

holiday greetings

To every member of our community, we extend sincere wishes for a happy, hearty Holiday Season that is filled with the joys of good health, good cheer and good fellowship.

J. L. Smith
Jeweler

Santa Comes To America

Just like most everyone else, Saint Nick prospered after he came to America.

In Europe, before he reached these shores, Saint Nick was a tall, angular man who rode a bony gray mare. He hadn't been in America long, however, before he had a new name, a new face, figure and a new and better mode of transportation.

The early English settlers in this country started Santa's "new look" process. They adopted the legendary figure from the Dutch, but couldn't pronounce "Saint Nickoolus". The best they could do was "Santa Kalouf," which was corrupted to "Santa Claus."

In 1809, Washington Irving in his "Knickerbocker's History of New York," changed Santa's physical appearance by describing him as a jolly fellow with a broad-brimmed hat and huge britches. He also taught St. Nick to smoke a pipe, and traded his hay burner for a wagon. Clement Moore in his famous poem, "The Visit From Saint Nicholas," went even further. He gave Saint Nick a sleigh, twinkling eyes, cheeks like roses, nose like a cherry and a round little belly.

Future writers may try to trade Prancer and Dancer off for a jet ship and trim down Santa's waistline. It will be a tough job, for though he isn't streamlined, Santa pleases the young folks and that's mighty important.

Canadian defence expenditures run close to \$2,000,000,000 a year.

Australia kangaroo - hopped back into office.

Here's wishing all our friends and neighbors a very, very Merry Christmas

from the Manager and Staff of the

Stouffville Co-operative

Merry Christmas

and good wishes for a happy holiday season

John and Sybil Houston and Staff

"The" Rexall Drug Store

SEASON'S GREETINGS

Here they are! The season's best wishes to all our wonderful friends. May you enjoy to the fullest every minute of this glorious holiday.

L. E. O'Neill

Some shoppers resort to counter attacks to get service in crowded stores.

No matter how far you check back, the hen was the first to think of the idea of packaged food.

"There's no fool like an old fool" is triply true if a woman makes a fool of him in advanced years.

Cheerful Holiday Wishes

Mind if we pop up with a Yuletide wish for everybody? May your Christmas be a joyous one, remembered for years to come.

A. E. Weldon and Staff

GREETINGS

Our heartfelt greetings to all our friends. May they be blessed with peace, health, and good cheer.

Norma and Len Wilkes

The Sunday School Lesson

SONGS OF THE SAVIOUR'S BIRTH

(Lesson for December 25)
Golden Text—Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.—Luke 2:14

THE LESSON AS A WHOLE

Approach to the Lesson

The first verses of our lesson portion (Luke 1:32, 33) are not a song; they are a glorious statement, worthy of being set to the grandest music, but they are still a straightforward, prophetic declaration.

The Songs of the Nativity are four, generally called the Magnificat (1:46-55), Mary's song when she visited her cousin Elizabeth; the Benedictus (1:68-79), the song of Zacharias at the birth of his son, John the Baptist; the Gloria in Excelsis Deo, the song of the angels over Bethlehem's plain; and the Nunc Dimittis (2:29-32), the song of Simeon when he saw the infant Christ in the Temple. The names of these songs are simply the first words in the Latin version. Only two of them, the first and last, appear in our lesson portion.

Luke alone gives us these four songs, which surely suggests that Luke, while a physician by training, was a musician by nature. It is one of the remarkable features of divine inspiration that a Gentile should be used to preserve great Hebrew songs—for they are essentially that, though given to us in the Greek language. The songs of Mary and of Zacharias are particularly Hebrew in structure and thought.

It is not surprising that an event which came "on wings of song" should be the theme of so much song. No season of the year so sings with song as that season which tells of the Saviour's birth. Whole anthologies of Christmas carols are published, and while many of the numbers are neither evangelical nor spiritual, they represent the joy and gladness which the remembrance of the Saviour's birth has brought into the hearts of men through the centuries. We who know the true meaning of His coming into the world, who have gone with Him through His death and resurrection, have the more reason to rejoice, with the understanding and with the heart, "This Christmas, then, 'O come, let us sing unto the Lord.'"

Verse by Verse

Luke 1:32—"He shall be called the Son of the Highest . . . the throne of his father David." Jesus' greatness arises out of His relation to God—"Son of the Most High." This name of God appears for the first time in Genesis 14:18. On the human side, Jesus is Son of David, and his divinely appointed successor and antitype.

Verse 33—"The house of Jacob . . . of his kingdom there shall be no end." Notice the definitive phrases, "throne of David," "house of Jacob." This cannot be "spiritualized" without doing violence to the text. Here we have no idealistic song but a glorious prophecy which will have historic fulfillment.

Verse 46—"My soul doth magnify the Lord." We come to the Magnificat, Mary's song, spoken in ecstatic frame (or perhaps actually chanted) on the occasion of her visit to Elizabeth.

Verse 47—"My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." Verses 46 and 47 should be one. They constitute a synonymous parallelism, after the manner of true Hebrew poetry. See how the two phrases balance each other.

Verse 48—"For he hath regard his handmaid . . . all generations shall call me blessed." "Regarded" is the common word for "looked upon," in this case with the added thought of favor or grace. "Handmaid" means literally "female slave." Mary is truly humble before God. The "call me blessed" in no sense intends the exaltation bestowed on her by the Roman Church.

Verse 49—" . . . mighty . . . great things . . . holy." Might and holiness join in the "great things" wrought in Mary. With remarkable chasteness she does not directly name the great thing.

Verse 50—"And his mercy is on them that fear him." The song widens its scope. Mary sees the enduring blessings that the coming birth will mean to the God-fearing in all generations to come. Whether her vision extended beyond the bounds of "the house of Jacob" we cannot say.

Chap. 2:29—"Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace . . ." Here we begin the Nunc Dimittis, the song of Simeon, whom we generally think of as an old man, although that is not stated. "Now lettest thou" is a statement of fact, not a petition. For explanation, see verse 26. The word "Lord" here is unusual. It translates a Greek word meaning "master," from which we have our word "despot."

Verse 30—"For mine eyes have seen thy salvation." No man can depart in peace whose eyes have not seen God's salvation. God's salvation is here personified.

Verse 31—"Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people." Simeon's vision is not limited to the Jews. He sees that God's salvation embraces

all peoples.

Verse 32—" . . . to lighten the Gentiles, and . . . thy people Israel." The greatest glory of Israel is Christ, who came by way of Israel to give the light of life to all nations. Not all Israelites had such clear perspective as Simeon.

The Heart of the Lesson

Following the theme of the lesson—"Songs of the Saviour's Birth", let us focus attention on the occasions of the songs.

We begin with Mary's song, (1:46-55). It is rather significant that Mary did not give utterance to this ecstatic song in Nazareth at the time of the announcement; by the angel, but in the home of her elderly cousin, Elizabeth, in the hill country of Judea. In Nazareth she had presented her body a "living sacrifice unto God," for the holy purpose declared by Gabriel, but she was there in an atmosphere of conflict; she dared tell no one, and she faced certain misunderstanding, suspicion and calumny. To be the mother of the world's Saviour involved her in the deepest suffering which a pure woman could face. What the angel said to her regarding Elizabeth decided her to visit her kinswoman. Arriving at the home in Judea, she found herself immediately in a different atmosphere, of understanding and sympathy. The Lord had gone before, and the Holy Spirit had revealed the wonderful truth concerning her who was already bearing the Saviour of the world to Elizabeth. So Mary is greeted as "the mother of my Lord," and ecstatic benedictions are pronounced upon her by her God-enlightened cousin. The strain and the stress drop away, and for the first time Mary is free to express all her heart. She does so in this wonderful song, the Magnificat, in which her whole soul flows out in praise and adoration to God, who has condescended to use her as a sacred vessel in the great work of redemption.

We come next to the song of Zacharias (1:68-70). For nine months he had been dumb and unable to express his thoughts except in writing. This affliction had come to him as chastening for his unbelief when the angel who visited him in the Temple with the announcement of the coming birth of his son, who should be Messiah's forerunner, was met with doubt and questioning. Those were 9 months of deep searchings of heart for Zacharias, and ever-deepening penitence and self-condemnation. By the time the babe was born, the father was a thoroughly chastened saint. The hour of his emancipation was near. When the neighbors insisted on calling the boy by his father's name, Zacharias was referred to for a decision. We wrote on the writing tablet, "His name is John," in keeping with the word of the angel 9 months before. There is more in that little written statement of Zacharias' than lies on the surface. It was a public announcement of his repentance and of the complete capitulation of unbelief before the word and work of God. It was a dedication of this child of their old age to the God who gave Him, and to the divine purposes revealed by the angel. It involved, also, a solemn undertaking to train this child in all the discipline of a Nazarite to God. All this is involved in that little statement, "His name is John." No wonder, then, that the old man's tongue was loosed and all the pent up and godly thoughts of nine months burst forth in a rhapsody of adoration and prophetic announcement which we call the Benedictus.

The third song is that of the angels (2:14). This is the briefest of the songs of the nativity. The angels had burst forth from their heavenly sphere to hover over the scene of the birth of Him who was their creator, and who was now entering human flesh to redeem lost men. They could not contain the wonderful news, but had to make it known. A group of Bethlehem shepherds were chosen as the recipients of the glad announcement and one of the angel group was appointed to make the declaration. As the host of angels heard their companion telling these shepherds, "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord," they could no longer contain, but burst forth in unison, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." We know that as the Gloria in Excelsis Deo—a song that relates glory above

Best wishes for Christmas

May this joyous Yuletide season bring to you and your loved ones an abundance of health, happiness and good fortune.

ERNIE & WIN AUSTIN AND STAFF
of the

Stouffville Nursing Home

to peace on earth.

The fourth song is that of Simeon (2:29-32). This godly man had been informed by the Holy Spirit that he would see the Christ before he died. He lived in expectation of the blessed vision, not in dread of the death that would follow. The day Jesus was brought up to the Temple for the rites of purification, Simeon was moved to come to the Temple at the same hour. As he saw this babe, not at all unlike the other babes who were brought on a like mission, the same Holy Spirit indicated to him that here was the one long promised to Israel. He has looked upon the face of the Christ. He has seen the salvation of the Lord. For him death holds no terror. He sings his plaintive, but joyous song, "Now art thou letting thy servant depart, Lord, according to thy word, in peace." We know this song as the Nunc Dimittis. Indeed, no one can die in peace until he has looked upon the face of God's anointed and seen the salvation of the Lord.

The man who painted "Cow" on each of his cattle at the start of the hunting season didn't reckon with sportsmen who can't read.

One out of every five families in Newfoundland has seven or more persons.

The Season's Greetings

We extend to our many good friends a sincere wish for a Yuletide laden with a wealth of the good things in life. May every day be filled with the blessings of good health, happiness and warm friendships.

E. H. Neville and Sons

STOUFFVILLE — Ontario