

**SUNRISE, NOONDAY, AND
SUNSET OF A CHRISTIAN LIFE,
REMINISCENCES OF EDWARD
JAMES OLIVER (LATE TREASURER
OF THE BAPTIST TRACT SOCIETY)**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649312986

Sunrise, noonday, and sunset of a Christian life, reminiscences of Edward James Oliver (late treasurer of the baptist tract society) by John T. Briscoe

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

JOHN T. BRISCOE

**SUNRISE, NOONDAY, AND
SUNSET OF A CHRISTIAN LIFE,
REMINISCENCES OF EDWARD
JAMES OLIVER (LATE TREASURER
OF THE BAPTIST TRACT SOCIETY)**

SUNRISE, NOONDAY, AND SUNSET

OF A

CHRISTIAN LIFE.

Reminiscences

OF

EDWARD JAMES OLIVER,

(Late Treasurer of the Baptist Tract Society)

By JOHN T. BRISCOE.

"With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation."
Psalm xci. 10.

London :

BAPTIST TRACT SOCIETY, 3, BOLT COURT, FLEET STREET, E.C.

1877.

210. m. 855.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

51

52

53

54

55

56

57

58

59

60

61

62

63

64

65

66

67

68

69

70

71

72

73

74

75

76

77

78

79

80

81

82

83

84

85

86

87

88

89

90

91

92

93

94

95

96

97

98

99

100

SUNRISE, NOONDAY, AND SUNSET

Of a Christian Life.

THOUGH it is far from easy to arrange the scattered reminiscences of a good man's character and career so as to present an attractive picture to the general reader, yet, as an incentive to others, that they may become "followers of those who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises," it may fairly be attempted. For even passing glimpses of one who was remarkable for the simplicity and thoroughness of his personal religion, can scarcely be lost upon spectators.

An endeavour is thus made to sketch the life-story of a veteran in the Baptist denomination, who was among the oldest members of the connection in London, and whose earthly course has just terminated.

Early Days.

Mr. EDWARD JAMES OLIVER was born on the 5th of July, 1788, and departed this earthly life on the 9th of January, 1877—thus completing a long course of nearly ninety years. Of his early associations

little is known beyond the fact that the parish in which young Edward first saw the light was that of St. Saviour, Southwark. He was the eldest of sixteen children, fourteen of whom died in childhood; and it is believed that for more than fifty years he was the sole survivor of the family.

His origin was a humble one, and in this we may, perhaps, trace the seeds of Mr. Oliver's subsequent success. Hard work is good discipline: many a nature has become firmly knit thereby which would otherwise have grown feeble and flaccid under what we so fondly call "better circumstances."

School Days.

The latter part of last century was not the age of School Boards. The education then given in even middle-class schools will not compare with elementary education now. A story is told of Dr. Johnson, to whom a man had the singular bad taste to express his thankfulness that he had never been educated. The rejoinder from the gruff doctor was—"Why, man, you are thanking God for your ignorance!" "And so I do," replied the other, in bravado. "Then, sir," said the doctor, "you have a great deal to be thankful for."

The position of his parents did not prevent them from giving Edward an average school training. He was sent to the "North-street Schools," in Snow's-fields, where he received an education which, though of course it would suffer by comparison with an average training now, yet was sufficient for the

practical life before our young scholar. But the best feature in the school was—it had a godly master. The exercises of each day were, therefore, commenced and closed with prayer; a portion of Scripture was also read. The good tutor was thus sowing seed which, up to the end of his pupil's life, bore glorious fruit. Truly the fruit was not immediately apparent: a course of sin intervened before the seed began to germinate; but it was there—deep down in the heart, awaiting the Divine influences which afterwards developed it.

And the master's care for the scholar was not limited to school-hours. He would often take his young friend to hear the leading preachers of the day, among whom was the venerated Abraham Booth, and notably the celebrated Rowland Hill. And though the substances of the discourses he listened to faded from the mind of the lad, the weighty, pithy sayings he heard clung to the memory of young Oliver like burrs. They laid hold upon his conscience, and in later days he would dwell upon them with peculiar pathos, as among the "all things" which, all along his life, had been working out his salvation.

Youth and its Temptations.

There was no Young Men's Christian Association when Edward Oliver was a young man. When his connection with his schoolmaster ceased, there was no Christian friend to take the youth by the hand and watch over his interests. And it needs no small re-

solution in a young man to put a bridle upon his unsanctified inclinations, and return a determined *No* to the solicitations of pressing temptation. And so, for a time, Edward's path was downward. Engaged in the boot and shoe trade, his leisure was given to the world and sin, though in his business his strong will and rare energy secured him some considerable success. The early impressions of childhood—though not lost—were nevertheless considerably enfeebled. Conscience and inclination were at war, and, for the present, victory was with the latter. Yet even this dark part of a life whose termination was like a glowing sunset, has its alleviations. If early religious training does not in every instance preserve from a sinful course, it at least fortifies conscience, gives point to the appeals of the God of love "who willeth not the death of a sinner," and prepares the heart in many an instance for the ultimate reception of his "grace which brings salvation," and which constrains to the denial of "ungodliness and worldly lusts," by making a life of soberness, righteousness, and godliness, the heart's blessed choice.

Formation of Character.

Hitherto the buds of early promise seemed to have been blighted, and character was being moulded by the influences adverse to true religion with which Edward Oliver was at this time surrounded. We frequently, when deploring the power of such influences, lose sight, however, of the important factor in the formation

of character which a child's early impressions supply. These in our friend's case were produced, as we have seen, by the instrumentality of his schoolmaster, and certainly they were never wholly effaced. But a crisis was now reached. A restless, earnest spirit craved something more exciting than plodding daily labour. Fascinated by worldly pleasure, is it surprising that the theatre was a favourite resort? or that our friend desired to be more than a mere spectator of the performances? Edward longed to be an actor; he was encouraged to put himself forward in theatrical life; but God, whose eye was upon him for good, willed it otherwise.

Conversion.

The way was being gradually prepared by which our young friend was to enter the service of a better Master than he at present served, and to play a part in a nobler drama than the stage offered.

At the time of which we write the celebrity of Rowland Hill in London was fully established. Crowds were flocking to hear "the witty preacher," whose solemn appeals, nevertheless, were like the sharpest arrows in many a conscience, notwithstanding that they were sometimes feathered with pleasantry. One well qualified to describe him* writes thus: "A man of simple faith and unaffected piety, despising cant on the one hand, and guarding against that questionable pietism on the other which shrinks from revealing itself by a frank avowal, Mr. Hill found the fields 'white unto

* Rev. V. J. Charlesworth.