

OUR KING, OUR JOY

NO. 963

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*“Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.”
Psalm 149:2.*

THE book of Psalms ends in a sacred tumult of joyous praise. There is praise all through it, though sometimes it is but a still small voice. But when you reach the concluding Psalms you hear thunders of praise! There God is praised with the sound of the trumpet and upon the high sounding cymbals. All the force and the energy of sacred minstrelsy are laid under contribution that Jehovah may be extolled. Let the Book of Psalms stand as an image of the Christian's life. If we began with the blessing of the man who delights in the Law of the Lord. If we proceeded to obtain the blessing of the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. If our soul learned to pant for her God as the hart for the water brooks. And if we went onwards till we sang, “He crowns me with loving kindness and tender mercies,” let us not pause now, but advance to the hallelujahs of the closing pages of our book of life!

He who ends this life with praising God will begin the next life with the same delightful employment! As our latter days are nearer the land of Light, let them be fuller of song. Let us begin below the music which shall be prolonged through eternity. Like the birds, let us welcome the break of day, which faith in the close of life gladly perceives to be very near. I shall, this morning, call upon the veterans of Christ's army to be first in the fulfillment of the duties of praise. I shall pray that those who have tasted longest that God is gracious, may utter the loudest notes of thanksgiving, so that the younger pilgrims may learn from them, and be strengthened and comforted by their joyful example.

At the same time I shall pray that all of us, whether we have been long in the Divine life or not, being citizens of the new Jerusalem, and subjects of the Prince Immanuel, may this day be joyful in our King. The time of the singing of birds is, I trust, come! Awake and sing, you who have dwelt in darkness.

I. I shall invite you to consider our text, first, by the remark that the joy to which we are here exhorted is PECULIAR TO A CERTAIN PEOPLE. “Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.” No others can be joyful in Him, no others have any reason for being so. Those who are not the children of Zion have reason for *dismay* at the very thought of God's supremacy. “The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice,” is a song for *saints*, but remember there is another side of it—“the Lord reigns let the people tremble!” “He is angry with the wicked every day.” The glory of the Son of God can be no comfort to those who are despisers of Him, for when He shall come, as come He will, it will be with no silver scepter in His hand for *them*—with no reward of Grace prepared for *them*—but He will come with a rod of iron to break them in pieces as potters' vessels.

Those who are not the children of Zion cannot, therefore, rejoice in their King. He is no King to them in the sweet and gentle sense in which He is the Prince of Peace to us. His rule extends over them, but its greatest display will be one of justice, not of mercy. He will exhibit His power in executing the righteous sentence of God upon the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction. And, seeing they have rejected Him, He will be the object of their deepest dread. Children of Zion, you are the people who should be joyful in our King, and there are sacred principles within you which make it certain that you will be!

The first is your loyalty. The children of Zion are loyal to their King. They delight to think that “the Lord reigns.” They are glad that He has set His King upon the holy hill of Zion. Why, if it could be put to the vote among Believers today who should be the Head of the Church, there would be but One chosen. If we were asked who should rule over us, what other name should even be mentioned in our presence but the name of Jesus our Lord and King? We are so loyal to Him that I am persuaded, though we justly fear we should deny Him if left by His Grace, yet if supported by His Spirit the most bitter pangs of torture, and the most dreadful terrors of death could not separate us from His love.

If we are His followers, come fair, come foul, come life, come death—none shall ever divide us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Prove your loyalty this day—rejoice in His Sovereign will even though He may be exercising it in a manner against which the flesh rebels. We will receive evil from His hand as thankfully as good, for that which appears evil we are well assured is good if He ordains it!

Loyal subjects do not only submit to those decrees of their Monarch which are pleasing in themselves, but they give in their unwavering adhesion to the entire administration of their King. His throne and dynasty to them are paramount, and in his actions they take delight. In the case of our great Lord and King the rule is absolute—what He commands we desire to do. What He wills we seek to will. We acquiesce in His determinations, and hope even to rejoice in the most painful of His Providences.

Christian loyalty finds music in the name, and Heaven in the Person of King Jesus. None can extol Him too much. Our hearts are never surfeited with His glories, our ears never weary of hearing His praises. His rule is so good, so kind, so loving, that no other people ever had such a monarch! Every day we elect Him afresh in our heart's warmest love, and we sing again and again—

“Crown Him, crown Him King of kings, and Lord of lords.”

Zion's citizens are something more than loyal to the Monarch, they are attached to His Person. Apart from the Throne and Crown of the Lord Jesus we feel a devout attachment to His very Person. As the Son of God, we worship Him and adore Him, and our heart reverently confides in Him.

As bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, our Brother, our Redeemer who has purchased us with His own heart's blood, He is the Beloved of our souls. He has engrossed our warmest love, and none can rival Him. The savor of His name has oftentimes revived our fainting spirits, and a sense of His Presence has filled us with the new wine of holy exultation. He is in Himself All in All to us. His offices, His works, His honors—all these are as garments perfumed with myrrh and aloes—but He Himself is Fragrance itself!

Nothing grieves us so much as when any speak slightly of Him. Nothing so excites our indignation as when men do despite to His Cross and Crown. Our greatest joy is to hear of saved souls in whom He is glorified, to see Him revealing His healing power among the sons of men, and the sons of men acknowledging that healing power by yielding themselves to His service. We show that we are attached to the Person of our King by the joy we feel when our minds consider Him. We are joyful in Him because our love finds her center of rest, and her circle of motion in Him and Him alone.

When the children of Zion rejoice in their King, this indicates that they sink themselves in Him. What matters it to the true child of God what becomes of himself so long as his King is great and glorious, so long as the Lord Jesus rides forth prosperously in His chariot of salvation, and His name is hallowed and His kingdom comes? The citizen of Zion is content to be poor, to be unknown, or to be obscure if the Prince of the House of David is but glorified.

In the olden times the children of Zion often courted death for their Lord's sake. They scorned to fly when the accusers sought them out. They came before the world's judgment seat and there confessed that if it were a crime to worship the Christ, they gloried in confessing that they worshipped Him—and if the price of faithfulness to Him were death—they asked to die that they might show how truly they loved Him!

Shall we, who owe as much to our Lord as they, be less willing to deny ourselves and to resist even unto blood, striving against sin? May the Spirit dwell in us so richly that for us to live may be Christ and not self at all! May we count all things but loss for Christ's sake! May we never pine at the hardness of our lot, or the extremity of our grief, if we are bearing hardness for Jesus' sake. But rather may we rejoice that we are counted worthy to take part in such a cause. Loyalty, attachment to His Person, and self-abnegation all make us joyful in our King, and there must be added to these an unbroken confidence in Him.

If we suspect our King's fidelity, or His wisdom, or His power. If we begin to think that He has made mistakes in His government, or that He has omitted us in the administration of His liberality, we shall not be able to rejoice in Him. But if we feel that Heaven and earth may pass away, but never can His love be changed. That the ordinances of Heaven might be broken, but never could His purposes and decrees fall to the ground. If we can feel that all is well and all safe in His hand, that the government is upon His shoulders, and therefore never suffers damage. That He, with the key of the House of David opening so that no man shuts, and shutting so that no man opens, rules wisely and well in all matters—if we

can feel this, we shall be devoutly joyful in our King! Put these various feelings towards our Lord Jesus together, and you have so many fountains of rejoicing in Him.

If we add to all this an intense admiration for the great King in Jeshurun, we shall not fail to rejoice. The thought of His coming down from Heaven to suffer for our sins, the remembrance of His life of holiness, and His substitutionary death of sorrow—these, I say—have won our hearts to deepest admiration. Surely there was never such a one as He, no love could be compared with His for a moment. He is to us “the chief among ten thousand and the altogether lovely,” to whom all the beauties of earth are ugliness, compared with whom the brightness of the morning is but darkness. If we do, indeed, so admire Him, that we see nothing else to admire except what first of all came from Him, then joining this with confidence, and attachment, and self-denial, and loyalty, we must, we *shall* be joyful in our King!

I wish we had not only these Divine Graces, which like many rare spices well blended make up a holy anointing oil, but that they were so in us and did so abound that the savor of them filled all the chambers of the Church till all the household of faith were transported with delight in their King. In proportion as we become what we should be, as children of Zion, by the work of Grace within us—in that proportion we must inevitably and necessarily be a joyful people rejoicing in our King.

An old Negro who had long known and loved his Master, and who with little knowledge yet had grown much in Grace, was noted for being always happy, and therefore someone asked him why it was he always rejoiced. He said, “Because I always rejoice in God.” “Well,” said one, “but suppose your master should beat you?” “If God suffers me to be beaten I will thank Him.” “But suppose you have no food given you.” “If I have meat I will thank Him, if I have no meat I will thank Him. If I live I will thank Him, if I die I will thank Him. But I will always thank Him, for He is always a good God and deserves to be thanked.”

May we get to just that state of heart, until the excellence of our King shall be our most prominent thought, and the joy of having such a King shall outweigh every other emotion! This will be sure evidence that we are of the chosen race. By this shall we discern our pedigree and citizenship. If we are joyful in our King we are the seed which the Lord has blessed.

II. Secondly, THIS JOY HAS A MOST PROPER OBJECT. We are to be *joyful* in our King. And it is most fitting that we should be so. There is nothing unreasonable in the exhortation. There is no more legitimate subject for joy in the universe. First, it should be a subject of intense joy to us to be ruled by Him. His Law is perfect, His government is gentle, His yoke is easy, His burden is light. If we were ruled by another we might soon find cause for complaint. Yes, and it might reach such a point that it would be our highest duty to rebel, and cast off the tyrant.

When we were in bondage to sin, we did well to shake off the yoke of the spiritual Pharaoh. Why should the freeborn seed of Israel be slaves to tyrant lusts? To serve Jesus is to be perfectly free. No command of Christ is an imposition upon our rights, or a curtailment of our joys. We are freest when we are most obedient to Him. Whatever Christ bids us to do is for our profit as well as for His glory. If we are Christians, indeed, we do not desire to escape our Lord’s dominion, but we ask that He may more completely subject us to His delightful sway.

We would have our judgment controlled by His teaching, our affections enamored of His Person, our will subservient, no, *acquiescent* to His desires, and our whole selves in every thought, and word, and deed, molded by His hands. We would be to Him what the wax is to the seal. When He overcomes our raging passions, and controls our emotions and thoughts, then are we joyful in our King. Not merely as a Savior but as a King we delight in Him. We rejoice in Him, also, not only as King over us, but as Lord of All. It is always a subject for congratulation to the true Believer that Christ’s kingdom extends over *all* men, over *all* angels, over *all* devils—that it has pleased the Father to commit to Him all power in Heaven and in earth.

We are joyful to think that not an angel bows in the courts of Heaven who would refuse to perform the will of Jesus our Lord, and not a devil howls and bites his iron bonds in the nethermost Hell who can effectually resist the purpose of the Crucified. No powers—physical, moral, or spiritual—predominate over Christ or are apart from His sway. We are joyful in our King because of His dominion, which has no end. He is the Almighty Savior, and we will bless and praise His name—

*“Blessing, honor, glory, might,
Are the Conqueror’s native right;*

***Thrones and powers before Him fall;
Lamb of God, and Lord of all!”***

We rejoice, too, in the power of our King and in the various displays of it. We are very weak and feeble—without Him we can do nothing. Sometimes we are much discouraged when the Gospel makes slow progress, but it is delightful to the last degree to fall back upon the thought that it might subdue the whole world tomorrow if Jesus willed it—for all power is in His hands. He can do great wonders yet, and that, too, when it seems as if the age of wonders were over. The Lord of Pentecost is mighty still to save. His arm is not shortened. Awake, O Lord, and let the arm of Your strength be made bare. Are You not the One who cut Rahab and wounded the dragon?

The enemy knows the power of Jesus’ name, and though Christ may put up His sword for awhile, it is ours with importunity to cry, “Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O Most Mighty,” for He *is* most mighty, still. If He should once take His bow of might and shoot forth the arrows of conviction among His foes, the battle would soon be turned, and the victory would be unto the banners of His Church. The time comes when we shall see far greater things than our eyes have yet beheld—the future is His with glory—

***“Kings shall fall down before Him,
And gold and incense bring;
All nations shall adore Him,
His praise all people sing—
For He shall have dominion
Over river, sea, and shore,
Far as the eagle’s pinion,
Or dove’s light wing can soar.”***

We rejoice, then, in all the triumphs He has achieved, and all the power that He has in reserve for future conquests.

And, Brethren, do we not, this day, delight in our King’s present glory, and in the glory yet to be revealed? That He rules me is delightful! That He rules all worlds is also inspiring. That He has power to execute His righteous will is also joyous. But oh, to think of His Glory! O you whose hearts have followed Him through the streets of Jerusalem in all His shame! O you who have stood with weeping eyes at Calvary’s foot and seen Him there in death in all its bitter pangs, let your hearts be joyful this day when you remember that He has done with the Cross and the crown of thorns! Behold Him in His Father’s courts! These dim, bleared eyes of yours cannot as yet steadily gaze upon Him face to face, but let your faith behold Him.

Like the sun in the firmament His glory flames forth! Angels and principalities, and powers are lost in the blaze of His brightness. Hear their hymns! They are all for Him. Behold them as they bow. They bow before the Lamb once slain. Unto Him that lives and was dead, and is alive forevermore, the song of cherubim and seraphim ascends. And yonder white-robed ones, once like yourselves wrestling hard with temptation, now conquerors! What music have they but the music which they bring to Him? All harps praise and all hearts adore the King in the midst of Zion! Blessed be His name! O that I had permission to bow so near to Him as to kiss His feet!

Would God I might but steal into the lowest seat among the general assembly and Church of the First-Born, and but for a moment gaze upon that God-like face which was stained with spittle for my sake! I would ask no higher joy than to look upon that Person once despised and rejected on my account, but now adored of angels and admired of all the saints! You, you suffering Saints, are in your shame, but think little of it, for He is in His glory. You are in your suffering, but what matters since He is in His triumph? Children of Zion, enter into this joy, and this day be joyful in your King!

I might thus enlarge upon the Divine Object of our joy, but I will not, except to say well may we, who are the children of Zion, be joyful in our King, because of all that our King has done for us. Is it a fair city in which we dwell, in the Church of God? He built it! Every stone is His quarrying, the architecture of every pinnacle is His. Nor is there anything of good within her walls which does not bear His mark, for every good gift has come from His hand.

Are we well clothed today? The robe of righteousness we wear was worked by Him. Every ornament of our sanctification is His royal gift. Are we satisfied at the Gospel feast? Then He Himself is our Bread. Out of the storehouses of our great Solomon come forth the fine flour and the fat things full of marrow which satisfy all those that wait at His Table. Have we a portion and a heritage? We have received it all from Him! Are we saved from the second death, are we delivered from the guilt of sin? It is all through Him!

The old poem of one of our writers sings of the “Man of Ross,” and declares that every institution of the town told of his liberality and benevolence—you asked, “Who built this fountain?” or, “Who founded yonder school?” The one answer was, “The Man of Ross.” So surely if you ask us concerning our privileges, possessions, hopes, and enjoyments, we trace them all to Him who is the Alpha and Omega of our salvation. He elected, ordained, redeemed, called, established and built up His Church, and to Him, our Lord and King, be praise forever and ever! O children of Zion, be joyful in Him!

III. Thus I have spoken of the persons who rejoice, and the King in whom they rejoice. We will now remind you, thirdly, that THIS JOY IS PERMANENT IN ITS SOURCE. One is very grateful to think that there is beneath the stars one joy which need never be suspended. Everything here below is uncertain. We build, as we fancy, for eternity, and find our fabric demolished in an hour. The brooks of earth are deceitful, but here is a river whose joyous floods no winter can freeze, no summer can dry up. Today our reasons for disquietude are many. You are lovers of the Gospel, and if so, I know that in this age you will see much to distress you. My heart is joyous in Christ, but it is very heavy in many respects, especially concerning the precious interests of the Truth of God and holiness.

Look around us at this time at the numerous misuses of the doctrines of the Gospel among our ministers and leading men. First one and then another—those who seemed to be pillars are shaken like reeds in the storm. A pestilence has gone forth from which few of our Churches are free. Human intellect is adored as an idol, and in its pride it changes the teaching of the Word of God, and sets up new dogmas which the Word of God utterly rejects. If these things depress our spirits, nevertheless let us be of good courage. For if we cannot be joyful in our ministers, we will be joyful in our King!

If the pulpit fails us, the Throne is ever filled by Him who is the Truth. And if we have to suspect the orthodoxy of one, and to know the heterodoxy of another—to see Judas here and Ahithophel there—nevertheless Judah still rules with God and is faithful with the saints. Our King abides, and His Truth endures to all generations. At times our heart is bowed down because of the backslidings revealed in the moral and spiritual characters of our Brethren. They did run well, what hindered them? They were foremost once, where are they now? They were burning with zeal—why are they now so lukewarm? Where has their ardor gone?

We hoped that they would be our joy and crown, but they have gone out from us because they were not of us. Moreover, we mourn that those who are truly saints do not exhibit the spirit of Christ so manifestly as we would desire. We see among them too little earnestness, too little holy jealousy. Well, if we cannot be joyful in our fellow citizens we will be joyful in our King! When our heart is ready to break because we see so much of our labor lost, and so many tempted of Satan, turning aside, we will rejoice that the honor of our exalted King is still safe and His kingdom fails not!

This is an age—I fear I must say it—of very general declension in spiritual things. Much profession of religion and little earnest contention for the faith. Much talk of charity but little zeal for the Truth. Much boast of high-toned piety but little vital godliness. Yet if the famine in the Church should grow worse and worse, till the faithful utterly fail, and rebuke and blasphemy abound, we must not cease to rejoice in the Lord!

We, ourselves, have grave cause to complain of ourselves when we examine ourselves before the Lord. Never pray we a prayer but what we would wish to have it forgiven as well as answered. Our faith is frequently so weak that we scarcely know whether to call it faith or unbelief. As for ourselves, we are a mass of flaws and infirmities. O God, we might be very heavy if we thought only of our own personal barrenness, but we will be joyful in our King! We will sing again the royal song. There are no flaws in Him, no imperfections in our Beloved, no coldness, no turning aside in Him.

Glory be to His name! My Brethren, you who are at work for the blessed Master, I know you do not always feel satisfied with your success. I am, myself, pining for greater harvests. I would I heard of more converts. I would be delighted to lose my eyes if I might but know that many found sight through Christ. I would welcome any affliction if I did but know that souls were being saved. But when we preach in vain and say, “Who has believed our report?” it is delightful to return unto our rest and feel, “Nevertheless, the pleasure of the Lord does prosper in His hands. He shall see of the travail of His soul.” If I cannot be joyful in my converts I will be joyful in my King!

Many of you, perhaps, are passing through deep waters in your temporal circumstances. If you cannot be joyful in your property, be joyful in your King! Perhaps your children are not turning out as you could wish. I am sorry you should have such perplexities with those who have been the subjects of so many prayers. But if you cannot be joyful in your children, be joyful in your King! It may be you, yourself, are much afflicted in body, and you are afraid the afflic-

tion will grow more severe. Well, if your heart and flesh fail you, yet your King will not! The eternal springs are out of reach of change.

How little does your joy depend upon the creature! Your bottle, like Hagar's, may be dry, but yonder is the well of water which never can fail you. There is always reason for being joyful in your King! And when you come to die, and the pulse grows faint and feeble, oh, *then* will be the time for you *more than ever* to be joyful in your King, whose Face you are *soon to see* in all its beauty! Whose praises are to be your eternal employ! Here, then, is a joy for all God's people, a joy that is founded in reason, grounded and bottomed in solid realities, seeing it is a joy in an immutable Christ.

Our joy is no passing meteor, but a fixed star. When the wicked have spent their penny, our treasure will be undiminished. Jesus, our King, never changes, and never will lose His preciousness in our esteem. His name is always sweet, His fullness is always abounding, His love is always overflowing. We have always cause, even in our worst estate, to be joyful in our King. The saints shall sing aloud upon their beds.

Let me thrust in one sentence here. I do not think it is so difficult to rejoice in our King in dark afflictions as it is to remember to rejoice in Him only in our sunniest days. Successful minister, are you rejoicing in your success? Hear Him say, "Nevertheless, rejoice not in *this*, but rather rejoice that your name is written in Heaven." Successful merchant, happy parent—are you rejoicing in these outward comforts? Hold them loosely, for they are slippery things. Set small store by them, for they will soon melt away. Do not, like the Russian queen, attempt to build a palace of ice. Its brilliance is too short-lived. Hold to the Well-Beloved when the way is smooth, even as you held to Him when the path was rough. As in your adversity you found all in Him, so in your prosperity see Him in it all.

IV. I will add, in the fourth place, THAT THIS JOY OF OURS, THOUGH SO PERMANENT IN ITS SOURCE, HAS CERTAIN OCCASIONS FOR ITS MORE SPECIAL DISPLAY. Jordan was always full, but it overflowed at certain seasons of the year. Our lake of joy is full now, let me pull up the sluices for a minute, that the floods of bliss may leap forth. When does a nation rejoice in its king? Well, there are two or three seasons in which nations set apart holidays to celebrate royal events. The first is at the *coronation*. Then they hang out all the flags and streamers, and adorn the streets and houses. Then all the music sounds, and the bells ring merrily, and all the pomp of the country is displayed. So let us this day be joyful in our King, for He is crowned King in our souls.

Look back to the time when first you crowned Him in your hearts—that happy day when first you saw Atonement through His blood, and looked to Him and were saved. That coronation day will never be forgotten by you. It is to you the day of days, even as the night in which the children of Israel came up out of Egypt. Keep the record of that coronation day in your hearts. "I was forgiven, I was accepted of Him." He stretched out His silver scepter and said, "I have pardoned your iniquity," and because of this I called Him "My Lord, my God, my King." My heart shall rejoice in Him whom again, today, she crowns King of my body, soul, and spirit.

Another day of joy with nations is the day of the royal *marriage*. Did I not see you climb to the very chimney tops, crowd your windows, and line your streets when but the other day a prince brought home his spouse from afar? And should it not make our souls rejoice within us when we hear that Christ has married His Church to Himself, and taken us to be His spouse in bonds of love? Last Sunday morning's doctrine, I hope, has not gone from your souls—"He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit," and if anything can make the bells ring in your heart it is to feel that you are one with Jesus—by vital, indissoluble union—one with Him.

Keep up the recollection of your Immanuel's marriage in your souls, for it is your highest glory. Be faithful to your solemn marriage Covenant. Forget your kindred and your father's house—so shall the King greatly desire your beauty, for He is your Lord—and worship Him with joy this day. People rejoice in their king, too, when he makes *peace*. We had rejoicings for peace some years ago, and right glad we were to hear that the treaty of peace was signed. Jesus our King is our peace. Peace with an angry God. Peace for our torturing conscience. Christ has made and signed and brought peace in—yes, He Himself is our Peace.

Then people rejoice in their king's *victories*. They hear that the royal arms have been victorious in battle. Then they make high holiday. In the olden times we read of the conduit of Cheapside running with wine instead of water on the event of some astounding victory of the English king over the French. O my Soul, when you remember Christ's victory over sin, death, and Hell, let your ordinary emotions which are but as water turn to generous wine of joy and thankfulness and consecration. All hail! Great Lord of Heaven and earth. Long live our King!

Take your timbrel, Miriam, and join in the song, O Israel! For the right hand of the Lord has done wonderful things! This is known in all the earth. He has led captivity captive, and ascended up on high! Rejoice, you angels, sound all your music, you spirits, who triumph with Him. Crown Him! Crown Him King of kings, and Lord of lords!

Sometimes I have heard, and you older men remember an instance right well, that a nation rejoices when a king keeps his *jubilee*. If he has been king for a long unbroken period, then will they rejoice in him. But our King keeps many a jubilee. He has the dew of His youth, and yet He is the Ancient of Days, whose goings forth were of old even from everlasting. He is the ancient King of Zion. Our great Melchisedek, without beginning of days and without end of years!

Praise His name forever and ever! There is a rejoicing in the nation, too, when the king holds his *receptions*, when he has reception days, when he displays his majesty to his friends, and when he rides forth in splendor. I hope it is such a day as this with many of us at this time. May you sing this morning in your hearts—

*“The King Himself comes near,
And feasts His saints today.
Here we may sit and see Him here,
And love, and praise, and pray.
One day amidst the place
Where my dear God has been,
Is sweeter than ten thousand days
Of pleasurable sin.”*

This afternoon may the King show Himself to you through the lattices, revealing Himself to you in your meditations and private prayers. In your work for Him in the school may you see His glory. May He hold His reception today, and you be presented to Him in love as the attendants of His court, feeling yourselves to be accepted in the Beloved, and partakers of His joy. So you see, though our rejoicing in our King is one perpetual festival, yet we have our high days when the light of the sun is as the light of seven days.

V. And now, to close. This being joyful in our King IS A JOY WHICH IS SURE TO HAVE PRACTICAL RESULTS. As time fails me, I will be but very brief on this point, and tell you an Eastern story. An Eastern merchant of great wealth employed a skillful workman in certain works of Oriental skill and elegance. His workman, by some means, had gradually sunk deeper and deeper in debt. Through extravagance, or loss, or many other causes, he had first fallen into a little debt, and then had borrowed, and loans and usurious interest had heaped up the amount till it was beyond hope that he should discharge it.

The man grew daily more and more depressed, and as he sank in spirit he was smitten with sickness, and the skill he once showed in his master's service began to decline. Each product of his hand revealed less art and cunning. The hand of his art was paralyzed. Meanwhile his creditor became more exacting, and at last threatened to sell the poor man's children as slaves, according to the Law of the land, unless the debt was paid. This weighed more heavily upon the poor man's soul, and he worked less industriously and with decreasing skill.

At last the merchant enquired of the steward of the workroom. “Ah,” said he, “was there ever a more cunning workman and he worked most dexterously. How is it that I see now no masterpieces come from him? His fabrics are few and in the market they are lightly esteemed. Our name suffers in the bazaar. Rival traders excel me in my works.” “My lord,” said the steward, “he is daily of a sorrowful countenance and forgets to eat bread. He keeps a long and bitter fast, for he is drowned in debt to a cruel creditor, and his soul pines like the heath of the desert. And therefore his hands are slow as that of an herdsman, and his eyes as dull as that of the owl in the sunlight. Beauty has forgotten him, and art has fled from him. He declines like one sick unto death.”

“Send for him, bring him here,” said his lord. And he brought him to his chamber, “What ails you, Ali? What clouds your eyes, and chains your hands? You are not unto me as before. You were skillful as Bezalel who worked for Moses, but now you are no better than the baseborn son of an infidel mother. Is it that you are deep in debt? Behold your discharge, your debt is paid! What do you think? Will not your cunning return to your right hand?” That servant worked with a diligence never before seen! In the joy of his heart his mind became as nimble as the gazelle on the plain, and his work as precious as the pearls of the Indian gulf. The merchant found himself abundantly rewarded in his servant's skill and toil, for having thus set his heart at rest.

Shall not it be thus with every ransomed soul to whom Jesus has brought the news of salvation? You cannot serve our King after the best sort with a downcast mind. You cannot give yourself entirely to His service unless you have the oil of joy to anoint your head! The wheels of the chariot are heavy till joy is harnessed to the car. The Lord Jesus has forgiven all your debt and given Himself to be your Joy forever, and should you not, from now on, be first in His service, manifesting an enthusiasm in His cause, a force, a power, an elasticity, an energy which otherwise you could never have felt? Joyous spirits, see to it that you keep your joy bright and clear, for you will honor your King the more.

He wants not slaves to grace His Throne—rejoicing hearts are His delight. You who are sad, pray that the King will lift up the light of His countenance upon you, so that your drooping hands and feeble knees may be strengthened. Do not let us be sad, for the Bridegroom is with us! Let us not tremble for the ark of the Lord—Dagon will fall before it yet. Though the hosts of the Lord may appear to melt away and their numbers lessen, when they are few enough to be trusted with victory, the Lord will grant it. God will reserve unto Himself the handful of men that lap, and these shall go forth and cry, “The sword of the Lord and of Gideon,” until the enemies of the Lord destroy one another.

Let not the enemy laugh us to scorn because of our trembling. But let us charge home with renewed vigor, for Truth, for God, for Christ, for the Cross, for the everlasting decrees of a sovereign God, for the majesty of the Holy Spirit who will effect those decrees in the heart of men! Let us set up our banners anew and advance to the fight! Let us strengthen ourselves in God this day and go forth to the conflict, which if it is severe, will, nevertheless most certainly yield all the more glorious a victory to Him who is our King, and to us who loyally serve Him, even as we rejoice in Him this day!

O that all were subjects of this King! Would God that those who are not reconciled to our Almighty Monarch would seek His face this morning! He will give them mercy through Jesus the Savior—may they seek it and find it. Amen.

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