

## **For Your Devotional Time This Week:**

“Given the violence of our world, with all the tramping warriors and bloody garments still reported, the gospel of a child born to Mary transforms the violence. The images of violence are themselves subverted by the child. This proclamation turns darkness into an illumination of the way of justice, peace, and righteousness. It strikes at the heart of human distress and calls out to all our captivities: ‘The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light’ (Isaiah 9.2)

Don E. Saliers, *Feasting On the Word, Year A, Vol. 1*, p. 102.



For a child has been born for us,  
a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders;  
and he is named  
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
His authority shall grow continually,  
and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom.  
He will establish and uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time onwards and for evermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.  
Isaiah 9.6-7



“What kind of sign is this that has been fulfilled? What a vulnerable sign – utterly human in its appearance, but with the power to alter human destiny! The poetic prophecy of Isaiah comingles with songs of birth and joy. This is the divine counterpoint to all human powers and principalities. Here is the wonder of divine agency at work in the midst of confusions and vagaries. Here is hope incarnate.”

Don E. Saliers, *Feasting On the Word, Year A, Vol. 1*, p. 102.

## **“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 dewdrops are shining;  
Low lies His head with the beasts of the stall.  
Angels adore Him in slumber reclining,  
Maker and Monarch and Savior of all.

Shall we not yield Him, In costly devotion  
Odors of Edom and offerings divine,  
Gems of the mountain and pearls of the ocean,  
Myrrh from the forest and gold from the mine?

Vainly we offer each ample oblation,  
Vainly with gifts would His favor 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.

Based on Matt. 2:11

Composer: John P. Harding, 1892

Author: Reginald Heber, 1811

Tune: "Morning Star"



“Christmas tells us that there is one who cares about us and comes to be with us. The simple story means that in this vast and mysterious universe, in this sometimes frightening world, we are not ever alone.

And it means that God cares about how life is lived in the world. Jesus knew what it means to be tired and hungry and lonely, and he knew what it means to be happy and loved and hopeful. Because of the birth of a child we know that God cares: about cholera victims in Haiti, about frightened Palestinians and Israelis, about children living in poverty, and affluent adults living in meaninglessness and despair.”

John M. Buchanan, *Christian Century*, December 14, 2010