

A SOLDIER'S STORY

I was a soldier, tall and proud,
Who fought among a worldly crowd.
I thought myself a warrior strong
And marched in flank of vile throng.
Of all my peers I was most brave,
Yet, to my sinful sword, was slave.
My comrades were all lusty men,
Filled with hatred, ire, and sin.
We battled for our present gain
And plundered those our swords had slain.

One day upon a broad plateau
Seeds of destruction we did sow.
And in their stead rose up a group
Of demon warriors in a troop.
Their slimy aspects, pitted sore,
Struck fear that shook our valor's core.
Their twisted features and red eyes
Incited dreadful, frightful cries.
Our courage trembled, fell and fled
And all our faces paled as dead.
The ghoulish figures shrieked then charged
With each one's awesomeness enlarged.
They threw a score of fiery darts
That pierced our minds, our souls and hearts.
With blazing swords our swords did meet
Until we madly sought retreat.
The devils hotly at our heels,
We felt as every sinner feels,
Condemned by our own wicked deeds,
Reaping fruit from sinful seeds.
Without the power to contend,
We ran and reached the plateau's end,
Marked by a crevice deep and wide
Which barred us from the other side;
There safe from demons we would be
If we could jump successfully.
And many tried, but shortly fell

Into that empty, dark black Hell.
There was no other course to try:
By sword or fall we each would die.
And I was last; by demons pressed,
With all my might I made the test.
I leaped and left the deathly ledge
And barely grasped the far side's edge.
But as I hung there I could hear
My comrades scream and demons jeer,
For far below they were not slain,
They knew no death, but constant pain!
The abyss reddened now with fire,
And, as the weeping pitch grew higher,
My fingers slipped from off the sod,
And I cried out, "O, save me, God!"
I felt a Hand take hold my arm
And lift me from impending harm.
Through tearful eyes I saw His face,
The Savior's visage, full of grace.
He set my feet on solid ground.
Upon my knees I there fell down
And praised Him, saying, "Thank You, Lord."
He said, "Arise, take off your sword.
Put on the armor I will give
And by My Word's sword you shall live."

I am a soldier, meek but proud;
I go among the worldly crowd.
By God's great power I am brave
To win to Christ the sin-bound slave.
My brothers are all faithful men
Who love their Lord and battle sin.
And we fight not for earthly gain,
But war for God without refrain.

— *David L. Hatton, 1968*