

ISAAC WATTS (d. 1748)

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross (1707)

Isaac Watts

When I survey the wond'rous Cross
On which the Prince of Glory dy'd,
My richest Gain I count but Loss,
And pour Contempt on all my Pride.

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.

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?

His dying Crimson, like a Robe,
Spreads o'er his Body on the Tree;
Then am I dead to all the Globe,
And all the Globe is dead to me.

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.

Against Idleness and Mischief (1715)

Isaac Watts

How doth the little busy bee
Improve each shining hour,
And gather honey all the day
From every opening flower!

How skilfully she builds her cell!
How neat she spreads the wax!
And labours hard to store it well
With the sweet food she makes.

In works of labour or of skill
I would be busy too:
For Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do.

In books, or work, or healthful play
Let my first years be past,
That I may give for every day
Some good account at last.

I Sing the Mighty Power of God (1715)

I sing the mighty power of God,
that made the mountains rise,
That spread the flowing seas abroad,
and built the lofty skies.
I sing the wisdom that ordained
the sun to rule the day;
The moon shines full at God's command,
and all the stars obey.

I sing the goodness of the Lord,
who filled the earth with food,
Who formed the creatures through the Word,
and then pronounced them good.
Lord, how Thy wonders are displayed,
wherever I turn my eye,
If I survey the ground I tread,
or gaze upon the sky.

There's not a plant or flower below,
but makes Thy glories known,
And clouds arise, and tempests blow,
by order from Thy throne;
While all that borrows life from Thee
is ever in Thy care;
And everywhere that we can be,
Thou, God art present there.

The Sluggard (1715)

'Tis the voice of the sluggard; I heard him complain,
"You have waked me too soon, I must slumber again."
As the door on its hinges, so he on his bed,
Turns his sides and his shoulders and his heavy head.

"A little more sleep, and a little more slumber;"
Thus he wastes half his days, and his hours without number,
And when he gets up, he sits folding his hands,
Or walks about sauntering, or trifling he stands.

I pass'd by his garden, and saw the wild brier,
The thorn and the thistle grow broader and higher;
The clothes that hang on him are turning to rags;
And his money still wastes till he starves or he begs.

I made him a visit, still hoping to find
That he took better care for improving his mind:
He told me his dreams, talked of eating and drinking;
But scarce reads his Bible, and never loves thinking.

Said I then to my heart, "Here's a lesson for me,"
This man's but a picture of what I might be:
But thanks to my friends for their care in my breeding,
Who taught me betimes to love working and reading.

Joy to the World (1719)
Isaac Watts

Joy to the World; the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King!
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room,
And Heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ;
While fields & floods, rocks, hills & plains
Repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love.

Notes