

“Oft In Sorrow, Oft In Woe” ~ Henry K. White

Any one living in Nottingham about the year 1792 might perhaps have seen a little butcher's boy carrying legs of mutton from his father's shop, and following him home as the evening twilight gathered in, and entering the kitchen, might have witnessed rather a remarkable sight. The little fellow, who was only seven years old, sitting with a grave studious face at the head of the table, while two or three rough-looking servants were poring over the copies he gave them to write, or the letters he was teaching them to form into words. The lad's name was Henry Kirke White. By the time he was seventeen he had published a volume of poems, besides studying law, and learning Latin, Greek, French, Italian, and Spanish. His great ambition was to go to the University, and to be ordained; and after overcoming many difficulties, he entered St. John's College, Cambridge, in the year 1805. But, sad to say, he worked too hard for his strength, and after being first man of his college for two years, it gave way, and he died at the age of twenty-two. After his death the fragment of a hymn was found among his mathematical papers.

*Much in sorrow, oft in woe,
Onward, Christians, onward go;
Fight the fight, and worn with strife,
Steep with tears the Bread of Life.
Onward, Christians, onward go,
Join the war and face the foe;
Faint not, much doth yet remain,
Dreary is the long campaign.
Shrink not, Christians, will ye yield?
Will ye quit the painful field?*

Thus far the hymn had gone....

In 1827, it was revised by Fuller-Maitland and included in a volume of hymns. Fuller-Maitland was only 14 years old at the time.

*Oft in sorrow, oft in woe,
Onward, Christian, onward go:
Fight the fight, maintain the strife
Strengthened with the Bread of life.*

*Onward Christians, onward go,
Join the war, and face the foe;
Faint not: Much does yet remain,
Dreary is the long campaign.*

*Shrink not, Christians will ye yield?
Will ye quit the painful field?
Will ye flee in danger's hour?
Know ye not your Captain's pow'r?*

*Let your drooping hearts be glad:
March in heavenly armor clad:
Fight, nor think the battle long,
Victory soon shall be your song.*

*Let not sorrow dim your eye,
Soon shall every tear be dry;
Let not fears your course impede,
Great your strength, if great your need.*

*Onward then in battle move,
More than conquerors ye shall prove;
Though opposed by many a foe,
Christian soldiers onward go.*