

The Warning Voice

How few the days by heav'n assign'd,
For mortal man on earth;
Towards the grave he travels on,
Each moment from his birth.

And yet how prone we are to live
As though we ne'er should die;
Regardless of eternal death,
Or endless joys on high.

Our friends and neighbours pass away,
The warning voice is giv'n;
Yet heedless mortals on we go,
As though there were no heav'n.

In eighteen hundred sev'nty five,
(A fact I now relate;)
A neighbour known to all around,
Met a distressing fate.

On Atherstone statute, (sunny morn)
He left his home quite well;
Thus many do—but who'll return,
There's none that wise to tell.

At eventide, returning home
In company with others----
A trap well filled with either sex,
Some sisters, and some brothers,

When suddenly, a crash! A scream!
And when they look around,
Poor man cast from his seat and bruis'd,
They help him from the ground.

They bring him home benumb'd with pain,
Not many words to speak;
Some rest to gain, he lays him down
Until the morning break.

The morning comes, the neighbours run,--
Sad news they have to tell;
Poor Charles is hurt--- and hurt so much
They fear he won't get well.

Their words prov'd true. Before mid-day
(His brother by his side,)
In pain he lay-gasping for breath,
He drew his last, and died.

They take him to the Churchyard near,
Where both his parents lie;
Then let him down the narrow cell,
And "Dust to dust!" they cry.

And when his grassy mound you view,
Or gaze upon the sod;
Let each one ask, "Am I prepar'd,
Prepar'd to meet my God?"

The Bible says, "There's but a step
Between us all and death";
And none can tell how soon we each
May draw our last, last breath.

To Jesus, then, for mercy flee,
He says He'll take us in;
And with his own most precious blood
He'll cleanse us from all sin.

Ah! Listen to the warning voice,
Which oft by God is giv'n;
And mercy seek,—that when death comes,
Each may be rais'd to heav'n.

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Two mothers next disease assails,
I mean the Cope's by name;
One up against the Maypole liv'd,
The other down the lane.

Two brothers' wives! Oh! Solemn thought;
And each had children dear;
It matters not—all ties are broke
When cold death does appear.

With fever one is laid aside,
The other goes to help;
But oh! Not many days are past,
She's laid aside herself.

The doctors come with solemn step,
Med'cine and skill they try;
But all in vain—these mothers both,
They sicken and they die.

Though children wept and fathers sigh'd
Cold death they knew had come;
These mothers both were borne away
To the long silent home.

In the Churchyard now, side by side,
These mothers both are laid;
“It is appointed once to die,”
The Bible long has said.

They lower'd them down the narrow cell,
And “dust to dust” again;
The parson read the service o'er,
The clerk he said Amen.

And when these mothers' graves you view,
Or gaze upon the sod;
Let each one ask, “Am I prepar'd,
Prepar'd to meet my God?”

Oh mothers! Mothers! Warning take,
Salvation now secure;
Although in health, for aught you know,
Death may be at the door.

Oh! Listen to the warning voice
Which oft by God is giv'n;
And mercy seek—that when death comes,
Each may be rais'd to heav'n.

For let our lot be what it may,
One thing important is;
Our great concern—to stand prepar'd
For everlasting bliss.

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The next is one, belonging to
(We often hear it spoke)
A people who are oft-times call'd
The Baptist Chapel folk.

From childhood's days she used to sing
Among the chapel choir:
Sometimes her voice was soft and low,
Sometimes she'd raise it higher.

In song, her voice was oft-times heard
The praise of God to swell:
But now it's hush'd in silent death;
Her grave that truth doth tell.

Those trilling strains are heard no more
In Zion's courts below;
For death has been—and when he strikes,
How soon we mortals go.

Just entered into married life,
(How soon earth's pleasures fade)
The mother and her new-born babe
Are both laid in one grave.

A few steps take—that grave you'll find
Hard by the graveyard wall,
Outside the place where people meet
Upon the Lord to call.

And as that grassy mound you view,
Or gaze upon the sod;
Let each one ask, "Am I prepar'd,
Prepar'd to meet my God?"

For young or old—be what we may,
One thing important is;
Our great concern—to stand prepar'd
For everlasting bliss

Some parents have dear children gone
Into the land of rest;
They're singing now with hand on harp,
The anthems of the blest.

The time can well remember'd be,
When in the coffin lay
A once lov'd, smiling, playful child,
All cold, as cold as clay.

If parents now could hear them speak,
In accents sweet and clear;
It would be, "Father, mother, come,
Come live with us up here.

The crowns of life so num'rous are,
And all the place is grand;
Oh! Father, mother, won't you come
Up to this happy land?"

A child in heav'n—oh, glorious thought!
Then why not parents come,
When in the Bible of God's truth
We read, "There is yet room"

Oh! Let us heed the warning voice
Which oft to us is giv'n;
And mercy seek, that when we die,
We may be rais'd to heav'n.

And when we view our children's graves,
Or gaze upon the sod;
Let each one ask, "Am I prepar'd,
Prepar'd to meet my God?"

Now let us turn across the way;
Mother and daughter there,
Various things they buy and sell,
As plainly will appear.

Things which are needed they both sell,
Their daily bread to earn;
Such things as cheese and bacon too,
And candles for to burn.

Also fine starch, and washing blue,
Good packets of black lead;
Butter and eggs, and pudding spice,
Also some home bak'd bread.

Corn, flour and bran, and lots of things
Quite numerous to mention;
But to enlarge upon them now,
It is not my intention.

The mother long has widow been,
Two husband's though she's had;
But they both died, (as well all must)
And in their graves are laid.

The daughter kind intelligent
As any lassie seen;
And seldom did she e'er despise
Either the poor or mean.

Quite strong and healthy, ruddy too,
And as old women say----
As fine a lass as most you see
In journey of a day.

But ah! How soon earth's pleasures fade,
And health and beauty flies;
In thirty hours, or thereabouts,
She sickens, and she dies.

They take her to the graveyard, where
Her friends are gone before;
And let her down the narrow cell
Outside the chapel door.

And as you see her grassy mound ,
Or gaze upon the sod;
Let each one ask, "Am I prepar'd,
Prepar'd to meet my God?"

Don't sit in judgement o'er the dead,
In silence let them rest;
If they have died in Jesu's arms,
They are for ever blest.

Their faults and failings were their own;
Where you and I have none,
How proud and haughty we may be,
And others frown upon.

The dead to save, or them destroy,
What mortal has the might,
Then leave them with the Judge of all,
Who surely will do right.

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The carrier's wife is next that dies;
(This solemn truth they tell)
Although look'd strong, and healthy too
She's often felt unwell.

(How true, within the stoutest frame,
Diseases fierce may lie.
Unknown to all that live around,
Unseen by mortal eye.)

The efforts made her life to save,
All prove of no avail;
For daily she gets worse and worse,
The neighbours tell the tale.

On market days, both here and there
She's many errands done;
Death's errand now is to call her
To the long, silent home.

They take her to the dark, cold grave,
(As thousands have before)
I surplice white the parson stands,
And reads the service o'er.

And when you see her grassy mound,
Or gaze upon the sod;
Let each one ask, "Am I prepar'd,
Prepar'd to meet my God?"

Prepar'd, or unprepar'd, when death
The solemn summons brings,
We must obey—and each appear
Before the King of kings.

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There's Farmer S-----, he's long look'd ill,
His strength seems almost gone;
They say he takes the best support,
Yet weaker does become.

Doctors and med'cine long he tried,
But all in vain their skill:
The smallest hope does not appear,
That e'er he will get well.

He lingers on ---he lingers long,--
Months and years they fly;
Disease in secret works its way,
And Farmer S----- must die.

A wife much younger than himself,
And two small children dear,
He'll soon be called to leave behind,
It plainly doth appear.

He's laid aside on his sick bed---
What sudden changes come!
One night the wife is well, and ill,
And dies--- in the same room.

They take her first to the cold grave,
He lives a few days more,
Then dies; they take him to the tomb,
Not far from the Church door.

There, side by side, in death's cold sleep,
Husband and wife are laid,
"In midst of life we are in death,"
The parson oft has said.

The eldest child, with grief at heart,
It oft for mamma cries;
A few weeks more she lingers on,
Then, poor thing! She dies.

The hearse---- and friends in mourning garb,
Unto the Churchyard go;
Beside her parents' new made graves,
In coffin she's let low.

And when you see their green turf graves,
Or gaze upon the sod;
Let each one ask, "Am I prepar'd,
Prepar'd to meet my God?"

Cast no reflections on the dead,
But leave them—let them rest:
To Abram's bosom if they're gone,
With angels they are blest.

Sweep your own houses first right well,
And make them pure and clean;
And conscious feel that in God's sight
You are quite free from sin.

Then ---others' faults you may enlarge
And scan their failings o'er;
Go, sing and shout them thro' the land,
Tell them at ev'ry door.

My ditty's done----I now must close;
Whoever likes may read;
The Saviour seek—make Him your trust,
In ev'ry hour of need.

Perhaps some critic may delight
My humble verse to scan:
Himself more perfect lines to make;
He's welcome if he can.

Then let them fly the world around,
And with the utmost care;
That he the glory all possess,
In which I want to share.

Myself and simple lines, I leave
With God to set all right:
No ill I wish to friend or foe,
So reader now---Good Night.