From Heaven Above to Earth I Come

VOM HIMMEL HOCH (L.M.)
Martin Luther, 1539
tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1855

1. "From heav'n above to earth I come To bear good news to ev'ry home; Glad tiding of great joy I bring, Whereof I now will say and sing; 
   To you this night is born a Child Of Mary, chosen virgin mild; This little Child, of lowly birth, Shall be the joy of all the earth.
   "This is the Christ, our God and Lord, Who in all need shall afford; He will Himself your Savior be From all your sins to set you free.
   "He will on you the gifts bestow Prepared by bright and fair; You may with us His glory share.
   These are the tokens ye shall mark, The swaddling clothes and manager dark; There shall ye find the young Child laid, By Whom the heav'n's and earth were made.

   Now let us all, with gladsome cheer, Follow the shepherds and draw near To see this wondrous Gift of God, Who hath His own dear Son bestowed.
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7. Give heed, my heart, lift up thine eyes!
   What is it in yon manger lies?
   Who is this Child, so young and fair?
   The blessèd Christ Child lieth there!

8. Welcome to earth, Thou noble Guest,
   Through Whom the sinful world is blest!
   Thou com’st to share my misery,
   What thanks shall I return to Thee?

9. Ah, Lord, Who hast created all,
   How weak art Thou, how poor and small,
   That Thou dost choose Thine infant bed,
   Where humble cattle lately fed!

10. Were earth a thousand times as fair,
    Beset with gold and jewels rare,
    It yet were far to poor to be
    A narrow cradle, Lord, for Thee.

11. For velvets soft and silken stuff
    Thou hast but hay and straw so rough,
    Whereon Thou, King, so rich and great,
    As ’twere Thy heaven, art throned in state.

12. And thus, dear Lord, it pleaseth Thee
    To make this truth quite plain to me,
    That all the world’s wealth, honor, might,
    Are naught and worthless in Thy sight.

13. Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child,
    Make Thee a bed, soft, undefiled,
    Within my heart, that it may be
    A quiet chamber kept for Thee.

14. My heart for very joy doth leap,
    My lips no more can silence keep,
    I too must sing, with joyful tongue,
    That sweetest ancient cradle song.

15. Glory to God in highest heaven,
    Who unto man His Son hath given,
    While angels sing with pious mirth,
    A glad new year to all the earth.