

SIMEON'S SWAN SONG*

NO. 2293

A SERMON

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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

(*Published in ever-loving memory of the beloved servant of the Lord, C. H. Spurgeon, who departed in peace, January 31st, 1892. Is not the first anniversary of the dear preacher's promotion to glory a good time to seek to increase the circulation of his sermons? Mrs. Spurgeon continues to receive the most cheering assurances of the usefulness of the discourses and expositions of her glorified husband, and by them "he, being dead, yet speaketh.")

*"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:
for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."*

Luke 2:29-30

IF we are believers in Christ, we shall one day use words like these. Perhaps not just at present, and yet, possibly, sooner than some of us think, we shall gather up our feet in our bed and we shall say with all composure, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word."

See what death is to the believer. It is only a departure. It is a departure after a day of service. "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart. My day's work is done. Let me now go home." With us who believe it will be a departure to a higher service, for we shall still be the Lord's servants even when we depart from this present sphere of labor. We shall go to do yet higher and more perfect work in the nearer presence of our Master. "His servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face." But death to the believer is only a departure from one form of service to another.

And note, that it is a departing "*in peace*." We are at peace with God. We have—

*"Peace! perfect peace! in this dark world of sin,
The blood of Jesus whispers peace within!"*

As many as have believed in Jesus, have entered into rest. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." We have joy and peace in believing and as we live in peace, we shall also die in peace. We shall remain in peace and we shall depart in peace. A deep and holy calm will fill up our dying moments.

*"It is enough: earth's struggles soon shall cease,
And Jesus call to heaven's perfect peace!"*

We shall be able to say, perhaps, when we come to die, what a dear friend of mine once said to me, when I went in to see him on his dying bed. A part of his affliction consisted in total blindness from what they call the breaking of the eye-strings. Sitting up, although he could not see me, he moved his hand and said,—

*"And when ye see my eye-strings break,
How sweet my minutes roll!
A mortal paleness on my cheek,
But glory in my soul!"*

So will it be with us—we shall depart in peace. To the believer, death is not a thing to be dreaded—he even asks for it, “Lord, now *lettest* thou, *permittedst* thou, thy servant to depart in peace. Grant it as a boon, vouchsafe it as a favor.” Death to the sinner is a curse, but to the believer it is a form of benediction, it is the gate of life. To the sinner, it is a chain dragging him down to the unutterable darkness of the pit, but to the saint, it is a chariot of fire bearing him aloft to the heaven of light and love.

Note, also, that Simeon said, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, *according to thy word.*” Did you not notice, in our reading, what Luke says about Simeon in the twenty-sixth verse? “It was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.”

The prophecy had been fulfilled, he had seen the Lord’s Anointed. There was nothing more for him to desire upon earth, so he said, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: *for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.*” The reason for Simeon’s holy calm, the cause of his finding death to be nothing but a departure out of this world, lies in this fact, that he could say, “Mine eyes have seen thy salvation.” It is of that blessed fact that I am going to talk tonight as the Spirit shall help me.

I do not suppose that everybody here can say, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.” Some of you would not depart in peace if death came to you as you now are. Dear friend, if you are not prepared for death and judgment, you had better pray, “Lord, let me stay here till I have found peace with You; and then let me depart in peace whensoever You will.”

I shall at this time take the innermost sense of the text, dwelling upon these words of Simeon, “Mine eyes have seen thy salvation.” There were others who had seen the baby Christ with their natural eyes, but Simeon had seen, in the babe, Christ, the salvation of God, not with his outward eyes, but with the inward perceptions of his spirit.

I hope that many here present can say that they have seen, and do see, in Christ, God’s salvation, and their salvation given to them of God. If so, I am sure that they feel ready to live, or ready to die. But if it be not so with any of you—if you cannot say, “Mine eyes have seen thy salvation,” you cannot pray, “Lord, let thy servant depart in peace.”

What, then, do these words mean, “Mine eyes have seen thy salvation”? I will try to explain their meaning in my discourse tonight and when I have finished, I think you will see that there are these five things included in this utterance of old Simeon. First, here is *clear perception*. Next, *perfect satisfaction*. Then, *happy unbinding*. Then, *dauntless courage*. And finally, *joyful appropriation*.

I. The first thing for us to notice in Simeon’s swan song is CLEAR PERCEPTION—“Mine eyes have seen thy salvation.”

Some people are very hazy in their religion—they “see men as trees walking.” They see things as we see them in London in a fog. That is to say, we do not see them clearly, we cannot see them distinctly, and yet we do see them after a fashion. The fault with a great many Christians, nowadays, is that they have only just light enough to see things as in a mist—they have not discerned clearly the sharply-cut image of the truth.

But Simeon could say, not, “I think I see the salvation of God in Christ. I hope I do. Perhaps I do. But he could say, “Mine eyes *have seen* thy salvation.” Oh, happy are you, my dear friends, tonight, if you can distinctly and clearly see in Christ Jesus, the salvation of God!

True, Christ was but a baby then, and Simeon could easily hold Him in his arms, yet his faith could see everlasting salvation, *infinite salvation within God incarnate*. God has come into our world and has taken upon Himself our nature. He that was born at Bethlehem was “very God of very God.” He that trod the acres of Palestine, as He went about doing good, was the same who “was in the beginning with God,” without whom was not anything made that was made.

Christ is God. “The Word was with God, and the Word was God,” but it is equally true that “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.”

*“It is my sweetest comfort, Lord,
And will for ever be,
To muse upon the gracious truth
Of Thy Humanity.*

*“For ever God, for ever man,
My Jesus shall endure;
And fixed on Him, my hope remains
Eternally secure.”*

Now, this Christ took upon Himself the sins of all His people. “Who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree.” “The LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” And sin, being laid on Christ, it remained no more on those from whom He took it. He bore it that they might not bear it. He suffered the consequences of their sin that they might never suffer those consequences.

Jesus made an atonement to the justice of God—He vindicated and honored the perfect law of the Most High. When I see Christ on the cross, Christ in the tomb, Christ risen from the dead, Christ at the right hand of God, I understand that He took away my sin. He died. He was buried. He came forth from the grave, having destroyed my sin and put it away—and He has gone into the heavens as my Representative, to take possession of the right hand of God for me, that I in Him and with Him may sit there forever and ever.

To me, Christ's sacrifice is a business transaction as clear and straight as mathematics could make it. I care not that men decry what they call “the mercantile theory of the atonement.” I hold no “theory” of the atonement. I believe that the substitution of Christ for His people is the atonement for their sins. And that there is no other atonement—but that all else is theory.

This is to me so clear, so true, so definite, that I can venture to say with Simeon, when I have seen Christ, especially Christ crucified, Christ glorified, “Mine eyes have seen thy salvation.” Clear perception, then, is the first meaning of Simeon's words.

You young people who have come to believe in Christ, *get clear perceptions as to how Christ is God's salvation.* Do not mix and muddle things up as so many do, but accept Christ as your Substitute, as “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” Believe that on the cross He paid your debt, discharged your liability, and bought you with a price—so that you are His, and His forever and ever.

You will never have peace in death—I do not see how you are to have solid rest in life—without a sharp, crisp, clearly-cut idea of how Christ is the salvation of God. The bulk of people do not see it and they therefore miss the comfort of it. The comfort of a man, immersed in debt, is assured if he has a friend who bears his burden and pays his debt for him—then he feels that he is clear of all his former liabilities.

I declare, before the living God, that I know of no solid comfort for my heart tonight but this—the chastisement of my peace was upon Him and with His stripes I am healed. May you get a clear perception of this great truth now!

II. But next, when Simeon could say, “Mine eyes have seen *thy* salvation,” he had PERFECT SATISFACTION in Christ.

You observe, he takes Christ up in his arms, and says, “Mine eyes have seen,” not, “a part of thy salvation,” but “*thy* salvation.” He is not looking to anything else for salvation, but only to that Man-Child, seeing all that that Man-Child will do, and bear, and suffer—recognizing in Him the two natures, the divine and the human—and as he clasps Him to his breast, he says, “Mine eyes have seen thy salvation. It is enough, I have here all that I want. Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.”

Beloved friends, have you ever done with Christ what old Simeon did? “He took him up in his arms, and blessed God.” All that you need to save you, lies in Him. I have known the Lord now for some forty

years, or thereabouts. When I first came to Him, I came as a sinner, without any works of my own which I could trust or any experience upon which I could rely. And I just rested my whole weight upon the finished work of Christ.

Now, after forty years of service, and nearly forty years of preaching the Gospel, have I any works of my own to add to what Christ has done? I abhor the thought of such a thing. Have I even the weight of a pin's head that I dare put into the scale with my Lord's merits? Accursed be the idea! More than ever do I sing,—

“Nothing save Jesus would I know,”

and nowhere would I rest but in Him alone.

Now, dear Christian friends, I know you understand this, that Christ is an all-sufficient Savior, that He is all your salvation and all your desire. And yet, perhaps, you are tempted at times to think that you must be this, or you must do that, or you must feel the other, or else Christ is of none effect to you. Think not so, but rest wholly and alone on Christ.

Say, “I rest in Him, whether I am a saint or a sinner, whether I have bright frames or dark frames, whether I am useful, or whether I am defeated in my service. I have no more to trust in when I rejoice in the light of God's countenance than I have when I walk in darkness, and see no light. Christ is everything to me at all times—a winter Christ and a summer Christ—all my light when I have no other, and all my light when I have every other light.”

***“My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame;
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ the solid Rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand.”***

God bring you to this, that you may say, “I have seen Christ, mine eyes have seen God's salvation. I am perfectly satisfied. I want nothing else.” Does a man pluck me by the sleeve, and say, “I will tell you something worth hearing”? My good fellow, go and tell it to somebody who wants to hear it, for I do not. I have heard all the news I want when I have heard of *eternal salvation* by Jesus Christ.

III. Now, thirdly, notice that there is in Simeon's words, “Mine eyes have seen thy salvation,” a kind of HAPPY UNBINDING.

The man has been, as it were, bound. But He says, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant *depart in peace*. Every fetter is now broken. I have seen thy salvation, Lord, I am not tied to life, nor tied to home, nor tied to comfort, nor tied even to Your temple. Now, Lord, I can go anywhere, departing in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.”

Is not that a grand utterance of old Simeon? The most of us are tied in one way or another and we find it hard to cut ourselves loose. With many of us, the first part of our life is often spent in tying ourselves down to this world, and by and by, we feel that we are too much tied, bound, hampered, hindered—and we cry out, “How shall we get free?”

The only way to get free is to get Christ. “If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” If you take Christ in your arms and say with Simeon, “Mine eyes have seen thy salvation,” you can then say, “Everyone else and everything else may go now.

***“Yea, shouldest Thou take them all away,
Yet will I not repine;
Before they were possessed by me,
They were entirely Thine.***

“And as You have given me Christ, You may do what You will with me as to other things.”

Where Christ is not valued, gold becomes an idol. Where Christ is not prized, health becomes an idol. Where Christ is not loved, learning and fame become idols. Where Christ is not first and foremost, even personal beauty may become an idol. But when Christ becomes our all in all, because our eyes have seen His salvation, then the idols fall, Dagon is broken.

We are emancipated and we can say concerning all these things, “Ay, whether you come or whether you go, you are not lords of the house—you are but comers and goers unto me henceforth and forever, for a clear conception that Christ is God's salvation, and a full grasp of Him as mine, have set my Spirit free from every fetter that hitherto held me in captivity.”

IV. I must not pause here, because I want you to notice how being able to say, “Mine eyes have seen thy salvation,” gives to a man DAUNTLESS COURAGE.

He who has once seen Christ as God's salvation is not afraid to see death. “Now,” says he, “I can look death in the face without dread, for I have seen God's salvation.” He is not afraid of that tremendous judgment seat which will be set in the clouds of heaven, for He who will sit upon that judgment seat is God's salvation to us who believe.

The man who is “looking unto Jesus” is not afraid of the day when the earth will rock and reel, and everything based upon it will shake to its destruction. He is not afraid of the star called Wormwood, nor of seeing heaven and earth on a blaze. “Mine eyes have seen thy salvation,” says he, and he bears this glorious vision about with him wherever he goes. It is more to him than any earthly charm could be, it is more powerful than the most potent charm of the mystic or the magician. Such a man is safe. He must be safe—his eyes have seen God's salvation.

If you would have a courage of the truest kind, that needs no stimulus of drink, and no excitement of the noise of trumpet and of drum—the calm courage that can suffer pain, that can bear rebuke, that can endure slander, that can stand alone, that could stand foot to foot with the infernal fiend himself, and yet not be afraid—if you would have such courage as that, you must get Christ in your arms, for then shall you say with Simeon, “Lord, come what may, I have nothing to fear, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.”

*“Fearless of hell and ghastly death,
I'd break through every foe;
The wings of love, and arms of faith,
Should bear me conqueror through.”*

V. I will not detain you much longer, for the time is well-nigh spent, but I would say this one more thing, He who lays hold on Christ, makes a JOYFUL APPROPRIATION of Him. His sight of Christ, his clear apprehension of what Christ is, is accompanied by a personal appropriation of Christ to himself.

This is the matter that puzzles many. I have, during the past week, talked with several people who have heard from me concerning the way of salvation and the preciousness of Christ, and the question of many of these inquirers has been this, “How can we get hold of Christ? We believe that all you say about Him is true. Christ is God's salvation, but how can we take Him to be ours? You seem to treat Christ as if He were yours beyond all question. How can we learn to do the same?”

My answer is, when you once know how the Savior saves, and how He is God's salvation, trust Him to save you. That trust grips Him, holds Him—and if you can hold Him—He is yours. We have certain rights of property extant among us and a man may have to bring his title deeds to prove that a house is really his own.

But in the kingdom of grace, the only title deed you want is that you have hold of Christ. May I take Him, then, without any right? Yes, taking Christ gives you the right to take Him. “To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.”

There is a piece of bread on yonder table. I mean to have it for my own. It will be of no use for you to dispute with me about the matter, for I shall put it beyond all dispute. How? I shall take that bread in my hand. Well, you can wrench it from me. I shall do more than that—I shall eat it. I shall digest it—it will become a part of my own being. You will not get it away from me, then—and I do not care if you go to the law with me to try to get it. Possession is more than nine points of the law in such a case as that. Digestion and assimilation will be ten points of the law, certainly.

Now, it is just so with Christ. Poor soul, take Him, believe Him, trust Him, appropriate Him. Trust Him more, and more, and more. The more the devil tries to take Him from you, trust Him the more. Plunge yourself deeper and deeper still into this sea of salvation, and trust Christ still more.

Perhaps someone says, "But how may I know at first that I have a right to trust Christ?" You have a right to trust Christ because you are commanded to do it. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Make a dash for this great blessing. Take Christ tonight, whether or no, for though it should seem like robbery to you to take Him, yet if you once have Him, He will never be taken away from you.

Make a dash for Christ, I say, tonight, and take Him, saying, "I believe Him. I trust Him. I rest myself on Him." Heaven and earth shall pass away, but if you do trust Christ, you shall never be ashamed. There was never a man yet who dared trust Christ and yet found that Christ was not equal to his need, or that He did not fully supply all his wants.

Simeon took Christ up in his arms. Somebody might have said, "Old man, what have you to do with the new-born King? Old man, you may be just and devout, but dare you handle the Incarnate God? Dare you handle Him upon whose shoulders God has laid the key of His kingdom, whose name is called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace? Dare you touch Him?"

Yes, He dares do it. He takes Him up in his arms, he clasps Him to his heart, he rejoices over Him, he is ready to die with delight now that he has found Christ. Come, poor troubled ones, come tonight and take Christ into your arms! And you, dear saints of God, who have done this long ago, do it again! Take Him right up into your arms, as though He were still a babe. Take Him to your heart and say, "He is everything to me—my love, my hope, my brother—this blessed Incarnate God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." If you can do this, it shall be well with you now, it shall be well with you in death, it shall be well with you throughout eternity.

Have I among my hearers any who are postponing this all-important business, putting it off till a more convenient season? Let me tell them something that ought to warn them of the risk they are running. Once upon a time the prince of darkness said to the evil spirits under his command, "I want to see which of you can be my best servant. The Gospel is being preached in various places and many persons are hearing it, and I am afraid that my kingdom will suffer loss. Unless something can be done, I fear that many will desert from under the black flag and enlist under the standard of Jesus of Nazareth. I would fain prevent this—which of you will help me?"

Then up rose one who said, "I will go forth and say that the Bible is not true, that Christ is not God, and that what is preached is not the truth." But the great prince of the pit answered him, "You will not serve my turn just now. There are a few places where you will be very useful, but the most of those who are listening to this Word will laugh at you and drive you back. You smell too much of the place where you go on my errands. You cannot do what I want now."

Up stood another of the evil throng and said, "Let me go and I will bring forth certain new views of truth and various fresh doctrines, and with these I will turn aside the thoughts of men from the old faith." But the prince of the power of the air replied, "You, too, are a good servant of mine, and you stand me in good stead at other times, but just now you are not the one for the task I propose."

Then out spoke one who said, "O prince of darkness, methinks I am your good soldier on this occasion. Here am I, send me." "And what will you do?" said Beelzebub, "What will you do?" "I will go forth and tell the people that the warnings of the preacher are true and the voice of the Gospel is the

voice of God. I will not awaken and arouse them by any sort of opposition, but I will tell them that there is time enough, by and by, to attend to these things. I will bid them wait a little longer and bide their time. I will put this word into the mouth of each one, that he may say to the preacher, 'Go thy way, for this time. When I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.'"

Then the grim master of the pit smiled and said, "Go your way, my faithful servant, you are he that shall carry out my purpose right thoroughly, and so shall you foil the preacher—and the Word that he utters shall fall to the ground." Is there not a message here for someone who is listening to my words?

"Mine eyes have seen thy salvation." How I wish that I could make some here, who do not know it, understand how divinely simple is the way of salvation! You are a sinner, guilty and condemned. Christ becomes a man, takes your sins, suffers in your stead. You accept Him to stand for you. You permit Him, by your faith, to be accepted as your Substitute, and His pains are put down instead of yours, and you are "accepted in the beloved," and saved in Him.

Oh, if you could but do this—and you may do it tonight before you leave this place, and I hope you will—if you do this, whether you be old or young, there will come to you a heartfelt of benediction for life, and the best of all preparations for death. Truly happy shall you be if you can say, "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

I seem as if I did not need to see anything else, after having seen Christ as God's salvation. There is a story told of Mohametans, who often are very fanatical, and do very strange and horrible things in their fanaticism. But they have been known to go to Mecca, to see the tomb of their prophet, and when they have seen his tomb, they have taken a hot steel and have drawn it across their eyes, that they might never see anything else—that indeed they might die with the view of the false prophet's tomb as their last sight.

Now, that is not what we do, but still we would act in the spirit of it. "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation." People say, "See Naples and die." They mean that it is so lovely that when you have seen it, there is nothing more to see. See Christ, and what else is there to see? Now, whether you sail over the blue sea beneath a bluer sky, or dive into the deeps of this murky atmosphere—whether you are in a palace or in a dungeon, sick or full of bounding health—all these are items of small consequence.

If your eyes have seen God's salvation, for God has blessed you as only God can bless you. Go and live in peace and go and die in peace—and praise the name of Him who gave you such a Savior to see, and the power to see Him.

The Lord bless you, beloved! Amen and amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

LUKE 2:21-38

Verse 21. *And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.*

Although the old law ends with Christ, it is very instructive to notice that He came under the law and conformed to all its appointments. Jesus, therefore, had to be circumcised. In Him the law was fulfilled in every point, even to the jots and tittles—nothing was omitted. Behold how perfect is the righteousness which He wrought out for His people!

22. *And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;*

Everything was done that was required by the Jewish law, you see. "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." "Being found in fashion as a man," and a man under the Jewish law—Jesus and His parents were obedient to all its requirements.

23-24. *(As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.*

This proves the poverty of our Lord's parents. If they had been able to bring a costlier sacrifice, they should have done so. The law required the offering of a lamb for a burnt offering, but there was a gracious provision in the case of the poor mother—"If she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for the burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean."

Even in the case of a working woman, the birth of her first-born son required from her a sacrifice, but it might be of the smallest kind—"A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons." Think of your Lord Himself redeemed by a sacrifice, a pair of doves offered in His stead! What a wonderful coming down to our condition and position was this!

25. *And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout,*

He blended in his character his duty to man and his duty to God—"he was just and devout."

25. *Waiting for the consolation of Israel:*

His devotion was not that of a blind devotee. He had eyes of expectation. He was expecting the Messiah to come, who is, "the consolation of Israel."

25-26. *And the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.*

That which the Holy Ghost reveals will assuredly come to pass, as it did in the experience of old Simeon.

27. *And he came by the Spirit into the temple:*

Men who have the Spirit will be led by the Spirit. Simeon came into the temple at the right moment. Just when a young man was entering, with his wife and new-born child, "He came by the Spirit into the temple."

27-28. *And when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms,*

He came in, I say, at the right time. Did ever anybody, who was not led by the Spirit, find Christ? Somebody has come in here tonight and he does not know why he has come—he has been led here by the Spirit that he may see Jesus, and may have such a sight of Him as shall be his salvation. God grant that it may be proved that many an aged Simeon has traveled here this Sabbath night, led by the Spirit for this purpose, to find the Savior in His own house!

28-32. *And blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.*

Simeon had studied the ancient prophecies to good purpose and he perceived from them that "the Lord's Christ" would be "a light to lighten the Gentiles" as well as "the glory of" God's ancient people, "Israel."

33. *And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.*

We may be very near to Christ and yet know very little about Him. Joseph and the virgin mother did not understand "those things which were spoken of him." One wonders it was so after all that had been revealed to them—we marvel that they marveled.

34. *And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel;*

Do you understand that? Whenever Christ comes to a man, there is a fall first—and a rising again afterwards. You never knew the Lord aright if He did not first give you a fall. He pulls us down from our pride and self-sufficiency and then He lifts us up to a position of eternal safety. He is "set" for this

purpose. This is the great design of Christ's coming—"This child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel."

34. *And for a sign which shall be spoken against;*

Christ and His Gospel will always be spoken against. If you know a gospel which is approved by the age and patronized by the learned, that gospel is a lie. You may be sure of that. But if it be spoken against, if it be slandered, if it be called absurd, unscientific, and I know not what, all that is in its favor.

35. *(Yea, a sword shall pierce through your own soul also,)*

This favored woman had the greatest smart to go with her great honor. She saw the suffering and anguish of her Son, and the nearer you are to Christ, the more of sorrow it will cost you, sorrow which you may be well-content to bear. You know how it is put in that hymn of which many of us are very fond,—

*"If I find Him, if I follow,
What His guerdon here?
'Many a labor, many a sorrow,
Many a tear.'"*

Yet, I say again, you may be well-content to bear it all for His sake, for you remember what the next verse of the hymn is,—

*"If I still hold closely to Him,
What hath He at last?
'Sorrow vanquished, labour ended,
Jordan past.'"*

35. *That the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.*

Christ and His cross are the revealers of the thoughts of men's hearts. Men's hearts can conceal their thoughts until Christ's cross comes near—then the old enmity rises up, the heart rebels, and we see what is really in men's hearts.

36-37. *And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; and she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fasts and prayers night and day.*

It would have been a pity for Christ to have been received in the temple only by a man. There must be a woman there, too, to join in Simeon's swan song, and to unite her testimony with his.

38. *And she coming in that instant—*

God knows how to time what we call our accidental walks—"She coming in that instant"—

38. *Gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spoke of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.*

So that the song of Simeon was sweetened by the voice of Anna—and they both rejoiced in God their Savior. And their joy was shared by "all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." May many of us have a share in that same joy as, by faith, we lovingly gaze upon "the Lord's Christ."

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—282, 889, 281

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.