

## The Prince of Peace

feast is accompanied by singing and dancing by the men alone, and ends with gifts of grain to the poor.

**HIS GOVERNMENT**—The Jewish and heathen Messianic prophecies produced in time an almost universal expectation of a great deliverer. Tacitus says, "Many believed that it was written in the ancient books of the priests that the East would revive about that

time and there would come from Judæa those who should gain the Empire." Suetonius says, "An old and fixed belief was spread through the whole East, that at that time some one springing from Judæa should obtain the Empire. This, though foretold, as the event proved, of the Roman Emperor, the Jews applied to themselves, and constantly rebelled."

## APPLICATION

*But there shall be no gloom to her that was in anguish* (Rev. Ver.), v. 1. Frederick Douglass the great negro orator, at a meeting of his

**God not Dead** own people, made a speech in which despair for their condition was the prevailing note.

The whole audience was cast down. An old negro woman, known as Sojourner Truth, who was present, called out and asked, "Frederick, is God dead?" Thank God for those who come to us in our dark hours, and point us to the light yet to dawn! These are the true prophets of the living, loving God.

*In the former time . . . contempt . . . in the latter time . . . glorious* (Rev. Ver.), v. 1. Blow after blow with mallet and chisel—so the sculptor out of these seemingly useless pieces

**The Glorious Result** of marble forms his splendid masterpiece. Day after day of

severe training—so the athlete gains the strength and endurance that win the race amid the plaudits of the crowd. Is it otherwise in the forming of character? Does not the road to excellence lie amid everyday, commonplace duties and trials? We are too apt to despise these. Are they not really God's tools, intended to mould and fashion us into the likeness of His own Son? Irsome the process may be, but how glorious the result!

*The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light*, v. 2. Take the sun out of the heavens, and desolation and death would

**The Light of the World** reign over the world, now so fair and beautiful. In countless ways the light of day ministers to us. It does more than show us our path. How a day of bright sunshine uplifts us after depressing days of gloom! Our souls need light, too. They need Jesus Christ, the Light of the World. Walking in His presence, we shall not stumble, and from

Him we shall receive constant inspiration and impulse.

*Thou hast multiplied the nation*, v. 3. The seed cast into the ground dies, but it is not lost. God sends His sunshine and showers, and by and by the green blades

**The World Harvest** appear, soon to ripen into the golden harvest. The Saviour

of the world likened Himself to "a corn of wheat," John 12 : 24. He died, but what a glorious harvest has sprung from His death! Not the Jews only, but people of every nation, have received the knowledge of God and His salvation. It needs only the earnest prayers and patient effort of God's children, to bring the glad tidings to every creature, and gather the last sheaf from the world's great harvest field.

*Joy . . . joy . . . joy . . . rejoice*, v. 3. How this verse rings through the soul like a peal of sweet bells, proclaiming its gospel of joy!

**The Highest Joy** Nor is this joy a stream that fails when the summer suns grow hot, but a perennial fountain.

Its source is in God, and it is as enduring as Himself. Are men glad when, in the harvest-time, they reap the reward of their toil? Does joy fill the hearts of the victors who have driven a foreign invader out of their borders, and maintained their freedom? Even deeper and more satisfying is their joy who have been delivered from the power of evil and have entered into the inheritance of the saints.

*Thou hast broken the yoke of his burden*, v. 4. It is only when we obey the laws of God that we are really free. The writer recently heard

**The Way to Freedom** this truth aptly illustrated. Imagine a horse and driver

approaching a deep and dangerous ravine. A new bridge has been erected to make a safe crossing. But the horse