

THE HIDDEN CROSS

The multitude saw but the cross of olive wood
 The Man of Sorrows bore, nor knew how underneath,
 Close pressed upon his heart, a **hidden** cross he wore—
 A dark and bleeding weight of sin and human woe,
 Made heavier with the sentence of God's broken law,
 And crowned with thorns of scornful and malicious hate,—
 A cross the world's Redeemer found on Jordan's brink,
 Nor laid it down until he came to Calvary.

Oft times it seemed he almost craved some human aid,
 Some sympathizing heart to share that cruel cross.
 Jerusalem, Jerusalem, hadst thou but known
 What time that cross bore heaviest on the yearning heart
 Of him, thy King! And yet, O slow of faith and hard
 Of heart, "Ye would not," and the King passed on his way;
 And of the people there was none with him! He trod
 Alone the valley of this dark world's shame and woe.

O, chosen three, had ye but watched with him "one hour"
 That awful night in dark Gethsemane, ye might
 Have lightened some the cruel weight of that dread cross,—
 Have known and shared with him that agonizing woe.
 Alas! alas! Your eyes were heavy and ye slept.
 So now, "sleep on and take your rest," ye weary ones.
 An holy angel's wing hath eased the hidden cross—
 Your Master, strengthened, waits that other cross to bear.

Which one bore heavier on the way to Calvary?
 The cross the cruel Roman soldiers laid upon
 The Blessed One? Ah, no! it was the unseen cross
 That crushed him to the earth, that wrung from those pale lips
 The agonizing cry, "My God! my God! oh, why
 Hast thou forsaken me?" In grief earth rent her breast,
 The sun grew dark; "'Tis finished," and the price is paid,—

The hidden cross had pierced that loving, tender heart!

“Take up thy cross and follow me,” the Master said.
 Ah, yes! his faithful Bride must also bear a cross,—
 The hidden cross, made not of life’s vicissitudes
 Alone, its ills and pains, its loss and poverty,—
 The outward signs the multitude behold.
 Ah, no! we follow in his steps who went before
 Us in the narrow way. We, too, must bear the woe,
 Be touched with feeling of the world’s infirmity,
 Its weary weight of sin and curse of broken law.
 Let us therefore, go forth to him “without the gate,”
 Lay down our lives in sacrifice, spend and be spent;
 And while we clasp this cross more closely to our breast,
 Press on toward Calvary, for there our Bridegroom waits
 To take the cross of woe, and give a crown of joy!

—G. W. S.

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