

Source: Edmund H. Sears, *Christ in the Life: Sermons with a Selection of Poems* (Boston: Lockwood, Brooks & Co., 1877) 242-243.

OLD JOHN BROWN

They call thee hot-brained, crazed, and mad;
 But every word that falls
Goes straight and true, and hits the mark
 More sure than cannon-balls.
Through spectre forms of bogus law [5]
 It cuts its way complete;
And judge and jury, too, are tried
 At God's great judgment-seat.

Old man, farewell! They'll take thy life:
 For dangerous enough, [10]
In these our sweetly piping times,
 Are men of hero stuff.
We should tread soft above the fires
 That underneath us lie:
You'll crack the crust of compromise, [15]
 And set them spouting high.

Where Henry's cry for "Liberty"
 Once sent its shivering thrill,
There's only room, six feet by two,
 For heroes now to fill. [20]
And o'er the spot the years will roll,
 As spring its verdure weaves,
And autumn o'er the felon's grave
Shakes down its yellow loaves.

But not the spot six feet by two [25]
 Will hold a man like thee:
John Brown will tramp the shaking earth
 From Blue Ridge to the sea,
Till the strong angel comes at last,
 And ope's each dungeon door, [30]
And God's Great Charter holds, and waves
 O'er all his humble poor.

And then the humble poor will come,
 In that far distant day,
And from the felon's nameless grave [35]

They'll brush the leaves away;
And gray old men will point the spot,
 Beneath the pine-tree shade,
As children ask with streaming eyes,
 Where Old John Brown was laid.

[40]

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