

## LORD, CHOOSE MY CROSS FOR ME.

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“It was a time of sadness, and my heart,  
Although it knew and loved the better part,  
Felt weary with the conflict and the strife,  
And all the needful discipline of life.

“And while I thought on these—as given to me,  
My trial test of faith and love to be—  
It seemed as if I never could be sure  
That, faithful to the end, I should endure.

“And thus, no longer trusting to his might  
Who says, ‘We walk by faith and not by sight’—  
Doubting, and almost yielding to despair,  
The thought arose: My cross I cannot bear.

“Far heavier its weight must surely be,  
Than those of others which I daily see:  
Oh, if I might another burden choose,  
Methinks, I should not fear my crown to lose.

“A solemn silence reigned on all around,  
E’en Nature’s voices uttered not a sound;  
The evening shadows seemed of peace to tell,  
And peace upon my weary spirit fell.

“A moment’s pause, and then a heavenly light  
Beamed full upon my wondering, raptured sight;  
Angels on silvery wings seemed everywhere,  
And angels’ music thrilled the balmy air.

“Then one more fair than all the rest to see—  
One to whom all others bowed the knee—  
Came gently to me, as I trembling lay,  
And ‘Follow me’, He said—‘I am the Way’.

“Then speaking thus, He led me far above;  
And there, beneath a canopy of love,  
Crosses of diverse size and shape were seen,  
Larger and smaller than mine own had been.

“And one there was more beautiful to behold,  
A little one, with jewels set in gold;  
Ah, this, methought, I can with comfort wear,  
For it will be an easy one to bear.

“And so the little cross I quickly took,  
But all at once my frame beneath it shook;  
The sparkling jewels—fair were they to see,  
But far too heavy was their weight for me.

“‘This may not be’, I cried, and looked again,  
To see if there were any here could ease my pain,

But one by one I passed them slowly by,  
Till on a lovely one I cast my eye.

“Fair flowers ’round its sculptured form entwined,  
And grace and beauty seemed in it combined;  
Wondering, I gazed, and still I wondered more,  
To think so many should have passed it o’er.

“But O! that form so beautiful to see,  
Soon made its hidden sorrows known to me:  
Thorns lay beneath those flowers and colours fair,  
Sorrowing, I said, ‘this cross I may not bear’.

“And so it was, with each and all around,  
Not one to suit my need could there be found.  
Weeping, I laid each heavy burden down,  
As my guide gently said, ‘No cross—no crown’.

“At length to him I raised my saddened heart,  
He knew its sorrow, bade its doubts depart.  
‘Be not afraid’, he said, ‘but trust in me,  
My perfect love shall now be shown to thee’.

“And then with lightened eyes and willing feet,  
Again I turned my earthly cross to meet;  
With forward footsteps, turning not aside,  
For fear some hidden evil might betide.

“And then, in the prepared, appointed way,  
Listening to hear and ready to obey.  
A cross I found of plainest form,  
With only words of love inscribed thereon.

“With thankfulness I raised it from the rest,  
And joyfully acknowledged it the best;  
The only one of all the many there,  
That I could feel was good for me to bear.

“And while I thus my chosen one confessed,  
I saw a heavenly brightness on it rest,  
And as I bent, my burden to sustain,  
I recognised my own old cross again.

“But O, how different did it seem to be,  
Now I had learned its preciousness to see,  
Yes, now no longer will I say,  
‘Perhaps another is a better way’.

“Ah! henceforth my one desire shall be,  
That he who knows me best shall choose for me,  
And so whate’er His love seems good to send,  
I’ll trust it’s best—because he knows the end”.—*Unknown*