

The Truth Sent from Above



1. This is the truth sent from above,
The truth of God, the God of love:
Therefore don't turn me from your door,
But hearken all, both rich and poor.
2. The first thing which I do relate
Is that God did man create,
The next thing which to you I'll tell,
Woman was made with man to dwell.
3. Then, after this, 'twas God's own choice
To place them both in Paradise,
There to remain, from evil free,
Except they ate of such a tree.
4. And they did eat, which was a sin,
And thus their ruin did begin.
Ruined themselves, both you and me,
And all of their posterity.
5. Thus we were heirs to endless woes,
Till God the Lord did interpose,
And so a promise soon did run,
That he would redeem us by his Son.
6. And at this season of the year
Our blest Redeemer did appear,
And here did live, and here did preach,
and many thousands he did teach.
7. Thus he in love to us behaved,
To show us how we must be saved;
And if you want to know the way,
Be pleased to hear what he did say:
8. "Go preach the Gospel," now he said,
"To all the nations that are made!
And he that does believe on me,
From all his sins I'll set him free."
9. O seek! O seek of God above
That saving faith that works by love!
And, if he's pleased to grant thee this,
Thou'rt sure to have eternal bliss.
10. God grant to all within this place
True saving faith, that special grace
Which to his people doth belong:
And thus I close my Christmas song.

The Herefordshire Christmas carol, "This is the Truth Sent from Above", was one of several rediscovered and preserved by Ralph Vaughan Williams. Cecil Sharp collected an eight stanza version of the carol from a Mr. Seth Vandrell and Mr. Samuel Bradley of Donnington Wood in Shropshire, although Sharp notes that a longer version existed in a locally printed carol book. Ralph Vaughan Williams obtained a different, Dorian mode version of the carol at King's Pyon, Herefordshire in July 1909 with help from Ella Mary Leather, the Herefordshire folklorist who had first collected it from the local oral tradition. This version, which contains only four stanzas, is therefore sometimes referred to as the "Herefordshire Carol".

Vaughan Williams first published the melody in the **Folk-Song Society Journal** in 1909 (where it is credited as being sung by a Mr W. Jenkins of King's Pyon). It was printed in Cecil Sharp's **English Folk-Carols** (1911), Vaughan Williams' **Eight Traditional English Carols** (1919) and Walters' **A Good Christmas Box** (1847). It appears in **The New Oxford Book of Carols** (#150).