While shepherds watched their flocks by night, all 
'Fear not' said he, for mighty dread had seized their

on the ground, The angel of the
troubled mind, 'Glad tidings of great

Lord came down, joy I bring, and glory to you and

Lord came down, and glory shone a-round, and glory
joy I bring, to you and all mankind, to you and
3 'To you in David's town this day
   Is born of David's Line
   A Saviour, which is Christ the Lord,
   And this shall be the sign'.

4 'The heavenly babe you there shall find,
   To human view displayed,
   All meanly wrapped in swaddling bands,
   And in a manger laid'.

5 Thus spake the seraph, and forthwith
   Appeared a shining throng
   Of angels, praising God, and
   Thus addressed their song.

6 'All Glory be to God on high,
   And to the earth be peace,
   Goodwill henceforth from heaven to men
   Begin and never cease.'

'Bethlehem' in three parts first appeared in G major in Laurence Ding's 'The Scholars Assistant'. Ed.2. Edinburgh: 1786, without text. In his next publication: 'The Beauties of Psalmody', Edinburgh: 1792, the three part tune had been altered to A minor, and set to While Shepherds Watched. Thereafter the minor tune enjoyed much more popularity than the major version. James Stevens of Glasgow added a fourth part to the minor version c. 1805.

According to the Hymn Tune Index both versions of the tune were published exclusively in Scotland up to 1820. This version is taken from a copy of Alexander Hume's 'British Psalmody', Edinburgh: 1844, now in our possession, and most resembles that in Robert Gale of Edinburgh's 'Psalms and Hymn Tunes', pub. 1820. The composer is unattributed. HTI 4701d.

© This edition Shelwin Music, Oxford, September 2014.