

# What Child Is This

Author William C. Dix

Composer Traditional English melody, 16th century

John 1: 14-18

Revelation 19: 16

Matthew 1: 18-25

Luke 2: 4-7

Matthew 2: 1-18

## Thoughts on the Text

"What child is this, who laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?" I listened as the soloist, my cousin, sang the words. It was the fourth of July, hardly the time of the year for such a song. But it was being sung by my husband's request. Only his body was in the casket at the altar, and I was in the pew remembering the day he told me he wanted that sung at his funeral. Not that he was planning his funeral then, nor could he know that at the age of forty-seven he would lose his life in an airplane crash. But it was so, and I was listening.

It's all here. The manger and the cross. The gospel message.

Angels greet . . . shepherds watch . . . the Babe is born.

In mean estate . . . with ox and ass.

The Word made flesh . . . to plead for sinners.

Nails, spears . . . the cross . . . for me, for you.

The King of Kings . . . salvation brings . . . loving hearts, enthrone Him!

The English melody Greensleeves is one so easily recognized, but I dare say that for those of us who have sung this hymn Christmas after Christmas, no matter what time of the year we hear that familiar tune, from the depths of heart and soul rises the words: "THIS, THIS IS CHRIST THE KING!"

Yes, I remember that funeral service when I sing this hymn. But more than that, I no longer think of it as a Christmas song; I now see it as a song of great praise.