An endless eternity is before you in Heaven or Hell and it depends upon your decision, which it will be. Receive Christ and it will be Heaven; go on, too cowardly to take a stand for Jesus, and it will be Hell.

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Romans 10:9).

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