

## JESUS LOVES ME, THIS I KNOW

Anna Bartlett Warner

This was one of the first hymns many of us learned ...

Jesus loves me—this I know,  
For the Bible tells me so;

Little ones to Him belong—

They are weak, but He is strong.

*Yes, Jesus loves me!*

*Yes, Jesus loves me!*

*Yes, Jesus loves me!*

*The Bible tells me so.*

Jesus loves me—He who died  
Heaven's gate to open wide;

He will wash away my sin,  
Let His little child come in.

Jesus loves me—loves me still,  
Though I'm very weak and ill;  
From His shining throne on high  
Watches with me where I lie.

Jesus loves me—He will stay  
Close beside me all the way;  
If I trust Him, when I die  
He will take me home on high.

Karl Barth was one of the greatest theologians in the twentieth century. While it is not possible for an evangelical to endorse everything he wrote and said, there is nevertheless a beautiful story centred around his answer to a question he was asked in a lecture room at a prominent American university. Following his lecture he was asked, “Dr. Barth, what is the most profound thought you have ever had?” Without hesitation, he answered by using the words of this hymn, “Jesus loves me – this I now, for the Bible tells me so”.

There is no greater knowledge than to know God loves you. To know God loved you so much He sent His Son into this world to make you His own by purchasing your salvation is an assurance beyond compare. He did not buy you with gold or diamonds but instead His Son died on a cross to take upon Himself your sins that you would be saved. He suffered the indescribable punishment meted out by His Father ... the punishment which should have been ours, but instead Jesus paid the full price of our redemption on Calvary.

The lady who wrote this hymn was Anna Bartlett Warner. She was born 31<sup>st</sup> August 1827, and she came from Puritan stock. Her father was a renowned New York City lawyer, and her mother was from a wealthy fashionable family also from New York. When Anna was a young child, her mother died, and her father's sister came to look after her and her older sister Susan. Though the family had been very wealthy they lost it all and had to move out of their New York mansion to a farmhouse beside *The United States Military Academy* at Westpoint ... where her home today is a museum to her memory.

She and her sister wrote many books and poems. For example, Susan wrote “Jesus bids us shine”, and Anna wrote “Jesus loves me”. Both sisters were soundly saved early in life, and in the military academy they held Bible studies for the officer cadets. Such was the respect for them, both sisters are buried in the military cemetery at Westpoint ... Susan died on 17<sup>th</sup> March 1885, aged 65 and Anna died at almost eighty-eight on January 22<sup>nd</sup> 1915.

“Jesus loves me” was written in 1859 and published in a novel she co-authored with Susan, - they wrote it chapter about. The novel was entitled “Say and Seal” and centred around a school teacher called Mr. Linden and a Miss Faith Derrick who lived in the house he boarded in. It’s mostly about their faith in God, their growing romantic feelings for each other, and the jealousy of others to the point of murder. ... Part of the story concerns a critically ill little boy called Johnny, who asked Mr. Linden to lift him up in his arms. Mr. Linden picked him up, walked slowly back and forth across the room ... and as he did so little Johnny then asked Mr. Linden to sing to him ... and as Faith listened, she heard Mr. Linden sing a beautiful song neither she nor Johnny had heard before, “Jesus loves me, this I know, For the Bible tells me so. Little ones to Him belong, They are weak, but He is strong.” ... In the story, a few hours later, Johnny died.

The hymn which began as a poem in a novel was set to music by William Bradbury in 1861, who also added the chorus, “Yes, Jesus loves me; Yes, Jesus loves me; Yes, Jesus loves me, the Bible tells me so”. It has been translated into many languages, and it is a truth the world needs to hear, “Jesus loves me”.

What possible reason did Jesus have for loving us? What possible reason lay behind Him coming into this world? It’s not a difficult question and yet, some people give you an incomplete answer. Some say He came to show us how to live a good life, and we are to try and follow His example. Some say He came to show us how to love each other rather than to hate ... Some say He came to show us how to help the poor and support those who haven’t got as much as we have ... All those are commendable but here is the *real* reason why Jesus came ... Jesus came because He loves you, even before there was anything to love about you. He knew you before you were born. He knew you before a single blade of grass grew up from the earth. He knew you before He put the stars, and the sun, and the moon in their place ... and even before it all began, He already loved you, “Loved with *everlasting* love” ... And *how* do I know? ... “For the Bible tells me so”. ... And because He loves you, He didn’t want you to go out into a lost eternity, and so He died to save you from your sin and its punishment.

It is not a message which originated in a church or with a pastor or with Karl Barth, but it is a message which was eternally dear to the heart of God to love His people. And in His everlasting plan He prepared to send His willing Son into this underserving world as a baby, to suffer the abuse He suffered, and to die the most horrendous death. As Paul wrote, [Col. 1:19](#) For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; [20](#) And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself. ... The Father sent His Son because His Son was the only One Who could make peace between God and man, - He is the only Mediator (I Tim. 2:5). Only Jesus satisfied God's demands.

All of us have sinned ... not just once or twice, but *repeatedly* ... and yet, God loves you, and He is not willing that any should perish but that everyone should come to repentance (II Peter 3:9). He knew the kind of people He was loving, and He knew there was nothing they were capable of to earn His love ... Therefore, of His own mercy and grace, He sent His Son to pay the cruel penalty to restore peace between Himself and beloved sinners, ... "Yes, Jesus loves me", and here again is how I know it, "the Bible tells me so".

Now, does God save everyone? No, He doesn't. Many people will not believe they need to be saved because they believe they are good enough to enter God's Heaven on their own merits ... Many believe in other religions, and they hope to enter Heaven some other way, but the Word of God plainly says, [Acts 16:31](#) Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved ... There is no other salvation. Put your faith in the Jesus, - the Son of God, - Who died for you, - Who died in your place, - on the cross of Calvary, and you will be saved. He is the only Way, the only Truth, and the only Life and there is no other door through which you and I can come to His Father except through trusting in Jesus as our Saviour to wash away our sins.

The children's hymn is not complicated, and neither is the Gospel upon which it is constructed for it is simply about how Jesus reaches out to the sinner offering the free gift of God's grace ... Jesus explained to His disciples by calling a little child and setting him in the midst of them, and then He said, [Mt. 18:3](#) Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. ... What was Jesus illustrating through the little child? ... He was illustrating how the little child simply trusts, without holding back.

The hymn says, "Little ones to Him belong – They are weak, but He is strong". Originally the hymn came out of the story about the little boy who was so sick, but then the hymn graduated into another sphere. It began to present how

spiritually ‘weak’ and unholy and incapable we are to save ourselves and Anna Warner very simply presents *Jesus*, “He Who died, Heaven’s gate to open wide”, - He is the only way in. There is no other way to enter Heaven apart from trusting in Jesus Christ as your Saviour and when you do, “He will wash away my sin, *[and]* let His little child come in”.

I don’t deserve a place in Heaven but I know even though I don’t *deserve* it, He has it already *reserved* for me. I know that when I depart this scene of time my soul will leave this body and He will take me to be with Himself forever. He will take me to His Father’s home where there is a room prepared for me and I will live with the King of kings, and we shall never be parted ... That is what He has promised in Jn. 14:6 ... I know I don’t deserve it, but He purchased the *right* for me to one day have it. Another hymn says, “He took my sins and my sorrows, He made them His very own” ... I wasn’t there at the beginning to ask Him to do it, but He freely did it for me even before it all began for He loved me ... “Jesus loves me this I know” ... How do I know? ... “for the Bible tells me so”. *That’s true grace!* ... That’s what another hymn also says,

Grace, grace, God’s grace,  
 Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;  
 Grace, grace, God’s grace,  
 Grace that is greater than all our sin!

And even though, - in my sin, - I’m so weak and hopeless, - there is not a thing I could have done to remedy my condition, - Jesus left Heaven’s glory for me, to take upon Himself at Calvary my sin and my punishment ... and He died on the cross for me, and now I belong to Him ... as Paul says, I’m not my own for I have been ‘paid for’ ... I have been bought for a price (I Cor. 6:20) ... and my body, my soul, and my spirit belong to God.

That is what it means when you become a Christian because when you are a Christian the Bible teaches you are a person in whom Christ lives, as another chorus says, “It’s no longer I that liveth, but Christ Who liveth in me”. ... He comes into your life and takes over, and it is not a one-day-a-week experience, but as the hymn says, “He will stay close beside me *all the way*” ... **Heb. 13:5** *for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* ... He doesn’t pick you up to drop you ... He doesn’t save you today and forget you tomorrow. He is the best Friend you will ever have. He is the most reliable for as another hymn says, “His forever, only His, Who the Lord and me shall part?”

... And then, when it is all finished 'down here' ... here is the greatest promise ... "when I die He will take me home on high". You don't need to speculate or worry where you will spend eternity for you will spend it with Him, "Forever with the Lord, Amen, so let it be".

Let's simply conclude with this final question ... Are you sure of where you are going when you die? It's either Hell where God's wrath is known forever, or it's Heaven, and into the presence of His eternal joy ... confident in the personal knowledge the cleansing blood of Jesus has washed away all your sins ...

"Yes, Jesus loves me, the Bible tells me so".