

“An Evening Funeral Song” ~ Charles Wesley

Among the Cornish miners in England they are accustomed to sing on the way to the church and from the church to the grave at the funeral of a comrade. Rev. S. W. Christophers says:--

“Some years ago, on a summer’s evening, a long crowd was seen passing down the church path from the town, pressing around a bier as if they would guard it in front, flank, and rear, and singing as they move.

“The strain was measured like their steps, and it was in the minor key, although it seemed at times more like a triumphant shout than a lament of sorrow. They were keeping up the beautiful custom of their fathers, the evening funeral, and the burial hymn from the house of bereavement to the grave. They were singing one of their tunes to one of Charles Wesley’s grandest hymns:--

Rejoice for a brother deceased,
Our loss is his infinite gain;
A soul out of prison released,
And free from its bodily chain;
With sons let us follow his flight
And mount with his spirit above,
Escaped to the mansions of light,
And lodged in the Eden of love.”

“The bier and the procession passed into the ancient sanctuary, by and by again to appear, moving towards the grave. The benediction had scarcely closed the funeral service before the devout multitude once more lifted up its voice—it was a full, a mighty voice—and, pressing around the open grave, they uttered in thrilling tones that glowing and impassioned hymn that seems to melt the earthly and the heavenly into one---

*Come, let us join our friends above
That have obtained the prize.*

Rejoice for a brother deceased;
Our loss is his infinite gain;
A soul out of prison released,
And freed from its bodily chain;
With songs let us follow his flight,
And mount with his spirit above,
Escaped to the mansions of light,
And lodged in the Eden of love.

Our brother the haven has gained,
Outflying the tempest and wind;
His rest he hath sooner obtained,
And left his companions behind,

Still tossed on a sea of distress,
Hard toiling to make the blest shore,
Where all is assurance and peace,
And sorrow and sin are no more.

There all the ship's company meet,
Who sailed with the Savior beneath,
With shouting each other they greet,
And triumph o'er sorrow and death;
The voyage of life's at an end;
The mortal affliction is past;
The age that in Heaven they spend,
Forever and ever shall last