



It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

The staying power of old hymns is seen nowhere more clearly than in our Christmas carols. Most of the Christmas classics that are sung and played and loved and recognized the world over have been so for centuries. It sometimes makes one wonder if a hundred or so years hence the songs being written now will find their place among those that have stood the test of time.

The mid-1700's to late-1800's seems to have been the most prolific time for producing the Christmas carols we sing today. Even though some of the lyrics had been written many years earlier, the translation into English and sometimes the music as we know it were produced in that time period.

I Heard The Bells on Christmas Day. O Come, O Come, Emmanuel. Joy To The World. Hark! The Herald Angels Sing. Silent Night. The First Noel. O Little Town of Bethlehem. O Come All Ye Faithful. What Child Is This.

You can't read through those titles without hearing the music in your spirit, they are so familiar. The same is true with It Came Upon The Midnight Clear. This classic of Christmas was written around 1849, but unlike most of those of its era, was written in America by one who lived a rather quiet life with his New England congregation. The promise brought by the angels of peace and good will and heaven's all gracious King is what he turned into song.

I took the poem away from the music and read it as if for the first time. I fell in love with it, and read it again and again. That's when I really saw its all-encompassing message. . .

in the quietness and stillness of the night the angels visited earth with the proclamation the world had long awaited

the angels still come and still speak their words of peace, not allowing the Babel sounds of the earth to quell their singing

the angels are especially aware of the burdened, the weary, the slow of step and whisper "Sh-h-h. Stop. Listen."

it's true! this promise is sure! the time is and is to come when the whole earth will join the angels in this song

PEACE ON EARTH, GOOD WILL TO MEN

© 2010 Verdell Davis Krisher