



Sunday Reflection

Ordinary Time

in the Charges of St Margarets, Renfrew
& St Johns, Johnstone



For Sunday 25 December 2021

Christmas morning

The Nativity of the Lord - A light for the humble

"The shepherds went back glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen." (Luke 2:20)

The three Brontë sisters wrote some of the most-loved classic English novels, such as Charlotte's *Jane Eyre*, Emily's *Wuthering Heights* and Anne's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*.

For much of his life their father, Patrick Brontë, served as an Anglican curate on the edge of the Yorkshire moors.

His was a deeply Evangelical Anglican faith; and Anne was closest to him in this.

Her faith is clearly seen in her poem "Music on Christmas Morning".

It contains the following verse: "To greet with joy the glorious morn, / Which angels welcomed long ago, / When our redeeming Lord was born, / To bring the light of Heaven below; / The Powers of Darkness to dispel, / And rescue Earth from Death and Hell."

These words express beautifully what so many Christians feel as the sun rises on Christmas Day.

The Christmas Day Eucharist may be that of families with children who are too young for *Midnight Mass* and have risen very early to unwrap their presents.

They come to share in the greatest present ever given: God's beloved Son.

They share in the joy of simple shepherds, scorned by the righteous, yet chosen above all others to hear the angels' song.

If we ever think ourselves superior to other human beings, then perhaps we should remember the humble, despised shepherds of Bethlehem.

That would involve a new dawn in our lives, not only on Christmas morning but at every sunrise.

"Music on Christmas Morning." by [Anne Brontë](#) (1820-1849)

First Publication: [Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell](#) London: Aylott and Jones, 8, Paternoster Row, 1846. pp. 45-46.

MUSIC ON CHRISTMAS MORNING.

MUSIC I love—but never strain
Could kindle raptures so divine,
So grief assuage, so conquer pain,
And rouse this pensive heart of mine—
As that we hear on Christmas morn,
Upon the wintry breezes borne.

Though Darkness still her empire keep,
And hours must pass, ere morning break;
From troubled dreams, or slumbers deep,
That music *kindly* bids us wake:

It calls us, with an angel's voice,
To wake, and worship, and rejoice;

To greet with joy the glorious morn,
Which angels welcomed long ago,
When our redeeming Lord was born,
To bring the light of Heaven below;
The Powers of Darkness to dispel,
And rescue Earth from Death and Hell.

While listening to that sacred strain,
My raptured spirit soars on high;
I seem to hear those songs again
Resounding through the open sky,
That kindled such divine delight,
In those who watched their flocks by night

With them, I celebrate His birth—
Glory to God, in highest Heaven,
Good-will to men, and peace on Earth,
To us a Saviour-king is given;
Our God is come to claim His own,
And Satan's power is overthrown!

A sinless God, for sinful men,
Descends to suffer and to bleed;
Hell *must* renounce its empire then;
The price is paid, the world is freed,
And Satan's self must now confess,
That Christ has earned a *Right* to bless:

Now holy Peace may smile from heaven,
And heavenly Truth from earth shall spring:
The captive's galling bonds are riven,
For our Redeemer is our king;

And He that gave his blood for men
Will lead us home to God again.

From <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/bronte/poems/pba-christmas.html>

Prayer

*God and Father of us all,
we rejoice with angels and shepherds
in the birth of your beloved Son.
May he enlighten us, heart and mind.
On this Christmas morning,
free us of all that is dark and unworthy
of the gift of your beloved Son. Amen.*

Please share your response to this reflection to Rector@SECStJohnStMargaret.org.uk – did anything speak to you? Did you feel challenged, angered, consoled by something in the words? How did God' spirit move you as you read it? Have you shared the words with someone else? Is this a worthwhile thing to make available to folk whilst we cannot meet for corporate worship to share in word and sacrament? What are your thoughts?

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