

Joy in Harvest

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon teaches that the joy of harvest symbolizes the believer's deep gratitude, assurance of God's faithfulness, and hopeful expectation of eternal reward through faithful labor and spiritual growth.

Scripture: Isaiah 9:3, Matthew 25:21, John 4:14, Psalm 84:7, Galatians 6:7, 2 Corinthians 1:20, James 5:16, Hebrews 12:1
Topics: "Joy", "Harvest", "Faithfulness of God"

Description

In 'Joy in Harvest,' C.H. Spurgeon explores the rich spiritual symbolism of the harvest season as a reflection of the believer's journey of faith. He emphasizes the joy found in salvation, answered prayer, and faithful service, encouraging Christians to rejoice in God's faithfulness and share their joy with others. This devotional sermon inspires believers to see their spiritual growth and labor as a fruitful harvest prepared by God's grace and promises.

Transcript

"They joy before You according to the joy in harvest." Isaiah 9:3.

[Other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon harvest subjects are as follows—#2896, Volume 50—HARVEST TIME (the first of his Sermons that was ever published); #2265, Volume 39—HARVEST JOY (a Sermon upon the whole of Isaiah 9:3); #1127, Volume 19—HARVEST MEN NEEDED; #1562, Volume 26—HARVEST PAST, SUMMER ENDED AND MEN UNSAVED; #706, Volume 12—FIELDS WHITE FOR HARVEST; #880, Volume 15— THE FORMER AND THE LATTER RAIN and #3058, Volume 53—THE JOY OF HARVEST.]

THE other day I was one of a glad company who kept the feast with great rejoicing, and together we shouted, "Harvest Home." It was a deep delight to see the rich and poor rejoicing together—and when the cheerful meal was ended, I was greatly glad to turn one of the tables into a temporary pulpit—and in the fine large barn be privileged to preach to an earnest, eager audience, the glorious Gospel of the ever-blessed God!

My heart was truly merry, in harmony with the happy occasion, and I shall now try to keep in the same key and talk to you a little upon the joy in harvest.

Londoners, and other city dwellers are apt to forget that it is harvest time, or to forget to render special praise to God for it. Living in these great deserts of dingy bricks we scarcely know what an ear of corn is

like, except as we see it dried and white in the window of a corn-dealer's shop. Yet let us all remember that there is such a season as harvest when, by God's goodness, the fruits of the earth are gathered in for the food of man.

We begin to study our theme by seeing—I. WHAT THE JOY OF HARVEST IS which is here taken as the simile of the joy of the saints before God. I am afraid that to the more selfish order of spirits, the joy of harvest is simply, or chiefly, that of personal gratification at the increase of wealth. Sometimes the farmer only rejoices because he sees the reward of his toils and is so much the richer man. I hope that with many there mingles the second cause of joy, namely, sincere gratitude to God that an abundant harvest will give bread to the poor and remove complaining from our streets. There is a lawful joy in harvest, no doubt, to the man who is enriched by it, for any man who works hard has a right to rejoice when, at last, he gains his desire and reward. It would be well, too, if men would always recollect that their last and greatest harvest will be to them according to their labor. He that sows to the flesh will of the flesh reap corruption—and only the man that sows to the spirit will of the spirit reap everlasting life. Many a young man commences life by sowing what he calls his wild oats, which he had better never have sown, for they will bring him a terrible harvest! He expects that from these wild oats he will gather a harvest of true pleasure, but it cannot be—the truest pleasures of life spring from the good seed of righteousness—not from the hemlock of sin! As a man who sows thistles in his furrows must not expect to reap the golden sheaves of wheat, so he who follows the ways of vice must not expect happiness. On the contrary, if he sows the wind of evil-doing, he will reap the whirlwind of remorse and everlasting despair! When a sinner feels the pangs of conscience, he may well say, "This is what I sowed." When at last he shall receive the full retribution for his sin, he will be able to blame no one but himself! Seeing he sowed tares, there was nothing to be reaped but tares. But, on the other hand, the Christian, though his salvation is not of works, but of Grace, will have a gracious and glorious reward given to him by his Master. Even though sowing in tears, he shall reap in joy. Having put his talents entrusted to him to use, out to good trading, or at least to interest, he shall share his Master's joy and hear with delight his Master welcome and repay with His, "Well done, good and faithful servant." The joy in harvest rightly consists in part in the reward of earnest labor—may such be the joy we find in serving our Lord!

The joy in harvest has another element in it, namely, that of gratitude to God for favors bestowed.

We are singularly dependent on God—far more so than most of us imagine or remember. When the people of Israel were in the wilderness, they went forth every morning and gathered the manna. This taught them that God gave them their daily bread. Now, our manna does not come to us every morning, but it comes once a year and is preparing all the time. Behind the baker's cart with its daily call is the miller. Behind the miller is the farmer and behind the farmer is God who makes the earth to yield her fruits and to multiply them for the sustaining of the whole race of men! Our supply is as much a Divine gift as if it lay like a hoar-frost around the camp. If we went out into the field and gathered food which dropped down directly from the skies, we would think it a great miracle to admire and wonder at—but is it not quite as great a marvel that our bread should come up from the earth as that it should come down from the sky? The one God who bade the heavens let fall the angels' food in the wilderness bids the dull earth, in its due season, yield the corn for the millions of mankind! Therefore, whenever that harvest comes, let us be grateful to God and let us not allow the season to pass without Psalms and songs of thanksgiving! I believe it is correct to say that there is never in the world, as a rule, more than sixteen months' supply of food—that is to say, when the harvest has been gathered in, there may be sixteen months' future supply—but at the time of harvest beginning there is not usually enough wheat in the whole world to last

the population more than four or five months. So that if the harvest did not come, we would be on the verge of famine. We still live from hand to mouth. Let us pause and bless our God and let the joy of harvest be the joy of gratitude!

To the Christian it should be great joy, by means of the harvest, to receive an assurance of God's faithfulness. The Lord has promised that seedtime and harvest, summer and winter, shall never cease. And when you see the loaded wagon carrying in the crop you may say to yourself, "God is true to His promise. Despite the dreary winter and the damp spring, autumn has come with its golden grain." What a strong comfort is this! Depend upon it, that as the Lord keeps this promise, He will keep all the rest! All His promises are, "yes and amen in Christ Jesus." If He keeps His Covenant with the earth, much more will He keep His Covenant with His own people whom He has loved with an everlasting love! Go, Christian, to the Mercy Seat with the promise on your lips and plead it! Be assured it is not—it cannot be—a dead letter! Let not unbelief cause you to stammer when you mention the praise before the Throne of God, but say it boldly— "Fulfill this Word unto Your servant on which You have caused me to hope." Shame upon us that we so little believe our God! The world is full of proofs of His goodness. Every rising sun, every falling shower, every revolving season certifies His faithfulness. Why do we doubt Him? If we never doubt Him till we have cause for it, we shall never know distrust again! Encouraged by the return of harvest, let us resolve in the strength of the Spirit of God that we will not waver, but will believe in the Divine Word and rejoice in it!

Once more. To the Christian, in the joy in harvest there must always be the joy of expectation.

As to the farmer there is an assured harvest for which he waits patiently and persistently, so there is a glorious spiritual harvest for all who wait and faithfully long and look for the coming and the appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus

Christ!

The mature Christian, like the ripe ear of corn, hangs down his head with holy humility. When he was but green and immature in the things of God, he stood boldly erect and was somewhat boastful. But now that he has mellowed and ripened and become full of the blessing of the Lord, he is humbled, thereby, and bows himself down. He is waiting for the sickle and he dreads it not, for no common reaper shall come to gather Christ's people to Him but He, Himself, shall reap the harvest of the world! The Lord leaves the destroying angel to reap the vintage and cast it into the wine-vat to be trodden with vengeance! But as for the grain which He, Himself, has sown, He will gather it Himself with His own golden sickle! We are looking for this. We are growing among the tares and sometimes we are half-afraid lest the tares should be stronger than ourselves and choke the wheat—but the separation will come, by-and-by, and when the corn is well winnowed and stored in the garner, we shall be gathered there. It is this expectation which even now makes our hearts throb with joy! We have in the past, too, gone to the grave with precious sheaves that belonged to our Master and when we were there, we thought we could almost say, "Lord, if they sleep they shall do well. Let us die with them." Our joy in harvest is the hope of being at rest with all the saints and forever with the Lord! A view even of the shadowy harvests upon earth should make us exceedingly glad because they are the image and foreshadowing of the eternal harvest above! So much about the joy in harvest. I hasten onward.

II. Let us continue our theme by looking now at WHAT JOYS THEY ARE WHICH TO THE BELIEVER ARE AS THE JOY IN HARVEST. It is the joy in harvest. It is a common notion, a popular delusion, that

Christians are an un-

happy people. It is true that we are tried, but it is false that we are miserable! With all their trials, Believers have such a compensation in the love of Christ that they are still a blessed generation and it may be said of them, "Happy are you, O

Israel."

One of the first seasons. One of the blessed occasions in which we knew a joy equal to the joy in harvest—a season which has continued with us ever since it commenced—was when we found the Savior and so obtained salvation. Brothers and Sisters, each of you can recollect for yourselves the time of the plowing of your souls. I give my witness. My heart was fallow and covered with weeds, but on a certain day the great Farmer came and began to plow my soul. Ten black horses were His team and it was a sharp plow that He used—and the plow made deep furrows. The Ten Commandments were these black horses and the Justice of God, like a plow, tore my spirit. I was condemned, undone, destroyed, lost, helpless, hopeless—I thought Hell was before me! Then there came a cross-plowing which added to my distress, for when I went to hear the Gospel, it did not comfort me—it made me wish I had a part in it—but I feared that such a gift was out of the question! The choicest promise of God seemed to frown at me and His threats seemed to thunder at me! I prayed, but found no answer of peace. It was long with me thus. But after the plowing, came the sowing. God who plowed the heart in mercy, made it conscious that it needed the Gospel—and then the Gospel seed was joyfully received! Do you not remember that auspicious day when at last you began to have some hope? It was very little—like a green blade that peeps up from the soil—you scarcely knew whether it was grass or corn, whether it was presumption or true faith. It was a little hope, but it grew very pleasantly. Alas, a frost of doubt came—some snow of fears fell! Cold winds of despondency blew on you and you said, "There can be no hope for me." But what a glorious day was that when at last the wheat which God had sown ripened and you could say, "I have looked unto Him and have been lightened! I have laid my sins on Jesus, where God laid them of old, and they are taken away and I am saved!" I remember well that day, and so, no doubt, do many of you. O Sirs, no farmer ever shouted for joy as our hearts shouted when a precious Christ was ours and we could grasp Him with full assurance of salvation in Him! Many days have passed since then, but the joy of it is still fresh with us. And, blessed be God, it is not only the joy of the first day that we look back upon—it is the joy of every day since then, more or less, for our joy no man takes from us—we are still walking in Christ even as we received Him!

Even now all our hope on Him is stayed, all our help from Him we bring and our joy and peace continue with us because they are based upon an immovable Foundation! We rejoice in the Lord! Yes, and we will rejoice! The joy in harvest generally shows itself by the farmer giving a feast for his friends and neighbors. And usually those who find Christ express their joy by telling their friends and their neighbors what great things the Lord has done for them. The Grace of God is communicative! A man cannot be saved and always hold His tongue about it—as well look for dumb choirs in Heaven, as for a silent Church on earth! If a man has been thirsty and has come to the Living Water, the river of this Water of Life—his first, best impulse will be to cry, "Ho! Everyone that thirsts!" Have you felt that joy in harvest? The joy that makes you wish that others could share it with you? If so, I entreat you, do not repress the gracious impulse to proclaim your happiness! Speak of Christ to brothers and sisters, to friends and kinsfolk! And if the language is stammering, the message in itself is so important that the words in which you utter it will be quite a secondary matter. Tell it, tell it out far and wide that there is a Savior! That you have found Him and that His blood can wash away transgression! Tell it everywhere and so the joy in harvest shall spread over

land and sea and the name of our God shall be glorified!

We have yet another joy which is like the joy in harvest. It is the joy of answered prayer.

I hope we all know what it is to pray in faith. Some prayers are not worth the words used in offering them because there is no faith mixed with them. "With all your sacrifice you shall offer salt," and the salt of faith is necessary if we would have any of our sacrifices accepted. Those who are familiar with the Mercy Seat know that prayer is a reality and that the Doctrine of Divine Answers to Prayer is no fiction! Sometimes God will delay to answer for wise reasons—then His children must cry and cry, and cry again. They are in the condition of the farmers who must wait for the precious fruits of the earth—and when at last the answer to prayer comes, they are then in the farmer's position when he receives the harvest. Remember Hannah's wail and Hannah's prayer? In the bitterness of her soul she cried to God, and when her child was given to her she called it, "Samuel," meaning, "Asked of God" for, she said, "For this child I prayed." He was a very dear child to her because he was a child of prayer. Any mercy that comes to you in answer to prayer will be your Samuel mercy, your darling mercy! You will say of it, "For this mercy I prayed," and it will bring the joy of harvest to your spirit. If the Lord desires to surprise some of His children, He has only to answer their prayers, for they would be astonished if an answer came to their petitions! I know how they speak about answer to prayer. They say, "How remarkable! How wonderful!" as if it were remarkable that God should be honest and that the Most High should keep His promise! May we not so dishonor Him by our doubt! Oh, for more faith to rest upon His Word and we would have more of these harvest joys!

We have another joy in harvest in ourselves when we conquer a temptation. We know what it is, sometimes, to get under a cloud—sin within us rises with a darkening force, or an external adversity beclouds us—and we miss the plain path in which we were accustomed to walk. A child of God at such times will cry mightily for help, for he is fearful of himself and of his surroundings. Some of God's people have been by the week and month together exposed to the double temptation, from outside and from within, and have cried to God in bitter anguish.

It has been a very hard struggle. The sinful action has been painted in very fascinating colors and the siren voice of temptation has almost enchanted them. But when at last, to change the figure, they have come through the Valley of the Shadow of Death without having slipped—when, after all, they have not been destroyed by Apollyon, but have come forth again into the clear morning light—they know an unspeakable joy compared with which the joy in harvest is mere childish merriment! Those know deep joy who have felt bitter sorrows. As the man feels that he is the stronger for the conflict. As he feels that he has gathered experience and stronger faith from having passed through the trial, he lifts up his heart and rejoices, not in himself, but before his God with the joy in harvest! Brothers and Sisters, Beloved, you know what that means!

Again, there is such a thing as the joy in harvest when we have been made useful in God's service. The master-passion of every Christian should be to be useful in the Master's Kingdom. There should be a burning zeal within us for the Glory of God. When this is so and the Christian desiring to be used has laid his plans and set about his work, he begins to look for the results—but it may be weeks, or years, before he is privileged to see them.

The true worker is not to be blamed that as yet there are no fruits, but he is to be blamed if he is content to always be without fruits. A preacher may preach without seeing conversions flow and who shall blame him? But if he is happy, or even content, notwithstanding this, who will justify him? It is ours to break our

own hearts if we cannot, by God's Grace, break other men's hearts! If others will not weep for their sins, it should be our constant habit to weep for them. When the heart becomes earnest, warm, zealous—God usually gives a measure of success—some fifty-fold, some a hundred-fold. When the success comes, it is the joy in harvest, indeed! I cannot help being egotistical enough to mention the joy I felt when first I heard that a soul had found peace through my youthful ministry. I had been preaching in a village some few Sabbaths with an increasing congregation, but I had not heard of a conversion. And I thought, "Perhaps I am not called of God. He does not mean me to preach, for if He did, He would give me spiritual children." One Sabbath my good deacon said, "Don't be discouraged. A poor woman was savingly impressed last Sabbath." How long do you suppose it was before I saw that woman? It was just as long as it took me to reach her cottage! I was eager to hear from her own lips whether it was a work of God's Grace or not. I always looked upon her with interest, though only a poor laborer's wife, till she was taken away to Heaven, after having lived a holy life. Many since then have I rejoiced over in the Lord, but that first seal to my ministry was peculiarly dear to me. It gave me a sip of the joy of harvest! If somebody had left me a fortune, it would not have caused me one hundredth part of the delight I had in discovering that a soul had been led to the Savior! I am sure Christian people who have not known this joy have missed one of the choicest delights that a Believer can know this side of Heaven. In fact, when I see souls saved, I do not envy Gabriel his throne, nor the angels their harps. It will be our Heaven here to be out of Heaven for a season if we can but thereby bring others to know the Savior and so add fresh jewels to our Redeemer's crown!

I will mention yet another delight which is to us as the joy in harvest, and that is, fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ. This is not so much a subject for speech as for musing—for deep experience and real enjoyment. If we attempt to speak of what communion with Christ is, we cannot but fall short of declaring it. Solomon, the wisest of men, when inspired to write of the fellowship of the Church with her Lord, was compelled to write in allegories and emblems. And though to the spiritual mind the Song of Songs is always a source of holy delight, yet to the carnal mind and to the formal Christian, it seems a mere love song. The natural man discerns not the things that are of God, for they are spiritual and can only be spiritually seen and known. But oh, the bliss of knowing that Christ is yours and of entering into nearness of communion with Him! To thrust your hands into His side and your finger into the print of the nails—these are

not everyday joys! But when such near and dear communing come to us on our high days and holy days, they make our souls like the chariots of Amminadib, or, if you will, they cause us to tread the world beneath our feet—and all that the world calls good or great! Our condition matters little or nothing to us if Christ is with us! He is our God, our Comfort, and our All—and we rejoice before Him as with "the joy in harvest." I have no time to enlarge further, for I want to close with one other intensely practical word. It is this—

III. SHALL WE NOT DESIRE MORE AND MORE THIS "JOY IN HARVEST?" Many of God's people are just now anxiously desiring a harvest which would bring to us an intense delight. Of late, divers persons have communicated to me in many ways the strong emotion they feel of deep pity for the souls of men. Others of us have felt a mysterious impulse to pray more than we ever have and to be more anxious than we ever were, that Christ would save poor perishing sinners. We shall not be satisfied until there is a thorough awakening in this land! We did not raise the feeling in our own minds, but we do not desire to repress it! We do not believe it can be repressed! And others will feel, too, the same heavenly affection and will sigh and cry to God day and night until the blessing comes! This is the sowing, this is the plowing,

this is the harrowing—may it go on to harvesting! I long to hear my Brothers and Sisters universally saying, "We are full of anguish! We are in agony till souls are saved." The cry of Rachel, "Give me children, or I die," is the cry of your minister this day—and the longing of thousands more besides! As that desire grows in intensity, a revival is surely approaching! We must have spiritual children born to Christ, or our hearts will break for the longing that we have for their salvation! Oh, for more of these longings, yearnings, cravings, travailing! If we plead till the harvest of revival comes, we shall partake in the joy of it!

Who will have the most joy? Those who have been the most concerned about it! You who do not pray in private, nor come out to Prayer Meetings will not have the joy when the blessing comes and the Church is increased. You had no share in the sowing, therefore you will have little share in the reaping. You who never speak to others about their souls, who take no share in Sunday school or mission work, but simply eat the fat and drink the sweet shall have none of the joy in harvest, for you do not put your hands to the work of the Lord! And who would wish that idlers should be happy? Rather in our zeal and jealousy we feel inclined to say "Curse you, Meroz! Curse you bitterly, the inhabitants thereof, because they came not up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

If you come to the help of the Lord by His own Divine Spirit, you shall share in the joy in harvest. Perhaps none will have more of that joy than those who shall have the privilege of seeing their own dear ones brought to God. Some of you have children who are a trial to you whenever you think of them—let them be such a trial to you that they drive you to incessant prayer for them! And if the blessing comes, why would it not drop on them?

If a revival comes, why should not your daughter be converted? And that wild boy of yours be brought in? Or even your gray-headed father who has been unbelieving and skeptical—why should not the Grace of God come to him? And oh, what a joy in harvest you will have then! What bliss will thrill through your spirit when you see those who are yours by ties of blood united to Christ your Lord!

Pray much for them with earnest faith and you shall yet have the joy in harvest in your own house—a shout of "harvest home" in your own family!

But possibly you, my Hearer, have not much to do with such joy, for you are, yourself, unsaved. Yet it is a grand thing for an unconverted person to be under a ministry that God blesses and with a people that constantly pray for conversions.

It is a happy thing for you, young man, to have a Christian mother! It is a great gift for you, O unconverted woman, that you have a godly sister! These make us hopeful for you. While your relations are prayerful, we are hopeful for you. May the Lord Jesus be yet yours. But, ah, if you remain unbelieving, however rich a blessing comes to others, it will leave you none the better for it! "If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land." But there are some who may cry in piteous accents, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved!" It has been remarked that those who pass through a season of revival and remain unconverted are more hardened and unimpressed than before. I believe it to be so and I therefore pray the Divine Spirit to come with such energy that none of you may escape His power! May you be led to pray—

"Pass me not, O mighty Spirit! You can make the blind to see.

Witness of Jesus' merit, Speak the word of power to me. Even me!

Have I long in an been sleeping, Long been slighting, grieving Thee? Has the world my heart been keeping? Oh forgive and rescue me! Even me."

Oh, for earnest, importunate prayer from all Believers throughout the world! If our Churches could be stirred up to incessant vehement crying to God, so as to give Him no rest till He makes Zion a praise in the earth, we might expect to see God's Kingdom come and the power of Satan fall! As many of you as love Christ, I charge you by His dear name to be much in prayer! As many of you as love the Church of God and desire her prosperity, I beseech you to keep not back in this time of supplication! The Lord grant that you may be led to plead till the harvest joy is granted!

Do you remember my saying one Sabbath, "The Lord deal so with you as you deal with His work this month"? I feel as if it will be so with many of you—that the Lord will deal so with you as you shall deal with His Church. If you scatter little, you shall have little! If you pray little, you shall have little favor. But if you have zeal and faith and plead much and work much for the Lord—good measure shaken together, pressed down and running over—shall the Lord return into your own hearts and lives! If you water others with trickling drops, you shall receive only drops in return. But if the Spirit helps you to pour out rivers of Living Water, then floods of heavenly Grace shall flood in your spirit!

God bring in the unconverted and lead them to a simple trust in Jesus—then shall they, also, know the joy in harvest! We ask it for His name's sake. Amen!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: ISAIAH9:1-7.

The last verses of the 8th Chapter picture a horrible state of wretchedness and despair—"And they shall pass through it, hard-pressed and hungry: and it shall come to pass that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves and curse their king and their God, and look upward. And they shall look unto the earth and behold trouble and darkness, gloom of anguish, and they shall be driven to darkness." But see what a change awaits them!

Verse 1. Nevertheless the gloom shall not be such as was in her vexation when at the first He lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali. And afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nation. Read the fine translation of the Revised Version—"But there shall be no gloom to her that was in anguish." What a marvelous light from the midst of a dreadful darkness! It is an astounding change, such as only God with us could work. Many of you know nothing about the miseries described in those verses, but there are some who have traversed that terrible wilderness—and I am going to speak to them. I know where you are. You are being driven as captives into the land of despair. And for the last few months you have been tramping along a painful road, "hard-pressed and hungry." You are sorely put to it and your soul finds no food of comfort, but is ready to faint and die. You fret yourself. Your heart is wearing away with care, grief and hopelessness. In the bitterness of your soul you are ready to curse the day of your birth! The captive Israelites cursed their king who had led them into their defeat and bondage. In the fury of their agony, they even cursed God and longed to die! It may be that your heart is in such a ferment of grief that you know not what you think, but are like a man at his wit's end.

For such as you there shines this star of the first magnitude—Jesus has appeared to save and He is God and Man in one Person—Man that He may feel our woes, God that He may help us out of them! No minister can save you, no priest can save you—you know this right well. But here is One who is able to save to the uttermost, for He is God as well as Man! The great God is good at a dead lift! When everything

else has failed, the lever of Omnipotence can lift a world of sin! Jesus is almighty to save! That which in itself is impossibility, is possible with God. Sin which nothing else can remove is blotted out by the blood of Immanuel! Immanuel, our Savior, is God With Us—and God With Us means difficulty removed and a perfect work accomplished!

2. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them has the light shined. Jesus came to Galilee of the Gentiles and made that country glorious, which had been brought into contempt. That corner of Palestine had very often borne the brunt of invasion and had felt more than any other region the edge of the keen Assyrian sword. They were at first troubled when the Assyrian was bought off with a thousand talents of silver, but they were more heavily afflicted when Tilgath-Pilneser carried them all away to Assyria, for which see the 15th Chapter of the Second Book of the Kings. It was a wretched land, with a mixed population, despised by the purer race of Jews—but that very country became glorious with the Presence of the Incarnate God! Even so, at this day His gracious Presence is the dawn of our joy!

3. You have multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy: they joy before You according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. The Revised Version reads, "You have increased their joy." If Christ comes to you, my dear Hearer, as God With Us, then shall your joy be great, for you shall joy as with the joy of harvest, and as those rejoice that divide the spoil! Is it not so? Many of us can bear our witness that there is no joy like that which Jesus brings!

4. For You have broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian. Your enemy shall be defeated, "as in the day of Midian." Gideon was, in his dream, likened to a barley cake which struck the tent of Midian, so that it lay along. He and his few heroes, with their pitchers and their trumpets, stood and shouted, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" and Midian melted away before them. So shall it be with our sins, doubts and fears if we believe in Jesus, the Incarnate God—they shall vanish like the mists of the morning! The Lord Jesus will break the yoke of our burden and the rod of our oppressor, as in the day of Midian! Be of good courage, you that are in bondage to fierce sad cruel adversaries—for in the name of Jesus, who is God With Us—you shall destroy them!

5. For every warrior's sandal from the noisy battle, and garments rolled in blood will be used for burning and fuel of fire. When Jesus comes, you shall have eternal peace, for His battle is the end of battles. "All the armor of the armed man in the tumult, and the garments rolled in blood, shall even be for burning, for fuel of fire." This is the rendering of the Revision and it is good. The Prince of Peace wars against war and destroys it. What a glorious day is that in which the Lord breaks the bow and cuts the spear in sunder, and burns the chariot in the fire! I think I see it now. My sins, which were the weapons of my foes, the Lord pile in heaps. What mountains of prey! But look! He brings the fire-brand of His love from the altar of His Sacrifice and He sets fire to the gigantic pile! Look how they blaze! They are utterly consumed forever!

6. 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, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Now is it that the Lord Jesus becomes glorious in our eyes! And He whose name is Immanuel is now crowned in our heart with many crowns and honored with many titles. What a list of glories we have here! What a burst of song it makes when we sing of the Messiah—"His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace!" Each word sounds like a salvo of artillery. It is all very well to hear players on instruments and sweet singers rehearse these words—but to believethem and realize them in your own soul is far better! When every fear, every hope and every

power and every passion of our nature fills the orchestra of our heart—and all unite in one inward song unto the glorious Immanuel—what music it is!

7. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His Kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of Hosts will perform this. If Christ is your Savior He must be your King—

"But know, nor of the terms complain,

Where Jesus comes He comes to reign!

To reign, and with no partial sway—

Lusts must be slain that disobey." The moment we really believe in Jesus as our Salvation, we fall before Him and call Him Master and Lord. We serve when He saves. He has redeemed us unto Himself and we acknowledge that we are His. A generous man once bought a slave girl. She was put upon the block for auction and he pitied her and purchased her. But when he had bought her, he said to her, "I have bought you to set you free. Here are your papers, you are a free woman." The grateful creature fell at his

feet and cried, "I will never leave you! If you have made me free, I will be your servant as long as you live and serve you better than any slave could do." This is how we feel towards Jesus. He sets us free from the dominion of Satan and then, as we need a Ruler, we say, "And the government shall be upon His shoulder." We are glad to be ruled by "Immanuel, God With Us." This also is a door of hope to us! That Jesus shall be the monarch of our hearts is our exceeding joy. To us He shall always be "Wonderful." When we think of Him, or speak about Him, it shall be with reverent awe. When we need advice and comfort, we will fly to Him, for He shall be our Counselor. When we need strength, we will look to Him as our Mighty God. Born-again by His Spirit, we will be His children and He shall be The Everlasting Father! Full of joy and rest, we will call Him Prince of Peace!

Are you willing to have Christ to govern you? Will you spend your lives in praising Him? You are willing to have Christ to pardon you, but we cannot divide Him and, therefore, you must also have Him to sanctify you! You must not take the crown from His head, but accept Him as the Monarch of your soul! If you would have His hand to help you, you must obey the scepter which it grasps. Blessed Immanuel, we are right glad to obey You! In You our darkness ends, and from the shadow of death we rise to the Light of Life! It is salvation to be obedient to You. It is the end of gloom to her who was in anguish to bow herself before You!

May God the Holy Spirit take of the things of Christ and show them unto us, and then we shall all cry—

"Go worship at Immanuel's feet!

See in His face what wonders meet!

Earth is too narrow to express

His worth, His Grace, His righteousness!"

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net