

Day 21: Christmas Eve

Revelation 19:1 After this I heard something like the loud voice of a vast multitude in heaven, saying, "Hallelujah! Salvation, glory, and power belong to our God..."

Noel: Christmas Eve 1913 by Robert Bridges

A frosty Christmas Eve when the stars were shining
Fared I forth alone where westward falls the hill,
And from many a village in the water'd valley
Distant music reached me peals of bells aringing:

Then sped my thoughts to keep that first Christmas of all
When the shepherds watching by their folds ere the dawn
Heard music in the fields and marveling could not tell
Whether it were angels or the bright stars singing.

But to me heard afar it was starry music
Angels' song, comforting as the comfort of Christ
When he spoke tenderly to his sorrowful flock:
The old words came to me by the riches of time
Mellow'd and transfigured as I stood on the hill
Heark'ning in the aspect of th'eternal silence.

I have always enjoyed the expression "keeping Christmas." I liked the idea that I keep Christmas, or observe Christmas or celebrate Christmas. And then keeping that first Christmas close to my mind and heart, celebrating the Advent of Jesus, that first coming of our Lord. However, that is not the only Advent of Jesus that should influence how I observe or celebrate or keep Christmas today.

Christmas is the first Advent, first coming, of Jesus as an infant. There is a second Advent of Jesus in the future. That second Advent will also be celebrated with heavenly

host ascribing glory, honor and power to him.

Christmas Eve is a sacred and special night as we keep that first Advent close to our hearts. But do not lose sight of the second Advent yet to come. That will also be a hopeful deliverance.

As you keep Christmas this year, may the peace of Christ be with you and your family.