

THE LIGHT OF CHRISTMAS - Mt. 4:16 (read vs. 12-16)

"The people which sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up."

Introduction: Christ leaving Nazareth - rejected (Lk. 4:29)
Capernaum evidently received Him.
Prophecy, Isa. 9:1, 2, fulfilled - Zebulun, Naphtali,
Galilee of the gentiles saw a great light.

I. The Darkness of our World

1. the darkness of sin -
 - A. the heathen world. (Rom. 1:18-32)
 - B. Heathenism in midst of nominal xtn countries.
2. the darkness of suffering, hunger, poverty
 - A. wretched music - the cry of hungry children.
3. the darkness of slavery, oppression, tyranny
 - A. miserable mediæval dungeons made so low the prisoner could only sit but not stand.
 - B. when xt came $\frac{1}{3}$ of the world was in slavery.
4. the darkness of the shadow of death

II. Christ Is the Light

1. of salvation - Socrates said: "We look for a god, of a god-inspired man, who will teach us our duty and help us to live as we ought."

2. of joy

3. of freedom - Return of Napoleon from Elba, Mar. 1815

4. of eternity -

Eternity in heaven will be characterized not only by length of unending duration, but by satisfaction of productive achievement. Compare example of Methuselah.

IV. Concluding thoughts.

1. "sitting" is a continuing posture.
where we sit we mean to stay.
2. "sitting" is a contented posture.
they loved darkness;
they chose it rather than light.
3. the sad condition of those
confirmed in sin.
saddest of all is the condition of
those who sit in darkness in the
midst of gospel light.
4. the light of Christmas is not like
the light of a candle, but like
the light of the sun
when he goes forth in his strength.
5. the light of Christmas is a
growing light.
It is "sprung up."
The uprising the world needs now
is an uprising of this glorious light.

"Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness, and lend us Thine aid!
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

Cold on His cradle the dewdrops are shining;
Low lies His head with the beasts of the stall;
Angels adore Him in slumber reclining,
Maker and Monarch and savior of all.

Say, shall we yield Him, in costly devotion,
Odors of Edom and offerings divine,
Gems of the mountain and pearls of the ocean,
Myrrh from the forest, and gold from the mine?

Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
Vainly with gifts would His favor secure;
Richer by far is the heart's adoration,
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor."

Reginald Heber

"What can I give Him
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd,
I would give Him a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man,
I would do my part,—
But what can I give Him,
Give my heart."

— Christina G. Rossetti