

Markham-Unionville Lions Club CARNIVAL and DRAW for a Television Set AND OTHER VALUABLE PRIZES Wed., Dec. 23rd at the Unionville Arena

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THIS WEEK'S SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

THE PRINCE OF PEACE AND A WARLESS WORLD Golden Text - Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. — Isa. 9:6.

THE LESSON AS A WHOLE Approach to the Lesson

The twentieth century broke upon a world rosy with optimism. In philosophical circles this optimism was expressed in a form of humanism which believed that the race was at last growing up and was ready to exchange its foolish ways for more reasonable procedures.

This postmillennialism was by no means confined to "liberals" and "modernists." Great numbers of sound Gospel preachers held it, even in the twenties, when I was beginning my ministry. I remember one splendid father with whom I held evangelistic meetings.

Today postmillennialism like the optimistic humanism of which it was the religious counterpart, is not nearly so vocal. More recently amillennialism has become an aggressive teaching, and is today the rival of premillennialism in the prophetic field.

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The Christmas hope is not that the world will be subdued to peace and righteousness by the preaching of the Gospel. But our Christmas story points to another coming of the Lord — not to a stable and a cross, but to a crown and a throne. Then shall the nations bow before Him, and the Lord shall be King over all the earth.

Isa. 22 — "The Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, ... and all nations shall flow into it." It should be noticed from verse 1 that this is a prophecy concerning Judah and Jerusalem, not concerning the Church.

Verse 3 — "Let us go up ... to the house of God of Jacob ... for out of Zion shall go forth the law ..." False religions will give place to the knowledge of the Lord. Notice the magnetic power of the center of truth, and its outflowing influence.

Verse 4 — "And he shall judge among the nations ... and they shall beat their swords into plowshares ... nether shall they learn war any more." There must be a work of judgment and rebuking before the war-crazed nations submit to total disarmament and forget their military science.

Chap. 9:2 — "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light." Once again apply to verse 1 for the fact that this is a prophecy concerning the region of Galilee, a greatly afflicted section, but highly privileged in having so much of the ministry of Christ the Light of the world. See Matthew 4:13-16.

Verse 5 — "... garments rolled in blood ... shall be with burning and fuel of fire." An unfortunate translation. This verse is a companion of 2:4; telling us of the day when war material will be consigned to the flames, because there is no more use for it.

Verse 6 — "... a child is born ... a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder ..." Note the accuracy of the phrasing. The child born is the eternal Son given. This prophecy leaps from the birth of Christ to His reign. The names shall be studied individually.

Verse 7 — "... government and peace ... upon the throne of David ... with judgment and with justice ..." The center from which "government and peace" extend is "the throne of David," of whom our Lord is both "the root and the offspring" (Rev. 22:16).

Luke 23 — "... in the same country shepherds ... keeping watch over their flock ..." The "same country" is the hill country about Bethlehem of

Judah (v. 4). Some believe that the flocks here referred to were being raised for Temple use.

Verse 9 — "... the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them ... sore afraid." Read "an angel." The definite article would identify this angel with the theophanies of the Old Testament, which is not intended. The unprecedented glory struck fear into the shepherd's hearts.

Verse 10 — "... good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people." This angel was an evangelist, a bearer of good news. Read "all the people," referring to Israel. The Gospel came "to the Jew first."

Verse 11 — "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Although "lowly born," this Saviour is of high rank. He is God's anointed one, the Christ, and Christ is Lord. Again, Saviourhood rests on Lordship.

Verse 12 — "... a sign ... the babe ... lying in a manger." The sign was not the "swaddling clothes," which were common for infants. The sign was that this swaddled babe was "lying in a manger" (v. 7), a most uncommon place for a newly born.

Verse 13 — "... a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying." As if in confirmation of the message. Notice the word "saying" — not "singing." Nevertheless it is a song whose very recitation is music.

Verse 14 — "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace good will toward men." The glory is God, but the peace and the good will (good pleasure) are from God, the fruit of the work which His Son had come to accomplish.

The Heart of the Lesson Men have ever mourned over a golden age that was past, or dreamed of the one to come.

The Bible shares these thoughts, only with a certainty which the dreams of men do not enjoy. It tells of a time when men communed with God in a garden into which no blight of sin or sorrow had come. It looks to a day when war and violence and corruption and inequity, and want will give place to peace and confidence and abundance with righteousness.

But the Bible does not look for this age of blessedness as the fruit of human effort, nor yet as the crown of an evolutionary process. Always it connects that glad day with a special breaking in of God upon the human scene, and with a turning of man to God. See it in our Isaiah passages. It is when the light of God breaks forth from Zion, and the nations turn thither to learn His way, that armaments will be turned into implements of peace and profitable production (22:4). It is when the Light breaks upon the world's darkness, that "government and peace" shall embrace the earth (9:2-7).

Again it must be noticed that a particular spot of earth is chosen as the center of the great enveloping movement of righteousness and peace. The law goes forth from Zion. The light shines in Galilee. It is the throne of David that extends its sway to the ends of the earth. Israel plays an important part in God's redemption.

Still further, a particular person is at the heart of this whole program of recovery. He is the child born in Bethlehem, the Son "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." He whose name is "Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace," is the one who rules the nations from the throne of David.

At His birth, the angels celebrated the event in the song which we call the Gloria in Excelsis Deo. They sang of the day when peace would rule the earth, and God's good pleasure be manifest among men. But not without cost would that day come. For that child in the manger it meant the cross. By that cross He sealed His right to reign, and by His resurrection He has given assurance of "the times of restitution of all things" (Acts 3:21). The dream of the prophets is secure. "Though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry" (Hab. 2:3). "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).

Today's men is in a class with the goose that laid the golden egg — and that's no fairy tale.

"The earth is not a perfect sphere," says an astronomer. There seem to be strong indications that it also isn't a perfect anything else.

WEDDING

LONG - EDWARDS A quiet wedding was solemnized at the United Church parsonage on Saturday, December 5th when Edna Edwards, daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Fred Cockerill, became the bride of John Long of Collingwood. The bride looked lovely in a grey gabardine suit with navy accessories and a corsage of pink roses. She was attended by her sister, Mrs. Clayton Tarr who wore navy blue with corsage of red roses. Mr. Clayton Tarr was groomsman. A reception given by the bride's family was held at the home of the bride's sister. After a short honeymoon the couple will reside at Duntroon.

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