

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Christmas is Now Drawing Near at Hand

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Christmas is now drawing near at hand
Come serve the Lord and be at His command
And God a portion for you will provide
And give a blessing to your soul besides

Down in the garden where flowers growing ranks
Down on your bended knees and give the Lord thanks
Down on your knees and pray both night and day
Leave off your sins and live fro' pray tae pray

So proud and lofty is some sort of sin
Which many take delight and pleasure in
Whose conversation God doth smirch as lie
And yet He shakes His sword before He stri'

So proud and lofty do some people go
Dressing themselves like players in a show
They patch and paint and dress with idle stuff
As if God had not made 'em fine enough

Even little children learn to curse and swear
And can't rehearse one word of godly prayer
Oh teach them better, oh teach them to rely
On Christ the sinner's friend who reigns on high

sung by Lal Waterson on the Watsons' "Frost And Fire" (1965)

"This moralising carol was much used by beggars and others towards Christmas time. Its tune turns over and again attached to such carols as "The Fountain of Christ's Blood", "Have You Not Heard of our Dear Saviour's Love" and "The Black Decree", also to the favourite old dialogue-ballad of "Death and the Lady", traceable to the sixteenth century. Here it is... in a form common among gipsies habitually drifting through the West Midlands half a century ago." - A.L. Lloyd 1965

For a Christmas carol, there is precious little Christmas in this one, but instead plenty of moralising. I would have turned away any beggar who sang a carol like this to me. After all he wants my "idle stuff". MJ

MJ