

The Baptism of Christ ~ hymns for the day

Hymn 1 ~ Brightest and best

Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
dawn on our darkness, and lend us thine aid;
star of the east, the horizon adorning,
guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

Cold on his cradle the dew-drops are shining;
low lies his head with the beasts of the stall;
angels adore him in slumber reclining,
Maker and Monarch and Saviour of all.

Say, shall we yield him, in costly devotion,
odours of Edom, and offerings divine,
gems of the mountain and pearls of the ocean,
myrrh from the forest, or gold from the mine?

Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
vainly with gifts would his favour secure:
richer by far is the heart's adoration,
dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.

Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
dawn on our darkness, and lend us thine aid;
star of the east, the horizon adorning,
guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

Reginald Heber (1783-1826)

Hymn 2 ~ Songs of thankfulness and praise

Songs of thankfulness and praise,
Jesu, Lord, to thee we raise,
manifested by the star,
to the sages from afar;
branch of royal David's stem
in thy birth at Bethlehem:
anthems be to thee addressed
God in Man made manifest.

Manifest at Jordan's stream,
Prophet, Priest and King supreme;
and at Cana wedding-guest
in thy Godhead manifest;
manifest in power divine,
changing water into wine:
anthems be to thee addressed,
God in Man made manifest.

Manifest in making whole
palsied limbs and fainting soul;
manifest in valiant fight,
quelling all the devil's might;
manifest in gracious will,
ever bringing good from ill:
anthems be to thee addressed,
God in Man made manifest.

Grant us grace to see thee, Lord,
mirrored in thy holy word;
may we imitate thee now,
and be pure, as pure art thou;
that we like to thee may be
at thy great Epiphany;
and may praise thee, ever blest,
God in Man made manifest.

*Christopher Wordsworth (1807-1885), and Compilers of
'Rejoice and Sing'*