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FOUR JOYFUL HYMNS

FOR

Christmas-Tide.

By W. C. DIX.

“’Twas much that man was made like God before ;
But, that God should be made like man, much more.”
DR. DONNE.



I.

“The tabernacle of God is with men.”

To-DAY let heaven and earth
In prophecy rejoice ;—
Angels and men with mirth
Uplift exultant voice ;
Born of a Maiden, God appears,
LIGHT, those who sit in darkness, cheers.

The cave and manger, veil
In mortal Flesh our KING ;
The Shepherds tell the tale,
The Magi presents bring :
From far off East they come ; with them,
Let us now go to Bethlehem.

Unworthy lips are these
The angel words to take,
And yet the lowly please,
Who sing for CHRIST’s dear Sake.
So, “Glory be to God on high,
And Peace, on earth Goodwill,” we cry.

Of Virgin-Mother born,
 Desire of every land,
 God comes this happy morn
 And saves from Satan's hand :
 From bondage which no more shall be,
 This Blessed CHILD hath set us free.

Alleluia.

*From the Greek of John the Monk. 8th Century. Vide
 Dr. Littledale's Offices of the Holy Eastern Church.*

II.

The WORD was made Flesh, and dwelt among us."

BEGINS the UNBEGINNING,
 Good news to-day is heard ;
 Fresh honour man is winning,
 Incarnate is the WORD.
 In Bethlehem, of MARY
 The ageless ONE is born,
 With hymns that never vary,
 The Angels greet the morn.

The Powers of Heaven are singing,
 And men on earth as well :
 The Magi gifts are bringing,
 The Wonder, Shepherds tell ;
 And we our voices blending
 With those that shake the sky,
 Say, " Peace on earth, unending,
 And Thanks to GOD on high."

From the same.



III.

“EMMANUEL, GOD with us.”

Joy fills our inmost heart to-day,
The Royal CHILD is born ;
And angel hosts in glad array
His advent keep this morn.

Chorus—Rejoice, rejoice, the Incarnate WORD
Has come on earth to dwell ;
No sweeter sound than this is heard,
EMMANUEL, EMMANUEL.

Low at the cradle-throne we bend,
We wonder and adore ;
And think no bliss can ours transcend,
No rapture sweet before.
Rejoice, &c.

For us the world must lose its charms
Before the manger shrine,
Where, folded in THY Mother's Arms,
Thou sleepest, BABE Divine.
Rejoice, &c.

Angels are thronging round Thy bed
Thine Infant Grace to see ;
The stars are paling o'er thy HEAD,
The Day-spring dawns with THEE.
Rejoice, &c.

THOU art the Very LIGHT of light,
Enlighten us, Sweet CHILD ;
That we may keep THY Birthday bright,
With service undefiled.
Rejoice, &c.

Written for Music.

IV
CHRISTMAS EVE.

“To-morrow ye shall have Help, saith the LORD GOD OF HOSTS.”

LIKE silver lamps in a distant shrine,
The stars are sparkling clear and bright ;
The bells of the City of God ring out,
For the SON of Mary was born to-night :
The gloom is past, and the morn at last
Is coming with orient light !

Never fell melodies half so sweet
As those which are filling the skies ;
And never a palace shone half so fair,
As the manger bed where our SAVIOUR lies ;
No night in the year is half so dear
As this, which has ended our sighs.

Now a new POWER has come on the earth,
A match for the armies of hell :
A CHILD is born who shall conquer the foe,
And all the spirits of wickedness quell :
For Mary's SON is the MIGHTY ONE
Whom the prophets of God foretell !

The stars of heaven still shine as at first
They gleamed on this wonderful night ;
The bells of the City of God peal out,
And the angels' song still rings in the height ;
And Love still turns where the Godhead burns,
Veiled in the Flesh from fleshly sight.

Faith sees no longer the stable floor ;
The payment of sapphire is there ;
The clear light of heaven streams out to the world,
And angels of God are crowding the air ;
And heaven and earth, through the spotless Birth,
Are at peace on this night so fair !

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