

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

1. When I sur - vey the won - drous cross on which the
2. For - bid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the
3. See, from his head, his hands, his feet, sor - row and
4. His dy - ing crim - son, like a robe, spreads o'er his
5. Were the whole realm of na - ture mine, that were a

1. Prince of Glo - ry died, my rich - est gain I
2. death of Christ, my God; all the vain things that
3. love flow min - gled down; did e'er such love and
4. bod - y on the tree; then am I dead to
5. pres - ent far too small: love so a - maz - ing,

1. count but loss, and pour con - tempt on all my pride.
2. charm me most, I sac - ri - fice them to his blood.
3. sor - row meet, or thorns com - pose so rich a crown?
4. all the globe, and all the globe is dead to me.
5. so di - vine, de - mands my soul, my life, my all.

Words: 1707, rev. 1709 | Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

Music: *Rockingham*, 1790 | Edward Miller (1731-1807) LM

In many ways, *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* is Watts' masterpiece. Stanza 1 introduces the main idea; st. 2 is a little prayer. The blood at the end of st. 2 becomes the subject for stanza 3, and the crown at the end of st. 3 becomes the subject for st. 4 (crimson robes signified royalty in Watts' day). The language is meant to disturb. Madelein Marshall suggests, "The singer 'blacks out,' ...just at the moment the darkness descends on nature. The identification with the death of Christ is that personal." This graphic fourth stanza, omitted from many hymnals, is essential to the picture Watts paints on Galatians 6:14, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, *by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*" The final stanza is a climactic response to these ideas.