

I Know of a Sleep in Jesus' Name

1. I know of a sleep in Jesus' name,
A rest from all toil and sorrow;
Earth folds in her arms my weary frame
And shelters it till the morrow.
My soul is at home with God in heav'n;
Her sorrows are past and over.

2. I know of a peaceful eventide;
And when I am faint and weary,
At times with the journey sorely tried,
Through hours that are long and dreary,
Then often I yearn to lay me down
And sink into blissful slumber.

3. I know of a morning, bright and fair
When tidings of joy shall wake us,
When songs from on high shall fill the
And God to His glory take us, [air
When Jesus shall bid us rise from sleep
How joyous that hour of waking!

7. O Jesus, draw near my dying bed
And take me into Thy keeping
And say when my spirit hence is fled,
"This child is not dead, but sleeping."
And leave me not, Savior, till I rise
To praise Thee in life eternal.

4. O that is a morning dear to me,
And oft, o'er the mountains streaming,
In spirit its heav'nly light I see,
As golden the peaks are beaming.
Then sing I for joy like birds at dawn
That carol in lofty lindens.

5. God's Son to our graves then takes
His way,
His voice hear all tribes and nations;
The portals are rent that guard our clay,
And moved are the sea's foundations.
He calls out aloud, "Ye dead, come
In glory we rise to meet Him. [forth!"

6. Now opens the Father's house above,
The names of the blest are given:
Lord, gather us there; let none we love
Be missed in the joys of heaven.
Vouchsafe Thou us all a place with Thee;
We ask through our dear Redeemer.

Heritage Hymns of the Month

November

"Behold a Host, Arrayed in White"

ELH 553

We wish we could see the people who are in heaven, if only for a moment. In Revelation 7:9-17, the Lord allowed St. John to see them and write down what he saw, to share with us. They are "a great multitude that no one could number ... standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands." John is asked, "Who are these, clothed in white robes?" He does not know and is then told that they made it "out of the great tribulation" by having their robes "washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb." (ESV)

In this hymn we sing about this, to a sweet Norwegian folk melody. It is a hymn that acknowledges life under the cross: "So oft, in troubled days gone by,/In anguish they would weep and sigh ... Ye did the joys of earth disdain,/Ye toiled and sowed in tears and pain." In answer to this, it is a hymn rich in comfort: "At home above the God of love/For aye their tears shall dry." Yet we still sing the true teaching of justification, directed to Christ and His promises: They "in the flood of Jesus' blood/Are cleansed from guilt and blame ... And praise the Lord, who with the Word/Sustained you on the way."

"I Know of a Sleep in Jesus' Name"

ELH 525

The best hymns use the full wealth of God's Word to teach the faith and comfort the conscience. This hymn shows how Scripture teaches in more than one place that death is a sleep. St. Paul calls Christians "those who sleep in Jesus" (1 Thess. 4:14); in the gospel we hear that "all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth" (John 5:28-29); and Jesus said that Jairus' daughter was "not dead, but sleeping" (Mark 5:39) before He took her by the hand and raised her with His voice.

This hymn brings these things together: “I know of a sleep in Jesus’ name,” we sing in the first verse – when we Christians die, we sleep in Jesus. “He calls out aloud, ‘Ye dead, come forth!’/In glory we rise to meet Him,” we sing in the fifth verse – His voice will wake the dead on the last day. “O Jesus, draw near my dying bed/And take me into Thy keeping,/And say when my spirit hence is fled,/“This child is not dead but sleeping,” we sing in the last verse. At our deathbeds, Jesus is there to raise us from death like the daughter of weeping Jairus. Jesus dries our tears as He turned Jairus’ tears from sorrow to joy.

Secondary Hymn for the Month

“O Happy Day When We Shall Stand”

ELH 590

This hymn, sometimes sung at graveside committals, places the hope of the resurrection in the forefront.

Behold a Host, Arrayed in White

1. Behold a host, arrayed in white,
Like thousand snow-clad mountains bright;
With palms they stand. Who is this band
Before the throne of light?
Lo, these are they, of glorious fame,
Who from the great affliction came
And in the flood of Jesus’ blood
Are cleansed from guilt and blame.
Now gathered in the holy place,
Their voices they in worship raise;
Their anthems swell where God doth dwell
Mid angels’ songs of praise.

2. Despised and scorned, they sojourned here;
But now, how glorious they appear!
Those martyrs stand, a priestly band,
God’s throne forever near.
So oft in troubled days gone by,
In anguish they would weep and sigh;
At home above the God of love
For aye their tears shall dry.
They now enjoy their Sabbath rest,
The paschal banquet of the blest;
The Lamb, their Lord, at festal board
Himself is host and guest.

3. Then hail! ye mighty legions, yea,
All hail! now safe and blest for aye;
And praise the Lord, who with His Word
Sustained you on the way.
Ye did the joys of earth distain,
Ye toiled and sowed in tears and pain;
Farewell, now bring your sheaves and sing
Salvation’s glad refrain.
Swing high your palms, lift up your song,
Yea, make it myriad voices strong:
Eternally shall praise to Thee,
God, and the Lamb belong.