

JEMIMA LUKE

Isle of Wight local author and hymnwriter

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Very little seems to be known about Jemima Luke and her work even though she wrote one of the world's most well known hymns "I think when I read the sweet story of old". In the book *Newport in Bygone Days* R. J. Eldridge wrote:

Mrs Jemima Luke spent the evening of her days in Newport. This hymn first appeared in the Sunday-school Teachers' Magazine in 1841. She died in 1906 in her 93rd year.

1. I think when I read that sweet story of old,
When Jesus was here among men,
How he called little children as lambs to his fold,
I should like to have been with them then.
2. I wish that his hands had been placed on my head,
That his arm had been thrown around me,
And that I might have seen his kind look when he said,
"Let the little ones come unto Me."
3. Yet still to his footstool in prayer I may go,
And ask for a share in his love;
And if I now earnestly seek him below,
I shall see him and hear him above.
4. In that beautiful place he is gone to prepare
For all who are washed and forgiv'n;
And many dear children are gathering there,
For of such is the kingdom of heav'n.



Jemima Thompson Luke was the wife of Rev. Samuel Luke who was an independent minister. She was the daughter of Thomas Thompson a philanthropist. She was born at Colebrook Terrace in Islington on 19 August 1813. When only thirteen she began writing for the *Juvenile Magazine*. In 1851 she published a book entitled *The Female Jesuit* and *A Memoir of Eliza Ann Harris*, of Clifton in 1859. However her name is known to the Christian world almost wholly through the one hymn. Jemima Luke died 2 February 1906.

Sadly the Isle of Wight cannot claim the hymn was written here. *I think when I read that sweet story of old* is said to have been composed on a stage coach journey in 1841. It was written for use in the village school near her father's home of Poundsford Park and published anonymously in the *Leeds Hymn Book* during 1853.

OTHER WORKS

Aia ho'omana'o wau i ka lono la'i e
Cuando leo en la Biblia, como llama Jes-s
Cuando leo en la historia, como llama Jesus
I think when I read that sweet story of old (Luke)

När jag ser i Guds bok dessa ljuvliga ord
O King of saints, we give Thee praise and glory
Oft, hab' ich gewuenschet

COMMENT

In the early 1930's, one hymnologist called this the world's

“best known and most widely used Children's Hymn.”

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