



The Story of The Three Bidders




*(An incident in the life
of Rowland Hill - Author unknown)*

Will you listen, kind friends, for a moment,
While a story I unfold:
A marvelous tale, of a wonderful sale
Of a noble lady of old;
How hand and heart, at an auction mart,
And soul and body she sold?


Twas on the broad, king's highway,
Near two centuries ago,
That a preacher stood, though of noble blood,
Telling the fallen and low
Of a Saviour's love, and a home above,
And a peace they all might know.



All crowded around to listen
And they wept at the wondrous love
That could wash their sin and receive them in
His spotless mansion above.
While slow through the crowd, a lady proud
Her gilded chariot drove.

"Make room," cried the haughty outrider,
"You are closing the King's highway;
"My lady is late, and their Majesties wait.
Give way there, good people, I pray."
The preacher heard, and his soul was stirred
And he cried to the rider, "Nay."



His eye like the lightning flashes,
His voice like the trumpet rings-
"Your grand fete days, and your fashions and ways
Are all but perishing things.
'Tis the king's highway, but I hold it today
In the name of the King of Kings."







Then- bending his gaze on the lady,
And marking her soft eye fall-
“And now in His name, a sale I proclaim,
And bids for this fair lady call.
Who will purchase the whole- her body and soul,
Coronet jewels and all?”

I see already three bidders-
The World steps up as the first:
‘I will give my treasures and all the pleasures
For which my votaries thirst.
She shall dance through each day, more joyous and gay,
With a quiet grave at the worst.’



But out speaks the Devil boldly,
‘The kingdoms of earth are mine.
Fair lady, thy name, with an envied fame
On their brightest tablets shall shine.
Only give me thy soul, and I’ll give thee the whole,
Their glory and wealth to be thine.’

And pray, what hast Thou to offer,
Thou Man of Sorrows, unknown?
And He gently says, ‘My blood I have shed
To purchase her for mine own.
To conquer the grave, and her soul to save
I trod the winepress alone.

I will give her My cross of suffering,
My cup of sorrow to share;
But with endless love in My home above,
All shall be righted there.
She shall walk in white, in a robe of light’
And a radiant crown shall wear.’



‘Thou hast heard the terms, fair lady,
That each one has offered thee.
Which wilt thou choose, and which wilt thou lose,
This life, or the life to be?
The fable was mine, but the choice is yet thine,
Sweet lady, which of the three?’





Nearer the stand of the preacher
The gilded chariot stole,
And each head was bowed, as over the crowd
The thundering accents roll;
And every word, as the lady heard,
Burned in her very soul.

‘Pardon, good people,’ she whispered,
As she rose from her cushioned seat.
Full well, they say, as the crowd made way,
You could hear her pulses beat.
And each head was bare, as the lady fair
Knelt at the preacher’s feet.

She took from her hands the jewels,
The coronet from her brow.
‘Lord Jesus,’ she said, as she bowed her head,
‘The highest bidder art Thou.
Thou gav’st for my sake Thy life, and I take
Thy offer- and take it now.

‘I know the world and her pleasures
At best they weary and cloy.
And the Tempter is bold, but his honours and gold
Prove ever a fatal decoy.
I long for Thy rest- Thy bid is the best;
Lord, I accept with joy!’

Give me Thy cup of suffering,
Welcome earth’s sorrow and loss.
Let my portion be, to win souls to Thee.
Perish her glittering dross!
I gladly lay down her coveted crown
Saviour to take Thy cross.



‘Amen,’ said the noble preacher,
And the people wept aloud.
Years have rolled on, and they have all gone
Around that altar who bowed.
Lady and throng have been swept along
On the wind like a morning cloud.



But the Saviour has claimed His purchase
And around His radiant seat
A mighty throng, in an endless song,
The wondrous story repeat.
And a form more fair, is bending there
Laying her crown at His feet.

So, now, in eternal glory,
She rests from her cross and care,
But her spirit above, with a longing love,
Seems calling on you to share
Her endless reward, in the joy of her Lord:
Oh! Will you not answer her- there?

