"Now look here, Roger, you may have 'convictions' as you call them, but convictions don't go far in the army. No, Sir! Throw them away while you're here. You can always pick them up when you're out of the army and back home at church. This is no church. See?" And Sergeant Mangers' face wore a harsh scowl.
"Throw my convictions away, Sir? I'd have to throw the Bible away then. My convictions are based and founded upon the Word of God. I cannot conform, Sir," and the young private looked sweetly but earnestly into the face of the hardened officer before him.

"Put it away, then. Put that Bible away!" the sergeant shouted; "you're preparing for war, not a church service," and the boot of the drill sergeant sent Roger sprawling across the ground.

Obediently he tucked the Testament in his shirt pocket and breathed a prayer for help. He was puzzled and a bit confused: all this happened off duty. If he had been dilatory and unconcerned while on duty he could better have understood. What was the sergeant's real objective? he wondered. Was he trying to drill hatred in his life so filled with the love of Christ and for the souls of men . . . the men in his own company?

Picking himself up he said softly to Sergeant Mangers, "I used to be like you, Sarge. I didn't believe in anything much. But my mother did. She kept praying for me. God answered her prayers. I got saved and two months later I was gloriously sanctified."

"Saved? Sanctified? What an odd lad! You believe in miracles, too, I suppose?" and Sarge's face was red as he tried to humiliate the nineteen-year-old before him.

"I sure do. In fact, my conversion and sanctification were miracles . . . of grace."

"Who knows? You might need a miracle soon," the sergeant jeered and taunted.

"Maybe so, Sarge. But if I need it God will provide it for me. He said He wouldn't allow us to be tempted above that we're able to bear or carry."

"Trash! Trash! All of it trash, young fellow. Look here, Private," he continued, "do you want to live when you get over there? If you do you'd do well to follow my advice: forget about The Book and your convictions and concentrate on killing, on self-preservation and survival. Maybe you're not afraid to die?" Again he jeered.
"The law of self-preservation rules quite strongly in each of us, Sarge. But if such should be my lot I would be ready. My soul is at rest and peace with my God."

"You know something, Roger? You should be a chaplain!" With that the sergeant walked briskly away.

Roger walked silently to the barracks where he seated himself on the bed and again began reading. Save for two others who were asleep, he was alone. He knelt by the bed and talked to the Lord, drawing new grace and strength from the time thus spent.

In a nearby pool-hall the sergeant spoke authoritatively. "You have your orders now, men. Do as you are commanded. The young private must be broken down. He'll not make a good soldier. Give him the works. Check him out . . . but good!" A loud burst of laughter ensued.

"Don't worry, Sarge, we'll give 'im the works like we give old Maloney here," a half-drunken Corporal laughed. "Eh, Maloney? This life ain't half-bad, is it?"

"Go easy on the private," Maloney spoke quickly. "That's a good kid. Too good to be in this kind of life and place."

"Still have a soft spot, Maloney?" the Sarge laughed. "You make a good soldier, though."

"One never gets over some things, Sarge. Someday you'll see what I mean."

"Aw, now Maloney! Life here ain't all bad," the half-drunk answered.

"Don't any of you get too rough on the kid or old Maloney takes a hand in matters. Understand? Maloney ain't all hardness: way down underneath there's still tenderness."

The days that followed were hard days for Roger. The men in the barracks stole his money, others hid his clothes so that he was late for breakfast and drill practice and roll call. Still others cursed and swore
unashamedly at him. All the while the young private maintained a holy living, a constantly consistent daily living, before men . . . his tormentors.

"We go across this week, Private," the sergeant told him one morning. "Do you feel as brave as you did before you heard this news? Do you still feel you're ready to die? It's not a pleasant thought, is it?" Again he jeered and mocked.

"His grace is sufficient for me, Sarge."

"You've almost convinced me of that these past weeks, boy." With that the Sarge walked away.

Not long was Company "C" on fighting soil when the enemy opened fire.

"Roger," it was Maloney, "what do you have that I didn't have when I came to the army? I was a Christian but the fellows did me like they did you and I went down under the pressure of it all. I want the Lord to come back into my heart. Can you pray for old Maloney, boy? I want to be saved like I was years ago."

Amid the roar of cannons and the thunder of heavy artillery the private prayed for his superior.

"I've found Him! I found Him!" Maloney shouted into the ear of the young soldier.

"You need to be sanctified, Corporal Maloney. This will keep you sweet under pressure and will stabilize you for what's ahead."

"How do I get it, Roger? Is this what kept you unmoving when Corporal Shannon and Sergeant Mangers kicked you so unmercifully? Is it what kept you sweet until you turned around and shined their boots and treated them with greater kindness and love than ever? Is it, private?"

"That's it, Corporal. It will do the same for you, too.

It works. Oh, it works wondrously well under pressure.
Seek it until you find it and. . . ."

A loud burst of gunfire drowned the private's voice. The enemy fired upon Company "C." They broke for jungle several roads away. A bullet hit the sergeant. He fell to the ground. Everybody who could crawl was on his face, crawling from the open spot to the jungle.

Roger raced across the open space to the sergeant. Half-dragging, half-pulling, he got him to a ditch. Just as the Sarge went in, he stopped an enemy bullet.

"Roger! Roger!" Sergeant Manners called. "Crawl in. It's only my leg." But it was too late.

"Get the Bible out . . . of my . . . pocket, Sarge." He was gone.

Sergeant Manners drew the Book from the bloody pocket. It fell open. In the light of the gunfire he read, "He that believeth in me shall never die." Believeth . . . shall never die! Believeth! Believeth! He had to believe. He was convinced. Roger had proven it to him. He looked quickly away from the dead body of the young private; away beyond the burst of the shells and the maddening roar of the cannon -- away past the stars (if there were any shining -- one could not tell with all the gunfire) and the moon: straight up into the face of an Almighty God . . . the God he had despised, rejected, and turned aside. "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner!" he exclaimed, blacking suddenly out.

He rallied sometime later to find a medic stooping anxiously over him. "You hurt bad, Sarge?" he asked.

"My heart mostly hurts -- I didn't thank the private for . . . for . . . saving my. . . ." He blacked out again.

When he rallied again he was in an improvised tent hospital in the jungle. He opened his eyes and looked about him. Among the many men from his company, he saw Maloney. He looked bad.

"You hurt bad, Maloney?" he asked, as he saw the eyes flutter.
"Pretty . . . bad, Sarge. But I hain't afraid to die. Roger led me back to the Lord tonight. This salvation's real, Sarge. I got sanctified, too. This time I'll stand true to my Jesus. Taunt me all you care to, I'm going through with . . . Jesus."

"There'll be no roughness nor taunting from me, Corporal: I'm a new man; a born-again man. See this Book?" and the sergeant held the bullet-racked Bible up triumphantly. "This Book changed my life. If the Lord spares my life I'll be going out of here not as Sergeant Mangers, but as Chaplain Mangers. 'He that believeth in Him shall never die.'

"Know somethin', Maloney? You were right: one never does get over some things; I'll never get over the life of Private Roger Carr." Maloney never heard.