CHRISTMAS DAY



- 2. Like circles widening round upon a clear blue river, orb after orb, the wondrous sound is echoed on for ever:
 "Glory to God on high, on earth be peace, and love towards men of love, salvation, and release!"
- 3. Yet stay, before thou dare to join that festal throng; listen, and mark what gentle air first stirred the tide of song:
 'tis not, "The Saviour born in David's home, to whom for power and health obedient worlds should come."
- 4. 'Tis not, "The Christ the Lord:"
 with fixed adoring look
 the choir of angels caught the word,
 nor yet their silence broke:
 but when they heard the sign,
 where Christ should be,
 in sudden light they shone,
 and heavenly harmony.
- 5. Wrapped in his swaddling bands, and in his manger laid, the Hope and Glory of all lands is come to the world's aid: no peaceful home upon his cradle smiled; guests rudely went and came, where slept the royal Child.
- 6. But where thou dwellest, Lord, no other thought should be; once duly welcomed and adored, how should I part with thee?

 Bethlehem must lose thee soon; but thou wilt grace the single heart to be thy sure abiding-place.

- 7. Thee, on the bosom laid of a pure virgin mind, in quiet ever and in shade shepherd and sage may find; they who have bowed untaught to Nature's sway, and they who follow Truth along her star-paved way.
- 8. The pastoral spirits first approach thee, Babe divine; for they in lowly thoughts are nursed, meet for thy lowly shrine: sooner than they should miss where thou dost dwell, angels from heaven will stoop to guide them to thy cell.
- 9. Still, as the day comes round for thee to be revealed, by wakeful shepherds thou art found, abiding in the field: all through the wintry heaven and chill night air in music and in light thou dawnest on their prayer.
- 10. Oh faint not ye for fear!
 What though your wandering sheep,
 reckless of what they see and hear,
 lie lost in wilful sleep?
 High Heaven, in mercy to
 your sad annoy,
 still greets you with glad tidings
 of immortal joy.
- 11. Think on the eternal home
 the Saviour left for you;
 think on the Lord most holy, come
 to dwell with hearts untrue:
 so shall ye tread untired
 his pastoral ways,
 and in the darkness sing
 your carol of high praise.

Words: John Keble. Music: Johannes Thomas Rüegg.
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