

What the "light" is we shall presently see. *The land of the shadow of death*; a strong figure for the desolation that war and irreligion have wrought. It is next door to death itself. (Job 10: 21, 22.)

V. 3. *Thou hast multiplied the nation.* The nation, revived and walking in the light would grow, so closely is even growth in numbers and in material prosperity bound up with right relations to God. *Thou hast increased the joy* (Rev. Ver.). The figure is the mirth of dance and merry song (35: 6). *Before thee.* It was a sacred mirth, an offering of praise to God from whom the blessings had come. *The joy in harvest.* The harvest home in Palestine, as in all lands, was a time of great gladness. The coming of the Messiah would bring a great harvest home. *As men rejoice . . . spoil.* After the perils of battle the ancients made great rejoicing over the dividing of the spoil. (Judges 5: 30.) Such joy would their coming king bring them. (Isa. 53: 12.)

V. 4. *The yoke of his burden.* The "yoke" was an instrument put upon the neck and shoulders by which burdens were carried or drawn. The deliverer would break off from the neck of Judah the yoke of Assyria, and set her free from the burden of oppression. So Christ breaks from our necks the yoke of sin. *The staff of his shoulder*, ch. 10: 5, gives the interpretation. The "staff" was a rod used on the backs of beasts and slaves by cruel masters. *The rod of his oppressor*, the driver's rod: a sharp goad to urge on beasts of burden. (Acts 9: 5.) *As in the day of Midian.* Compare Judges 7: 22; Ps. 83: 9. As God delivered Israel from Midian by the hand of Gideon, so would He deliver His people by the hand of the coming king. (See Judges 7: 19-22.)

V. 5. The Revised Version disentangles this puzzling verse (see above). *All the armour of the armed man in the tumult*; i.e., all the signs and instruments of war. *Confused noise and garments rolled in blood*; an apt description of the horrors of battle. *Shall even be for burning and fuel of fire*; a highly picturesque way of saying that war shall be

swept away. "War has rolled away forever over that northern horizon [from which their enemies came] and all the relics of war in the land are swept together into the fire." (*Prof. G. Adam Smith.*) A prophecy, too, of the final ending of all war and discord through the kingdom of Christ in the earth (Isa. 2: 4). A time which is long a coming, but which is assuredly on the way.

III. Sunrise, 6.

For unto us a child is born. The blessed change shall come to pass by the marvellous child whose birth Isaiah had already intimated (ch. 7: 4). "Could Ahaz possibly understand by Immanuel any other child than the Prince whose coming was the inalienable hope of his house?" (*Prof. G. Adam Smith.*) *A son.* Compare John 3: 16. *Upon his shoulder.* Compare Isa. 22: 22. The rule of the kingdom shall be put upon the shoulders of this little child mighty to bear rule. (See Matt. 28: 18.) *And his name*; corresponding to his character and mission. *Wonderful, or Wonderful Counsellor*; because pre-eminently endowed with wisdom for that counsel which is peculiarly the function of a king. (28: 29.) *Mighty God*; clothed, as He shall be, with God's nature and power. *Everlasting Father*; because of His infinite fatherly tenderness and care. *Prince of peace*; because He alone can bring peace to a world of strife. (Luke 2: 14.)

IV. Day, 7.

V. 7. *There shall be no end.* His peaceful rule shall be universal and endless (Luke 1: 33). *Upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom.* In fulfilment of God's covenant to make permanent a king upon the throne of David. (Ps. 132: 11.) The Christ is David's true successor. He rules over the people and the kingdom of God. *With judgment and justice*; right principles of rule rightly administered. *The zeal of the Lord of Hosts*; a bold figure and strong; the blazing ardor of omnipotence. Can pessimism live in the light of such pledge? How can believers but be optimistic?