

BE THOU MY VISION

(Irish origin in the 8th century; translated by **Mary Elizabeth Byrne** (1880-1931) and versified by **Eleanor Henrietta Hull** (1860-1935))

Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be¹ all else to me, save that Thou art.
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Be Thou my wisdom, Thou my true word;
I ever with Thee, Thou with me, Lord;
Thou my great Father, I Thy true² son;
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.

Be Thou my battle-shield, sword for the fight;
Be Thou my dignity, Thou my delight,
Thou my soul's shelter, Thou my high tower:
Raise Thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor³ man's empty praise;
Thou mine inheritance, now and always:
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
High King of heaven, my treasure Thou art.

⁴High King of heaven, after victory won,
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all. ⁵

¹ In the original (Eleanor Hull's *Poem Book of the Gael* published in 1912), it started with '*Naught is*' instead of '*Naught be*' in verse 1 line 2.

² In the original, '*dear*' was used instead of '*true*' in verse 2 line 3.

³ In the original, '*or*' was used instead of '*nor*' in verse 4 line 1.

⁴ In the original, it started with '*With the High King of heaven,*' in verse 5 line 1. There were also four extra lines between verses 4 and 5.

⁵ In the modern version which has significant departure from the original in order to adapt the text to the tune *SLANE*, the whole hymn is as follows with the alterations in bold:

*Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
Be all else but naught to me, save that Thou art;
Be Thou my best thought **in the day and the night**,
Both waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.*

*Be Thou my wisdom, **be** Thou my true word;
Be Thou ever with **me**, **and I** with **Thee**, Lord;
Be Thou my great Father, **and** I Thy true son;
Be Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.*

*Be Thou my **breastplate**, **my** sword for the fight;
Be Thou my **whole armour**, **be** Thou my **true might**;
Be Thou my soul's shelter, **be** Thou my **strong** tower:
O raise Thou me heavenward, **great** Power of my power.*

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*Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
Be Thou mine inheritance now and always;
Be Thou and Thou only **the** first in my heart;
O **Sovereign** of heaven, my treasure Thou art.*

*High King of heaven, **thou heaven's bright Sun,**
O **grant me its joys after vict'ry is won;**
Great Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be **Thou** my vision, O Ruler of all.*

Words Read Aloud

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