

So Rich a Crown

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He came, out from God, a gift from the Father's heart. Descending from the throne high and lifted up, He laid aside the garments of His majesty. The train of that robe of light filled the heavenly sanctuary with its radiance. Stepping down from the infinities of uncreated light, He passed through the creature realms of wondering angels, taking nothing of them. Still downward He came to one of the billions of His galaxies which He Himself had made. There His destination hung, a speck of sunlit stardust, so insignificant among gigantic suns and island universes that only He could find it, for in the eternal purposes of love and grace He had placed it there as a paradise for His creature man.

He arrived on the dark side of the planet, for it was night where He appeared. Yet that darkness must give way and bow to the effulgence of God. The night sky blazed with glory. A multitude of angels heralded God's praise in the heavens and man's privilege and prospects on earth. Blessed creatures indeed all they of the human race! The Son of God had come to earth to bring heaven into their hearts and them into heaven at last. Though full well He knew the price His love would pay to make it so.

What a story of the glory of God on earth, walking, working, weeping, among His creatures. Oh, how they would welcome this visitor of love and sweetness to this sordid world of tears and pain that man had made out of the paradise of God! Ah, sad and shameful is the record. He came, but there was no room for Him. They wanted His bread in their mouths, but not His beneficent rule in their hearts. They wanted His healing powers, but not His holy claims. They were filled with wonder at His grace, but filled with wrath at His truth.

At last their hatred exceeded. They must find Him and destroy Him. His radiance had exposed their sins. Their insect consciences scurried for cover. They mocked at His meekness and scorned His compassion for sinners. They had made their decision. The darkness they loved and therefore the light they must extinguish.

Gethsemane! So they found Him at the garden of the oil press ... on the dark side of the planet. In the night He had prayed in agony till His sweat, like great blood drops, fell to the ground. He had seen what none else but God could see. He had surveyed "the place afar off" where none else but He would go, and He bowed to the Father's will. He stood before their rabble mob, Holiness personified. Love was His banner and compassion the beating of His heart, even for those who hated Him without a cause. His body bathed in the sweat of His anguish and the traitor's kiss still wet upon His cheek, they led Him away to the judgement of men.

Gabbatha! The soldiers gathered round in raucous glee. "A King?" they mocked, "Then anoint Him," and they spat on His lovely face. "A King? Then gave Him a robe," and they threw around His bleeding back a soldier's cloak. "A King? Then gave Him a staff of authority" and they put a brittle reed into His hand, "A King? Then gave Him a crown," and they pressed a crown of thorns upon His blessed brow, "A King? Then He must have a throne," and they took Him to Golgotha. There they nailed Him through His hands and feet to the only throne men ever gave Him.

Yet out of this race of sinners they have come by the millions. From habitations of cruelty and homes of respectability, from hell-holes of ignorance and halls of learning. Still they come! His cross, His suffering love, has won their hearts. His beauty has captured their affections. He is to them the Altogether Lovely One. They are His and He is theirs by eternal decree. Is it any wonder that, by faith, they gather around Him week by week and show forth His death, remembering with sweetest sadness the giving of His body and the shedding of His precious blood and looking forward "till He come."

*When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride.*

*Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast save in the Cross of Christ, my God;
All the vain things that charm me most I sacrifice them to His blood.*

*See from His head, His hands, His feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet, or thorns comprise so rich a crown?*

*Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine, demands my heart, my life, my all! – Isaac Watts (July 17th 1674 –
November 25th 1748)*