

Oft as the Bell, with Solemn Toll

Words: John Newton, 1779. Music: George Elvey, 1862.

Oft as the bell, with solemn toll,
Speaks the departure of a soul;
Let each one ask himself: Am I
Prepared, should I be called to die?

Only this frail and fleeting breath
Preserves me from the jaws of death;
Soon as it fails, at once I'm gone,
And plunged into a world unknown.

Then, leaving all I loved below,
To God's tribunal I must go;
Must hear the Judge pronounce my fate,
And fix my everlasting state.

But could I bear to hear Him say,
Depart, accursd, far away!
With Satan, in the lowest hell,
Thou art for ever doomed to dwell.

Lord Jesus! help me now to flee,
And seek my hope alone in Thee.
Apply Thy blood, Thy Spirit give,
Subdue my sin, and in me live.

Then, when the solemn bell I hear,
If saved from guilt, I need not fear;
Nor would the thought distressing be,
Perhaps it next may toll for me.

Rather, my spirit would rejoice,
And long, and wish, to hear Thy voice;
Glad when it bids me earth resign,
Secure of Heav'n, if Thou art mine.