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WORD in SEASON:

O R,

Advice to a Soldier.

Fight the good Fight of Faith : Lay hold of eternal Life !

1. **A**RE you to die? Must you leave this World? And carry Nothing of it away with you? Naked as you came out of your Mother's Womb, naked shall you return? And are you never to come back into this World? Have you no more Place under the Sun? When you leave these Houses and Fields, this Flesh and Blood, do you part with them for ever? Are you *sure* of this? Must *All Men* die? Can *none at all* escape Death? Do *Rich Men* likewise die, and leave their Riches for others? Do *Princes* also fall and die like one of their People? Can you then escape it? You do not think so. You know Death is as sure as if you felt it already: As if you was now gasping for Life, sweating and trembling in those last Pangs, 'till the Soul started off from the quivering Lips, into the boundless Ocean of Eternity.

2. And are you to be judged? How is this to be? Why, the Son of God shall come in his Glory, and all his holy Angels with him; and then shall he sit upon the Throne of his Glory. And before him shall be gathered all Nations, and He shall separate them one from another, as a Shepherd divideth his Sheep from the Goats. Behold He cometh with Clouds! And every Eye shall see Him which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty! And I saw (wilt thou also say) a great white Throne, and Him that sat there-
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on, from whose Face the Earth and the Heavens fled away, and there was found no Place for them. And I saw the Dead, small and great, stand before God, and they were judged, every Man according to his Works. And shalt *Thou* also be judged according to *thy* Works? All thy Works, whether they be good or evil? Yea, and for every *idle* Word which thou shalt speak, Thou shalt give an Account in the Day of Judgment. But *this* is not all. The Lord, the Judge searcheth the *Heart* and trieth the Reins. He understands *all thy Thoughts*; and for all these likewise He shall bring thee into Judgment. Supposest Thou, It is enough, To be *outwardly* Good? What! Tho' thy *inward* Parts are very Wickedness? And are they not? Is not thy Soul fallen short of the Glory (the Glorious Image) of God? Look into thy Breast. Art Thou not a fallen Spirit? Dost Thou not know and feel, how very far Thou art gone from Original Righteousness? How desperately full Thou art of all Evil, and naked of all Good? Is there not in Thee an Earthly, Sensual, Devilish Mind? A Mind that is Enmity against God? 'Tis plain there is. For thou dost not love God. Thou dost not delight in Him. He is not the Desire of thy Eyes or the Joy of thy Heart. Thou lovest the Creature more than the Creator. Thou art a Lover of Pleasure more than a Lover of God. O how wilt thou stand in the Judgment!

3. Are you then to go to Heaven or Hell? It must be either to one or the other. I pray God you may not go to Hell! For who can dwell with everlasting Burnings? Who can bear the Fierceness of that Flame, without even a Drop of Water to cool his Tongue? Yea, and that without End; for as the Worm dieth not, so the Fire is not quenched. No. Whoever is once cast into that Lake of Fire, shall be tormented Day and Night for ever and ever. O Eternity! Eternity! Who can tell the Length of Eternity? I warn *Thee* now, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, that *Thou* come not into that Place of Torment!

4. But alas! Is not Hell now begun in thy Soul? Does thy *Conscience* never awake? Hast Thou no *Re-*
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morfe at any Time? No *Sense* of Guilt? No *Dread* of the Wrath of God? Why these (if Thou art not saved from them in this Life) are the Worm that never dieth. And what else is thy carnal Mind? Thy Enmity against God? Thy foolish and hurtful Lusts, thy inordinate Affections? What are Pride, Envy, Malice, Revenge? Are they not Vipers gnawing thy Heart? May they not well be called, The Dogs of Hell? Canst Thou be out of Hell while these are in thy Soul? While they are tearing it in Pieces, and there is none to help Thee? Indeed they are not fully let loose upon Thee. And while Thou seest the Light of the Sun, the Things of the World that surround Thee, or the Pleasures of Sense divert thy Thoughts from them. But when Thou canst eat and drink no more, when the Earth with the Works thereof are burnt up, when the Sun is fallen from Heaven, and Thou art shut up in utter Darkness, what a State wilt Thou be in then? May'st Thou never try! Seek thou a better Habitation, a House of God eternal in the Heavens.

5. There the Wicked cease from Troubling, there the Weary are at Rest. For God shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes; and there shall be no more Death, neither Sorrow nor Crying, neither shall there be any more Pain, but everlasting Joy upon their Heads. But this Joy our Ears have not yet heard, neither has it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive. Yet a little of it the Children of God can conceive, from what they already enjoy. For the Kingdom of Heaven is within them. God has given them eternal Life; the Life which is hid with Christ in God. They have Heaven upon Earth; Righteousness and Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost. Their Souls are renewed in the Image of God. They love God with all their Hearts. They are happy in Him; and they love their Neighbour, (that is every Man) as themselves, as their own Souls. Being justified by Faith, they have Peace with God; yea, a Peace which passeth all Understanding. And they rejoice evermore, knowing their Sins are blotted out; that they are accepted in the Beloved, and that they are going to an Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

6. Will

6. Will you reply to all this, *But I am a Soldier, and have therefore nothing to do with these Things?* Hold! Have Soldiers nothing to do with Death? How so? Do Soldiers never die? Can you fright Death away? No, my Friend; he will not regard all your big Words or Looks. Nor all the Weapons of your Warfare. You can neither conquer nor escape Him. Your Profession may excuse you from many other Things. But there is no excusing yourself from Death. Are you less sure of this than other Men are? No: there is one Lot for all. Are you farther from it than they? Nay, rather nearer. You live in the very Jaws of Death. Why then a Soldier (if there be any Difference) has more to do with Death than other Men. It is not far from every one of us. But to him it is just at the Door.

7. Or do you fancy a Soldier has nothing to do with Judgment? Will you say then (as poor Captain Urata did, when he was asked a few Minutes before his Death, if he had made his Peace with God) *I hope GOD will deal with me like a Gentleman?* But God said unto him, *Thou Fool! I will deal with Thee, as with all Mankind. There is no respect of Persons with Me. I reward every Man according to his Works.* Thou also shalt receive of the Righteous Judge, according to the Things which Thou hast done in the Body. Death levels all; It mingles in one Dust the Gentleman, Soldier, Clown and Beggar. It makes all these Distinctions void. When Life ends, so do they. Holy, or Unholy? is the one Question then. Lo! The Books are opened, that all the Dead may be judged according to the Things that are written therein! O may thy Name be found written in the Book of Life!

8. For, have Soldiers nothing to do with Hell? Why then is it so often in thy Mouth? Dost thou think God does not hear the Prayer? And how often hast Thou prayed for Him, *To damn thy Soul?* Is His Ear waxed heavy that it cannot hear? I fear thou wilt find it otherwise. Was not he a Soldier too (and a terrible one) to whom God said of old, *Hell from beneath is moved for Thee, to meet Thee at Thy coming?* And what marvel! For Sin is the high Road to Hell. And have
Soldiers

Soldiers nothing to do with Sin? Alas! How many of you wallow therein, yea, and glory in your Shame! How do you labour to work out your own Damnation! O poor Work, for poor Wages! The Wages of Sin is Death; the Wages of Cursing, of Swearing, of taking the Name of God in vain; of Sabbath-breaking, Drunkenness, Revenge; of Fornication, Adultery, and Uncleanness. Now art thou clear of those? Does not thy own Heart smite Thee? Art Thou not condemned already? What Voice is that which sounds in thine Ears? Is it not the Voice of God? Shall I not visit for these Things, saith the Lord? Shall not my Soul be avenged on such a Sinner as this? It is a fearful Thing to fall into the Hands of the Living God! Be very sure that thou art stronger than He, before thou fliest in His Face. Do not defy God, unless thou canst overcome Him. But canst thou indeed? O no! Do not try. Do not dare Him to do His worst. Why should He destroy both thy Body and Soul in Hell? Why shouldst thou be punish'd with everlasting Destruction, from the Presence of the Lord and from the Glory of His Power?

9. But if there were no other Hell, Thou hast Hell within Thee. An awakened Conscience is Hell. Pride, Envy, Wrath, Hatred, Malice, Revenge, what are these but Hell upon Earth? And how often art Thou tormented in these Flames? Flames of Lust, Envy, or proud Wrath? Are not these to thy Soul, when blown up to the Height, as it were, a Lake of Fire, burning with Brimstone? Flee away before the great Gulph is fixt: Escape! Escape for thy Life! If Thou hast not Strength, Cry to God, and thou shalt receive Power from on high: And He, whose Name is rightly call'd Jesus, shall save thee from thy Sins.

10. And why should he not? Has a Soldier nothing to do with Heaven? God forbid that you should think so! Heaven was design'd for *you* also. God so loved *your* Soul, that He gave His only begotten Son, that you, believing in Him, might not perish, but have everlasting Life. Receive then the Kingdom, prepar'd for you from the Foundation of the World! This, this is the Time to make it sure; this short, uncertain Day

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Day of Life. Have you then an Hour to spare? No; not a Moment. Arise, and call upon thy God. Call upon the Lamb who taketh away the Sins of the World, to take away thy Sins. Surely he has borne *thy* Grievs, and carried *thy* Sorrows! He was wounded for *thy* Transgressions, and bruised for *thy* Iniquities. He hath paid the Ransom for *thy* Soul. Believe in Him and thou shalt be saved. Art thou a Sinner? He came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance. Art thou a lost, undone Sinner? He came to seek and to save that which was lost. May He that gave himself for Thee, give Thee Ears to hear, and a Heart to understand his Love! So shalt Thou also say, *The Life I now live, I live by Faith in the Son of God.* So shall the Love of God be shed abroad in *thy* Heart, and thou shalt rejoice with Joy unspeakable. Thou shalt have the Mind that was in Christ, and shalt so walk as he also walked: 'Till having fought the good Fight, and finished thy Course, Thou receive the Crown that fadeth not away!

The E N D.