

A THRILL OF HOPE

Wednesday, December 17

Reading: Romans 8:18-25

Translated French Poem:¹

Christians, it is midnight: the solemn hour when the God-Man came down to us to wipe away original sin and end His Father's anger. The whole world trembles with hope on this night that gives us a Savior. People, to your knees! Await your deliverance! Noel, noel! Behold, the Redeemer!

English Hymn:

*O holy night, the stars are brightly shining / It is the night of our dear Savior's birth
Long lay the world in sin and error pining / Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth
A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices / For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!
Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices! / O night divine! O night when Christ was born!
O night divine! O night, O night divine*

“Long lay the world in sin and error pining” – Ever since Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit the world has been suffering under the curse of sin. The Apostle Paul wrote that “the whole creation has been groaning in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time” because of sin (8:22). Earlier in Romans, he has stated that “Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:9, 23).

“Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth” – The search for worth and meaning in life has been going on since time began. People try to find worth in money, power, pleasure, and a host of other things that ultimately do not satisfy. The only true worth in life is a life given to Christ. We know we have value and worth because Jesus gave His life for us.

“A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices” – Paul says that “the creation waits in eager expectation” to be “liberated from its bondage to decay” (8:20-21). “Hope” in the Bible is not wishful thinking. It is a confident trust that God will keep His promises. At Christmas, we celebrate that “glorious morn” when Jesus stepped down to earth to die for our sins and offer the gift of eternal life to all who believe. What could our response be but to fall on our knees in worship.

“Hear the angel voices” – On that first Christmas, the angels proclaimed to lowly shepherds about peace on earth because the Savior, Messiah, and Lord had come. This was “good news that will cause great joy” (Luke 2:10-14).

Our world today needs the HOPE of Christmas more than ever! The message of the angels has been drowned out by the noise of wars, pride, and living for one's own sinful desires. As those who have placed our hope and faith in Jesus, Christmas reminds us that this was just the beginning. Jesus' 1st coming reminds us of His promise to come again and redeem body and soul for all eternity.

Does the birth of Jesus give you hope for the future or are you still pining in sin and separation? In what ways do you need to fall on your knees and worship Him with all your heart?

¹ All translations taken from Andrew Gant, The Carols of Christmas