

The Peace Giver

I. The Kings of the East

Katharine Lee Bates (1859-1929)

The Kings of the East are riding tonight to Bethlehem.
The sunset glows dividing, the Kings of the east are riding;
A star their journey guiding, a gleam with gold and gem.
The Kings of the East are riding tonight to Bethlehem.

To a strange sweet harp of Zion, the starry host troops forth;
The golden-glaived Orion, to a strange sweet harp of Zion;
The Archer and the Lion, the watcher of the North;
To a strange sweet harp of Zion, the starry host troops forth.

There beams above a manger the child-face of a star;
Amid the stars a stranger, it beams above a manger;
What means this ether ranger to pause where poor folk are?
There beams above a manger the child-face of a star.

II. Royal Presents

Nathaniel Wanley (1634-and 1680)

The offerings of the Eastern kings of old
Unto our Lord were incense, myrrh and gold.
Incense because a God; Gold as a king;
And myrrh as to a dying man they bring.

Instead of incense (blessed Lord)
If we can send a sigh or fervent prayer to Thee,
Instead of myrrh,
If we can but provide tears that from penitential eyes do slide,
And though we have no gold; if for our part
We can present thee with a broken heart, Thou wilt accept;
And say those Eastern kings did not present thee
With more precious things.

III. The Peace-Giver

Algernon C. Swinburne (1837-1909)

Thou whose birth on earth
Angels sang to men
While Thy stars made mirth,
Saviour, at Thy birth, this day born again.

As this night was bright
With Thy cradle-ray,
Very Light of Light,
Turn the wild world's night to Thy perfect day.

Thou the Word and Lord,
In all time and space,
Heard, beheld, a adored,
With all ages poured forth before Thy face.

Lord, what worth in earth
Drew Thee down to die?
What therein was worth, Lord, Thy death and brith?
What beneath Thy sky?

Thou whose face gives grace
As the sun's doth heat,
Let Thy sun-bright face
Lighten time and space here beneath Thy feet.

Bid our peace increase
Thou that modest morn;
Bid oppression cease;
Bid the night be peace; Bid the day be born.

IV. All My Heart

Paul Gerhardt (1607-1676)

Translation by Catherine Winkworth (1829-1878)

All my heart this night rejoices,
As I hear, far and near,
Sweetest angel voices:
“Christ is born” their choirs are singing,
Til the air, everywhere,
Now with joy is ringing.

Hark! A voice from yonder manger,
Soft and sweet, doth entreat
“Flee from woe and danger
Brethren, come; from all that grieves you
You are freed; all you need
I will surely give you.”

Come, then, let us hasten yonder;
Here let all, great and small,
Kneel in awe and wonder,
Love Him who with love is yearning;
Hail the Star that from far
Bright with hope is burning.

Thee, dear Lord, with heed I'll cherish,
Live to Thee, and with Thee
Dying, shall not perish,
But shall dwell with Thee forever
Far on high in the joy
That can alter never.