

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

Isaac Watts · 1707 · Tune: Hamburg (Lowell Mason (arr.))

Meter: L.M. (8.8.8.8)

Verse 1

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.

Verse 2

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.

Verse 3

See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Verse 4

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

History

Isaac Watts wrote this hymn for a 1707 communion service. It was paired with Lowell Mason's arrangement of a Gregorian chant ('Hamburg') in 1824. Charles Wesley reportedly said he would gladly trade all his own hymns to have written this one.

Scripture References (KJV)

Galatians 6:14

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 3:7-8

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.