**9 – It came upon a midnight clear.**

Written in 1849 this poem and carol was written by Edmund Sears an American Unitarian Pastor. There is a transatlantic divide of tunes used to set Sears words. In America the popular setting is Willis and in England a melody created by Sullivan, of Gilbert and Sullivan fame. Both tunes can be found below for you to enjoy.

The Carol is based on Luke 2:14, the visit of travellers from the East bringing gifts. It was written by Sears during a dark period of personal melancholy as news broke of wars in Europe and between the US and Mexica. He had suffered a breakdown and in the Carol portrays darkness, suffering and war.

All of these things are written in despite them being alien to traditional telling of the visit of the Eastern travellers. However it also breaks through with the hope that despite the current darkness the angels singing their “love song” of hope and peace will break through even after “two thousand years”.

Today as we enjoy this Carol we consider the travellers bringing their gifts to Jesus, we consider those places where darkness and festive hope mingle uncomfortably and we pray for people who in their sadness are reminded of the hope and peace that can still be found.

**Versions for you to enjoy**

<https://youtu.be/ukGi-jx5S2M> engage lyrics

<https://youtu.be/KtV477Cqni0> traditional Kings College

<https://youtu.be/XQjpDKKPDK4> different tune

<https://youtu.be/zFBb-3JRdfU> folk arrangement

It came upon a midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth,
To touch their harps of gold:
“Through all the earth, goodwill and peace,
From heaven’s all-gracious King.”
The world in solemn stillness lay,
To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats
O’er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains,
They bend on hovering wing,
And ever o’er its Babel sounds
The blessèd angels sing.

Yet with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long;
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;
And man, at war with man, hears not
The love-song which they bring;
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing.

And ye, beneath life’s crushing load,
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way
With painful steps and slow,
Look now! for glad and golden hours
come swiftly on the wing.
O rest beside the weary road,
And hear the angels sing!

For lo!, the days are hastening on,
By prophet bards foretold,
When with the ever-circling years
Comes round the age of gold
When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendours fling,
And the whole world give back the song
Which now the angels sing.