

O well may little children eager make
This blissful day their own: O may they learn,
Who early towards the Blessed Infant turn,
To imitate His gentle, gracious charms:
What joy to those uplifted by His arms
In age, who still are children for His sake.

What those poor shepherds saw, we seem to see;
The queen-like, calm-eyed, virgin-mother pure;
Her spouse, once justly questioning, now sure
Of all the angel told; and Him Whose birth
Brought mercy from high heav'n to sinful earth;
The holiest type of happy family.

And well may we before God's altar bring,
With our memorial of Christ's natal day,
Prayers for our kin and dear ones far away;
Yea, e'en for those, unseen, who waiting rest
Expectant of His promise to the blest,
When partings dread will cease and sorrowing.

But all in vain we gather for the feast,
If we, though freely fed, omit to feed
The hungry, or supply the pressing need
Of those who thirst, or far from kindred dwell,
Or are unclad; or cheer, by cot, in cell,
Christ's pining brothers, even to the least.

O gracious God, Who did'st all-pitying give
Thy peace, beyond man's ken, by angels' song,
To all who for the heavenly gift should long;
Grant us this choicest blessing from above,
Our hearts and minds, in knowledge and in love
Of Thee, to keep; that we in Thee may live.