

Israel a numerous nation (compare ch. 26 : 15 ; 66 : 8 ; Zech. 14 : 10). The wonderful growth of Christ's kingdom from its small beginnings is here foreshadowed. *Thou hast increased their joy* (Rev. Ver.). The Hebrew equivalents for "not" and "their" are exactly alike in sound, and almost so in spelling, and the one might easily be substituted for the other in transcribing. *They joy before thee.* "It is the presence of Jehovah on which their joy (and all true joy) depends." (Vitranga.) Note three things about this joy : (1) It is holy, the expression "before Thee" recalling the temple feasts, Deut. 12 : 7 ; 14 : 26. (2) It is a harvest-time joy. There is a reference to the glad harvest feast of Tabernacles, Ex. 23 : 16. (3) It is the joy of victors who divide the spoil, exulting over good things won and evils removed.

II. A Great Deliverance, 4, 5.

Vs. 4, 5. *Thou hast broken* ; pointing to deliverance from the Assyrians, and the greater deliverance from sin through the coming Messiah (see Mark 2 : 10). *Yoke of his burden* ; the yoke which burdened him. The yoke is an emblem of slavery, Gen. 27 : 40. *The staff of his shoulder* ; the staff with which he was beaten. *Rod of his oppressor* ; literally, "his driver," the same word as in Ex. 5 : 6. *As in the day* ("day" here means "day of battle," as often in Arabic.—Camb. Bible) *of Midian* ; when Gideon with only 300 men, strong in God, broke the seven years' dominion of Midian, Judges, ch. 7. Read v. 5 as in Rev. Ver. The sense is thus given by Dr. George Adam Smith : "War has rolled away forever over that northern horizon, and all the relics of war are swept together into the fire." The tyrant is overthrown, his warriors are slain, anything that would remind us of battle will be destroyed by fire and a kingdom of peace established (compare ch. 11 : 1-10).

III. A Great King, 6, 7.

V. 6. *For.* Vs. 4 and 5 also begin with "for." The ground of Israel's triumph (v. 3), is their deliverance, v. 4. Then (v. 5), the ground of that deliverance is the destruction of the foe. And the ground of all joy, all freedom, is the new, great King, v. 6. *Unto us a child is born.* To the description that follows only one Child, even Jesus, has

answered. *A son is given.* Jesus was Son of God and Son of man. *The government . . . upon his shoulder* ; not only that of Israel, and Judah, but that of the whole world, Mic. 5 : 4. *Wonderful.* "He is Himself, wholly and entirely wonder." (Delitzsch.) Jesus excites wonder by His teaching (Matt. 7 : 28), His doings (Matt. 8 : 27), His birth, death, resurrection, ascension. *Counsellor* ; He has all wisdom, Col. 2 : 3. *The mighty God.* As the title, "Counsellor," ascribes to the Messiah wisdom, this ascribes to Him strength (see Ps. 45 : 6 ; Heb. 1 : 8). *The everlasting Father.* The fourth name results from the third. Being divine the King must be eternal. He is called Father because He rules in a fatherly, that is, a tender and pitiful manner. *Prince of Peace.* He creates peace among the nations (Zech. 9 : 10), as though He were Peace itself come down in bodily form, Mic. 5 : 5.

V. 7. *Of the increase of his government . . . no end.* The Messiah's kingdom shall continually increase, until it includes the whole world, Matt. 28 : 19, 20. *Upon the throne of David.* The Messiah was to be a descendant and heir of David, and from David's kingdom His would spring. *To order it, and to establish it ; to organize it and make it firm and enduring. With judgment and with justice.* This is the only solid foundation of national greatness. *The zeal of the Lord of hosts.* Because the Lord loves His people, He will consume in wrath all that opposes their well-doing. *Will perform this.* With all created things in heaven and earth ready like an army to do His will, God's purposes cannot fail.

Light from the East

JOY IN HARVEST—A festival somewhat like the English Harvest Home, or the Scottish "Clyack," still lingers in some of the villages of Palestine. It is regarded as a thank offering for a good harvest, and is held on some hill-top or sacred place, when all the grain has been gathered in. It is given by the chief farmers, who join and invite all the inhabitants of the place, rich and poor, and any strangers who may chance to be among them. It is an occasion of very great and general rejoicing. Several sheep, and sometimes one or two oxen, are roasted and eaten. The