

Once in Royal David's City

Cecil F. Alexander / IRBY



1. Once in royal David's city
stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby
in a manger for his bed;
Mary was that mother mild;
Jesus Christ her little child.
2. He came down to earth from heaven
who is God and Lord of all,
and his shelter was a stable,
and his cradle was a stall;
with the poor and mean and lowly
lived on earth our Saviour holy.
3. And through all his wondrous childhood
he would honour and obey,
love and watch the lowly maiden
in whose gentle arms he lay;
Christian children all should be
mild, obedient, good as he.
4. For he is our childhood's pattern,
day by day like us he grew;
he was little, weak, and helpless,
tears and smiles like us he knew;
and he feeleth for our sadness,
and he shareth in our gladness.
5. And our eyes at last shall see him
through his own redeeming love;
for that child so dear and gentle
is our Lord in heav'n above;
and he leads his children on.
to the place where he is gone.
6. Not in that poor lowly stable,
with the oxen standing by,
we shall see him; but in heaven,
set at God's right hand on high,
where like stars his children crowned
all in white shall wait around.

Inspiration: Luke 2: 7.

Lyrics: 87.87.77; Cecil Frances Alexander, 1818-1895, in "Hymns for Little Children", 1848.

Music: IRBY; Henry John Gauntlett, 1805-1876, in 1850; harmonized by Arthur Henry Mann, 1850-1929, for "A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols", King's College, 1918.