



Bethlehem, of noblest cities

sung by St Martin's Voices

- 1 Bethlehem, of noblest cities
none can once with thee compare;
thou alone, the Lord from heaven
didst for us incarnate bear.
- 2 Fairer than the sun at morning
was the star that told his birth;
to the lands their God announcing,
seen in fleshly form on earth.
- 3 By its lambent beauty guided
see the eastern kings appear;
see them bend, their gifts to offer,
gifts of incense, gold and myrrh.
- 4 Solemn things of mystic meaning:
incense doth the God disclose,
gold a royal child proclaimeth,
myrrh a future tomb foreshows.
- 5 Holy Jesu, in thy brightness
to the Gentile world displayed,
with the Father and the Spirit
endless praise to thee be paid.

O sola magnarum urbium

Prudentius (348-410), Edward Caswall (1814-1878)



Brightest and best

sung by St Martin's Voices

- 1 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.

- 2 Cold on his cradle the dew-drops are shining;
low lies his head with the beasts of the stall;
angels adore him in slumber reclining,
Maker and Monarch and Saviour of all.

- 3 Say, shall we yield him, in costly devotion,
odours of Edom, and offerings divine,
gems of the mountain and pearls of the ocean,
myrrh from the forest, or gold from the mine?

- 4 Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
vainly with gifts would his favour secure:
richer by far is the heart's adoration,
dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.

- 5 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.

Reginald Heber (1783-1826)