

THE DARK SIDE OF THE CROSS

Brokenly we stumble down the twisted trails of life,
Struggling to discover peace in self-made worlds of strife,
Fighting to escape our fears of losing what we gain,
Craving for a feast of pleasures free from any pain.
Yet, upon these broad and damning roads beneath our feet,
There's a solemn shadow that our steps may often meet.
In the setting sun of earthly dreams there stands a Cross,
Casting hope upon those paths of everlasting loss.
From its slender shade, which seems at first so cramped and tight,
Comes a whispered offer for a journey into Light.
Once, there was no exit; now a doorway stands in view,
Open for the weary passerby to walk on through.
Oh but how it looks constricted, narrow as the grave,
Waiting to convert the seeker's soul into its slave
By its strong death-dealing nails for fixing limbs to wood:
No more wandering the world we thought we understood;
No more squandering of precious gifts that God bestows;
No more pity for ourselves for self-engendered woes;
No more place for stubbornness within our willful heart—
Selfish thrones must topple, proud dominions fall apart;
No more so-called freedom for our flesh to play the fool;
Only crucifixion, setting Jesus free to rule . . .
Harsh and strict, this pathway through the Cross of Christ appears,
Warning all who enter of its dark side's loss and tears.
Yet, if we have thought it out and in that way have stepped,
We elude what choked our lives, rejoicing where we wept.
Such emancipation on the Cross's other side
Opens up to us a realm extremely rich and wide.
Heaven's light unveils a vast expanse where glory shines.
Holy wealth with pure delight and beauty intertwines.
Far beyond imagination, rapture fills our souls.
Endless joy in useful service flows from godly goals.

What were not true friendships in the world we leave behind
Change to new, real fellowship we'd always hoped to find.
On the Cross's brighter side, our destination's clear.
Working out His Word and will, we sense His presence near.
Jesus walked the dying side to hellish depths below
To unlock the living side, where treasures overflow:
Mysteries of faith and prayer, His Body's bread and wine,
Light of Life, a life of Love, and love for Light Divine.
What He purchased when He hung as "nothing" on the Tree
Was to be our everything: His life in you and me.
So, don't flee the Cross because you see its darker side.
Don't keep running off to find a wider place to hide.
Stop and leave the worldly highway, choose no more to roam:
Make the Cross of Jesus yours, and it will lead you home.

— *David L. Hatton, 4/6/1993*