

The Old Rugged Cross

"The inspiration came to me one day in 1913, when I was staying in Albion, Michigan," George Bennard wrote about the composition of this hymn. "I began to write *The Old Rugged Cross*. I completed the melody first. The words that I first wrote were imperfect. The words of the finished hymn were put into my heart in answer to my own need. Shortly thereafter it was introduced at special meetings in Pokagon, Michigan, on June 7, 1913."

Bennard had served with the Salvation Army before being ordained in the Methodist Episcopal Church. By this time he was carrying on revival services through the Midwest. After its debut at Pokagon, the song was presented at an evangelistic convention in Chicago. Participants then took it back to their homes throughout the country.

The Old Rugged Cross

On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,
The emblem of suffering and shame;
And I love that old cross where the dearest and best
For a world of lost sinners was slain.

*So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,
'Til my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross,,
And exchange it some day for a crown.*

O that old rugged cross, so despised by the world,
Has a wondrous attraction for me;
For the dear Lamb of God left His glory above
To bear it to dark Calvary.

In the old rugged cross, stained with blood so divine,
A wondrous beauty I see;
For 'twas on that old cross Jesus suffered and died
To pardon and sanctify me.

To the old rugged cross I will ever be true,
Its shame and reproach gladly bear;
Then He'll call me some day to my home far away,
Where His glory forever I'll share.

George Bennard (1873-1958)
United Methodist Hymnal #504