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A Christmas Carol For 1862

George MacDonald

The skies are pale, the trees are stiff,
The earth is dull and old;
The frost is glittering as if
The very sun were cold.
And hunger fell is joined with frost,
To make men thin and wan:
Come, babe, from heaven, or we are lost;
Be born, O child of man.

The children cry, the women shake,
The strong men stare about;
They sleep when they should be awake,
They wake ere night is out.
For they have lost their heritage—
No sweat is on their brow:
Come, babe, and bring them work and wage;
Be born, and save us now.



Across the sea, beyond our sight,
Roars on the fierce debate;
The men go down in bloody fight,
The women weep and hate;
And in the right be which that may,

Surely the strife is long!
Come, son of man, thy righteous way,
And right will have no wrong.

Good men speak lies against thine own—
Tongue quick, and hearing slow;
They will not let thee walk alone,
And think to serve thee so:
If they the children's freedom saw
In thee, the children's king,
They would be still with holy awe,
Or only speak to sing.

Some neither lie nor starve nor fight,
Nor yet the poor deny;
But in their hearts all is not right,—
They often sit and sigh.
We need thee every day and hour,
In sunshine and in snow:
Child-king, we pray with all our power—
Be born, and save us so.

We are but men and women, Lord;
Thou art a gracious child!
O fill our hearts, and heap our board,
Pray thee—the winter's wild!
The sky is sad, the trees are bare,
Hunger and hate about:
Come, child, and ill deeds and ill fare
Will soon be driven out.

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