

A Christmas Meditation

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INDENT { For 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. Isaiah 9:6.

Isaiah 9:6 is one of the Old Testament verses most frequently quoted at Christmas time. This verse packs together, within the compass of a few words a most astonishing amount of truth about the wonderful present that God gave the world on the first Christmas day.

This verse is not an isolated verse. In the book of Isaiah it follows a passage in which Isaiah has described the great misery that is to come to the people of Israel as a result of their sin. He has told how the Assyrian army is to spread over their land, bringing confusion and misery to great multitudes of people. However, he goes on to say that God is going to bring light where there was darkness, and Zebulun, Naphtali, and Galilee of the nations--the very region where the Assyrian army first broke through--is to be the area where the light will shine first (v.1-2). He declares that all the weapons of war are to be destroyed and made fuel of fire (v.5). God promises that eventually war and confusion will be replaced by peace and happiness. After this introduction, he tells, in the words of our present verse, how this peace is to be brought about. It will come through a wonderful Man, the gift of God to the world.