

CHRIST SEEN AS GOD'S SALVATION

NO. 3177

A SERMON
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“Mine eyes have seen thy salvation.”
Luke 2:30

[Other sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon the same text are
 #1417, “Your salvation” and #2293, Simeon’s Swan Song]

THOUSANDS of times that song of Simeon has been sung by careless, thoughtless persons, but surely it is one of those songs that ought never to come except from believing lips. To make it merely a part of a liturgy, and for shamelessly living men to say, “*Mine eyes have seen thy salvation,*” must be an atrocious sin before God. Let all who have ventured to use such words as these without having thought of their meaning, confess their sin before God, and ask that He would make those words to be true which have hitherto been so frivolously uttered, and that before they close their eyes in death, they *may* see God’s salvation.

I. I shall, first of all, TAKE THE TEXT AS IT DROPS FROM SIMEON’S LIPS and follow his leading.

We will start with Simeon’s main idea. He came into the temple, he saw there a little babe, and he recognized, in that newly-born child, Jesus the promised Savior. And as he took up that Savior into his arms, he said, “*Mine eyes have seen*”—what? “*Thy salvation,*” God’s salvation—not only the worker of the salvation, but the salvation itself.

From which I gather that, wherever we see Jesus, we see God’s salvation, Wherever our eye spiritually lights upon the Christ of God, there we see God’s salvation. Whether in Bethlehem’s manger, or on Calvary’s cross, or on yonder throne of glory from which He shall judge the quick and the dead—wherever we see Him, we see the salvation of God.

Let me then take your thoughts along the history of our Savior for a few moments. Far back into the ages, when as yet this world and sun and moon were not created—when God dwelt alone—then, in the foreknowledge of God, it was apparent that man would sin—that elect men, beloved of God, would fall in the common ruin.

Then came the grand debate, the mighty question to be only solved by the supreme intellect of heaven, “How can sinners be reconciled to God?” and the covenant was made, that ancient covenant of which David sang, “ordered in all things and sure.” Jesus, the second person of the blessed Godhead, entered into covenant with His Father, that, in the fullness of time, He would stand in the sinner’s place and pay the sinner’s debt—that He would head up in Himself as many as the Father gave Him, and become the second and restoring Adam to them, though, through the first and falling Adam, they, with others, had been destroyed.

Then, when the covenant was signed, and the divine parties to that grand transaction struck hands, and ratified the bond, mine eye, as it looks into that vast eternity, and with holy curiosity, desires to scan that council chamber—mine eye perceives God’s salvation in the person of Jesus Christ.

This was all that could have been seen by faith, even after the world had been created and man had fallen, until that day when the fullness of time was come—when Jesus Christ, who had covenanted to save His people, came to perform the work. Oh, the grandeur of that day when angels came in haste to sing that the babe was born in Bethlehem!

Ah, Simeon! What you see there is not merely a babe—a little child hanging upon a woman's breast—it is the Word incarnate, the *Logos*, without whom was not anything made that is made. He that spake, and it was done, lies there. He that said, "Light be," and light was—the Word that was with God when He balanced the clouds and when He fixed the sockets of the universe, even He is there in the person of that child.

The Son of Mary is also the Son of God. And whenever you, beloved, look to God incarnate, and understand that wondrous mystery, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," and men chosen of Him beheld His glory, "the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth"—then, when you see God in human flesh, you see God's salvation.

Follow with the eyes of your love that babe when He had become a man. See Him, in the obedience of thirty years to His reputed father, handling the adze and the hammer in the carpenter's shop of Joseph. "Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself." See Him in the three years of His most blessed ministry. What work was crowded into those years! How did the zeal of God's house eat Him up!

The dew fell upon Him in the night when He kept the sheep of God in the wilderness and on the mountain's brow shepherded them in His midnight prayers. Oftentimes, the sweat fell from Him in that daily service which, as the Servant of servants, He rendered to all His brethren. None toiled as He did—none so arduously, none so perfectly, none so willingly, none with so complete a bending of His whole faculties to His all-absorbing work.

Behold the righteousness of the saints—this work of Christ is making a robe in which the saints shall be arrayed. His active obedience renders unto God a recompense for our breaches of His holy law. In Christ, the actively-obedient, you see God's salvation.

But oh! let your eyes swim with tears as you follow Him from His active to His passive obedience. I stayed midway in a verse just now, "Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself"—as you go on, you read, "and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." There He is in yonder garden among the olives. Do you hear His sighs, His deep-fetched groans?

Do you mark the sweat drops of His blood as they fall upon the earth? He is pleading, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." But it is not possible. Do you see Him hurried away with the felon's kiss still upon His cheek—hurried away by traitorous hands to Caiaphas—hurried to Pilate and Herod, one after the other, scorned and scoffed everywhere?

He, whose visage is bright as the morning when the sun arises, and whose countenance is like Lebanon, comely as the cedars—He it is that they make nothing of, and scout, and scoff at. Into His face, which angels look on with hushed awe, they cast their accursed spittle. They buffet Him and cry, "Hail, King of the Jews." They mock His royalty with a crown of thorns and His priesthood by binding His eyes and saying, "Who is it that smote thee?"

Remember that He who is in this shame is God's salvation. He is made lower than earth's basest menials that He might lift us higher than heaven's brightest seraphs—coming down from where He was in heaven's excellency to all this depth of shame, that out of all our shame He might lift us up to the excellency supernal.

Then, at length, it comes to a climax and the patient sufferer gives His hands to the iron and His feet to the nails. They lift Him up—a felon's death He must die. Without the camp He must suffer. Made sin for us, He cannot be in the congregation. He must be numbered with the transgressors. Behold Him dying in bodily pains not to be readily described!

But bethink you, the worst was this—God, to whom good men look for succor when they die, refused Him help. JEHOVAH, who never did forsake the virtuous, forsook Him, the most virtuous of all. He who is our castle and high tower, our rampart and defense in our extremity, hid as it were, His face from Him—and that bitterest of all cries, which contains in it as much grief as all the shrieks of the damned in hell, went up, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" There He was, the forsaken one. Yet He was God's salvation, for He was—

*“Bearing, that we might never bear,
His Father’s righteous ire;”—*

enduring to be cast away from heaven that we, base as we are, might be enfolded in the divine bosom and loved with the divine affection.

Nor is this all. On the third day, He who on the cross had conquered, rose to claim the victory. Behold Him! He is God’s salvation as He rises from the tomb. Where is your sting, O death? Where is your victory, boastful grave? JEHOVAH Jesus has saved us from death. He has risen from the sepulchre. Behold Him as He ascends! Let not your eyes be too dazzled with the glory. He rides in solemn pomp up to heaven’s gate.

Your ears can even now catch the echoes of that song, “Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.” He that enters there has saved us and has gone to receive gifts for men. His entrance there is the entrance of all His people, for He is their Representative, and takes possession of heaven on their behalf. Being there for us, we are saved. His presence on the throne is the presence of God’s salvation.

If time did not fail me, I would like to pursue the story and point you to Him, looking still like a lamb that has been slain, pleading with His never ceasing, ever-prevalent intercession. I would like to bid your faith anticipate the day when He shall come again, with no sin-offering, but unto salvation, when you and I, seeing Him, shall see God’s salvation—when our bodies shall be perfected, no more to be weak and suffering, but made like His glorious body.

Our brethren that have gone before us, who at this moment sleep in their silent tombs amongst the purple heather, or in the crowded cemetery, or in the chill vault—they also shall hear the sound of His second advent when the herald blast shall bid the world know that the Lord has come and—

*“From beds of dust and silent clay,
To realms of everlasting day,”—*

they shall wing their triumphant way, for Jesus Christ shall be to them, as to us, God’s salvation. That was Simeon’s idea, I think. I have but hammered out his ingot of gold a little, to show you that where Jesus is, there is the salvation of God.

II. And now, in the second place, we shall TAKE SOME LEAVES OUT OF OUR OWN AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

The text says, “*Mine* eyes have seen thy salvation.” Simeon must not be allowed the monopoly of these words. I claim them, “*Mine* eyes have seen thy salvation.” Brethren and sisters, many of you can, in a spiritual sense, use the same language as the Patriarch about to depart uses. You too, can say, “*Mine* eyes have seen thy salvation.” Will you turn over the book of your life awhile as I turn over mine?

Well, we need not read those early pages, the pages of our estate of sin. Drop tears and blot them out. Dear hand of Jesus, stained with blood, wipe down each one of them, and blot them out forever! But what is this first bright page? It is the page where we began to live, *the page that records our spiritual birth*. And I think we shall find written somewhere across it, “This day mine eyes beheld God’s salvation.”

Well do I remember that day. I had looked here and looked there. This was my question—I have offended God, how can He forgive me? It was no use to tell me God was merciful—I had an answer for that, “God is just.” It availed nothing to say, “Sin is little,” I knew better. It was heavy to me—what must it do to Him? The question I wanted to have answered was—How can God in justice pass by my iniquities?

Then did I learn, as in a moment, this sweet story which has been my delight to tell in various forms a thousand times—that Jesus came and said, “I will be the sinner’s Surety. I will stand in his place of curse and ruin, and will bear for him the penalty of pain, for him I will even bear death.” I learned that if I looked to Jesus—just looked, that was all—that if I simply trusted in Jesus, I should be saved. I looked,

and happy day, mine eyes saw God's salvation. That blessed doctrine of substitution, that simple command, "Believe and live"—that was the glass through which my soul looked and saw God's salvation.

But if I remember rightly, a little further on—in my case it was not above a week after I had seen my sin forgiven, I felt myself in another difficulty. *I found I could not do what I would.* My will was now never to sin again, but I did sin. I willed to be holy, but I was not what I would be. I groaned and cried, "Where is salvation from this evil heart of mine, from this corruption of my nature?"

And I remember well going to the same place where I had heard of the Savior, and hearing the minister declare that, if any man felt in himself the evil nature, he was not saved. "Ah!" I thought, "I know better than that." I could not be persuaded of that, for I knew I was saved as I had looked to Christ, but I did find that I was where Paul was when he said, "To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." I seemed then to say to myself "My will is so fickle, how can I hold on? my power is so feeble, how can I stand against sin?"

Ah! and well do I remember the day when I could say in a more emphatic sense than before, "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation." For, as I searched the Word, *I perceived that as many as believed in Christ had eternal life* and eternal life is not a life that lasts a little while—it is what it is said to be—*everlasting life.*

Then I perceived in the Word, that against this everlasting life the old body of sin and death would struggle, but that it was written that the new life was a living and incorruptible seed "which liveth and abideth forever." And I discovered the apostle's words, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

It was a grand discovery when I perceived that the life God had given me could not die any more than God could. That it was a beam from Himself. That He had made me a partaker of that divine nature, since I had escaped the corruption that was in the world through lust. That the Spirit of the Most High was given to the believer to dwell in him and to be with him forever. And that He who began the work had declared that He would carry it on and perfect it unto the day of the appearing of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

When I learned that truth, I felt as if I had not seen God's salvation before. I had seen so little of it the first time—enough to make me leap for joy, it is true—but on the second discovery, I beheld that *He that redeemed me from the guilt of sin would quite as certainly redeem me from the power of sin.* That He that set me on the rock would keep me there. That He that put me on the road to heaven had said about all His servants, "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." That was a glorious discovery!

None of your two penny-halfpenny salvations that some people profess to have, that only last for a day or two, or a few weeks at most, and then depart—in Christ today and out of Christ tomorrow! Christ has pardoned their sin and yet they think He has not given them salvation! But to know that "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance," that He has said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," that "the righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger," that the Word of Christ stands sure, "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hands"—this is to see God's salvation in a broader light. I pray that every hearer who has seen Christ may go on to see more of Christ till he has seen his full security in the person of the Well-beloved.

But further on (and it was with me a long time later), when I had discovered that the Christ who saved me from the guilt was also pledged to save me from the power of sin, then I found afresh that He was God's salvation. I discovered partly through thought and partly through the clear testimony of the written Word, that every soul that believes in Christ, believes in Christ because God made Him believe in Christ—that concerning that soul there was a purpose made by God that that soul should be a believer—and that purpose was made from all eternity, and that purpose once made could never be changed. It was like the mountains of brass which could never be moved.

I say that the salvation of the believer in Christ did not rest on his own will, but on God's will. That the purpose that saved him was not his own purpose, even as it is written, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." Why, I remember that was as good a discovery to me as the very first one that I made. It was almost like another conversion. I had been up to the ankles in the water of life before, but now I was up to the very breast. And what could I say but this,

*"I'm a monument of grace,
A sinner saved by blood.
The streams of love I trace,
Up to the Fountain, God;
And in His sacred bosom see
Eternal thoughts of love to me"?*

Here it is that "mine eyes have seen God's salvation"—seen the source of it, the secret springs of it, the eternity of it, the immutability of it, and the divinity of it. I pray that every burdened child of God may get to see that also. Then will he indeed sing for joy of heart.

Probably, dear brethren, we have not all gone further than that, if so far, but it is a very blessed thing when we are led to see another truth, namely, that *every quickened believer is one with Jesus Christ*. "We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." The Christ in heaven is the same Christ who is here on earth in every one of His saved ones—they are all parts of Him. There is a vital union subsisting between them so that whatever Christ is, they are. They were one with Him of old, they were one in the grave, one when He rose, one when He triumphed o'er His foes, and they are at this day one with Him as—

*"Now in heaven He takes His seat,
While seraphs sing all hell's defeat."*

Every believer is as much one with Christ as the finger is one with the body. If I lost my finger, I should not be a perfect man as to my body. And if Christ lost the meanest member of His body, it would be a part of Christ that would be lost—and Christ would not be a perfect Christ. We are one with Jesus by indissoluble, vital union—and if your soul perceives that, you will clap your hands and say to the Father, "I have indeed seen Your salvation, for now I see that I am in heaven." He "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." We are saved and glorified in Christ Jesus as our Representative and Covenant Head.

Not even yet have I exhausted this theme, and I only pray that you and I may go on to know yet more and more the heights and depths of God's salvation. I was thinking just now before I began to preach that, if ever you and I should be permitted to look down upon the world of misery—if in some future state we should ever gaze into that land of darkness and despair where sinners cast away from God are suffering the due reward of their sins—if our eyes should ever see their agonies and our ears should ever hear their cries of despair, we should, among other things, say, "My God, I never knew before how great Your salvation is, for I also should have been there, but for Your mercy. Until I saw something of what hell is, I could not tell how much I owed You. I could not say that, in its heights and depths, mine eyes had seen Your salvation."

And brethren (to put a better, a more pleasing light upon it)—

*"When I stand before the throne,
Dressed in beauty not my own;"*

when I shall see Him—and see Him I shall, for I can say with Job, "Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." When you and I shall cast our crowns at His feet, when we

shall raise our voices with all the white-robed throng in the everlasting hallelujahs, then we shall say, "My God, my Father, 'Mine eyes have seen thy salvation.'"

III. Time fails me, so I must pass on to spend a few minutes in a third portion of my topic. It is this—THERE ARE SOME HERE WHO HAVE NEVER SEEN GOD'S SALVATION.

The Gospel is hid from them. And if it be hid, it is not hid because we have used hard words to hide it. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid from them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not." Blind sinner, do you desire to see the salvation of God? "Ah!" say you, "If I know my own heart, I do." Why, then, can you not see it, man? It is very plain. Ah! I see, your eyes are sealed up.

The first seal I see on your eyes, like a fixed scale, (and oh, I wish I could take it off for you) is this—you *do not even believe that you need any salvation*. The man who does not believe he needs saving, of course will never see God's salvation. In your heart you say, "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing."

But my poor friend, be persuaded to take God's opinion of you, which is much nearer the truth than yours. You are naked, and blind, and poor, and miserable. You are lost, ruined, and condemned, as it is written, "He that believeth not is condemned already." Is that scale gone?

Now I see another, (I wish that I could take that off, too) and that is, you know you are blind, but *you say*, "I must try and save myself." This is a very thick scale. You will never see while that is on your eyes. Do you not notice how Simeon put it—not, "Mine eyes have seen *my own* salvation," but "Mine eyes have seen *thy* salvation," that is, God's salvation, the Lord's salvation.

Let me tell you, poor man, if ever you are saved, your salvation must be God's in the beginning, God's in the carrying on, and God's in the concluding. No salvation will ever serve your turn but one which is divine from top to bottom. If nature's fingers could nimbly spin a garment that should cover human nakedness, it would be of no avail. All that nature spins, God must unravel before a soul can be clothed in the righteousness of Christ. It is not your doings, man—it is Christ's doings that must save you. Not your tears, but Christ's blood. Not your feelings, not anything in you or from you. Listen you who have an ear to hear it, "Salvation is of the LORD"—from first to last.

If that scale shall come off your eye, I know that you will say, "Now I begin to see enough to know that I cannot see. I have just enough light to discover the darkness I am in. I see that none can save me but God, He must do it—but will He save me? Will He save me?" Lend me your finger, man. Do you see? No, you do not, but there is the hem of Jesu's garment—touch that with your finger and you shall be restored to sight at once.

I mean this. Jesus died to save such as you are—trust Him and you are saved, you are saved completely and at once. A physician who was under some concern of soul, asked his patient, who was a godly man, "Can you explain to me what faith is?" "Yes," said his godly patient, "I can let you see it very soon if God will let you see it. It is like this—I am very ill, I cannot help myself, I do not attempt to do it, I have confidence in you, I put myself into your care, I take what medicine you send me—I do what you bid me. That is faith. You must trust yourself in the hands of Christ like that." That is it. When you, my dear friend, wholly and entirely trust yourself in the hands of Christ—then your eyes have seen God's salvation.

I have no time for more. I wish I had. But I want to say this final word to everyone who has seen God's salvation. Perhaps one of you is poor. Well, go home tonight saying, "I am poor, but mine eyes have seen thy salvation." One of you perchance is in suffering. Then say, "I feel ill. Never mind, mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

And perhaps there are some warnings and intimations that make another of you think you will soon be called to die. Consumption is undermining your constitution—never mind, don't fret—your eyes have seen God's salvation. How much better to die in an attic or in a ditch, and see God's salvation, than be carried in the most pompous manner to your grave a soul that knows nothing of God and of the Savior.

O you that are much tried and much troubled, bear up, bear up, your sorrow will not last much longer! When you and I get to heaven, as I trust we shall, as I *know* we shall if we are resting on the atonement of Christ, these troubles by the way will only be matter for us to talk of, and to say to one another, "How graciously the Lord has upheld us in His providence, and how wonderfully He has brought us through every trial! Even in my poverty, mine eyes saw His salvation. In my sickness and in my death, I did but see it all the more clearly because of the clouds and darkness that were round about me!"

God bless you, dear friends! I earnestly pray that you may all see God's salvation. May He hear the prayer, for Christ's sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

LUKE 2:1-40

Verses 1-9. *And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.*

These men were probably poor and illiterate, but that did not hinder God from revealing Himself to them, nor prevent the coming of His Son to them. They were engaged in their ordinary calling, "keeping watch over their flock by night," when this great blessing came to them. Seldom does such a blessing as this come to idlers. It was not while they were gadding abroad and wasting their time, but while they kept watch over their flocks that "the angel of the Lord came upon them."

First one angel led the way and then a multitude of the heavenly host followed, and these poor men, perhaps troubled with the common superstition of the Jews that the appearance of God, or any supernatural visitation, would always be followed by death, "were sore afraid."

10-11. *And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*

The anointed Savior has full power to save, for He "is Christ the Lord" and therefore He is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.

12. *And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.* [See sermons #1026, Joy Born at Bethlehem and #1330, The Great Birthday]

Not in marble halls, wrapped in purple and fine linen, and welcomed by the great and mighty of earth. Nay, this greatest of all princes is born amid the poverty of our ordinary manhood. He is One chosen out of the people, the people's Savior—and a manger receives the people's King.

13. *And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God,*

They could not stay behind. The news spread through heaven that an angel had gone to announce the birth of Christ, and the others flew through the pearly gates, and hastened to overtake the herald—and reached him just as he had concluded his message, "Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host." These cohorts of the Lord came riding post haste, *Praising God,*

13-17. *And saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another,*

Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

Good news is not to be kept to ourselves. When we have ascertained its truth we are to tell it to others, and we are especially to tell the goodness of salvation. Tell it, O you who know it in your own hearts by blessed experience! Tell it, though it will sometimes be with broken accents in the feebleness of your flesh, yet even then tell it in the ardor of your heart's affection and God will bless your testimony—and others will learn the good news through you.

18-19. *And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them—*

Weighed them, estimated them at their right value,

19. *In her heart.*

The best of coffers to lay up anything in is the heart. Happy are those who, like Mary, store up the things of Christ, not in their brain, though that would make them orthodox—but in their heart—for that will bring them salvation.

20-24. *And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them. 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. 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; (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.*

Our Savior put Himself under the law for our sakes and in every jot and tittle He observed it. So we are delivered from its dominion, for if Christ has fulfilled the law on our account, it has no more claim upon us. “Ye are not under the law, but under grace.”

25. *And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; [See sermon #659, Simeon] and the same man was just and devout,*

This combination makes up a complete character, “just” towards man, “devout” towards God. There are many who think they are just, but their justness does not extend to their fellow creatures, and they forget the claims of the Most High upon them. On the other hand, I have known men who have pretended to a vast amount of devotion, but who have never been just. Such persons are hypocrites, as the others are robbers of God. But he who is just and devout—just towards man and devout towards God—has the character of a true man. Such was Simeon, “just and devout,”

25-29. *Waiting for the consolation of Israel: 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. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: 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, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:*

You see, dear friends, he was not afraid to die, and he knew that he could not die until he had seen the Messiah. Some of us, if we had a revelation that, on the occurrence of a certain event, we would die, might be filled with alarm or anxiety. But it is not so with holy Simeon—he rather longs to depart in peace. He looks upon the coming of “the Lord's Christ” with great joy because now he knows the battle of life for him will soon be over and that he will enter into his victory.

30-34. *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. And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. 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; [See sermon #907, Christ—The Rise and Fall of Many]*

There were many who fell through their offenses against Jesus, but blessed be His name, there are still many who rise through Him, rise first to newness of life on earth and afterwards to resurrection life in glory. Jesus is set for both—He must be to one the savor of death unto death, and to another He must be the savor of life unto life.

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

How true has this been! The cross has been to many a stumbling block, and to the worldly wise it has been foolishness. And so will it be to the world's end.

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

Great privileges often involve great troubles. Mary was highly favored and truly blessed among women, yet no woman ever had greater sorrow than she had.

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

Christ's death revealed the thoughts of many hearts. It revealed the thoughts in the heart of Pilate, that he loved popularity better than the truth. It revealed the thought in the heart of Judas, that he loved gold better than he loved his Master. It revealed the thought in the heart of Caiaphas, that he would keep to old customs rather than to the right. It revealed the thought in the hearts of the disciples, and showed what poor timid, trembling hearts they had. Peter's impulsive spirit, too, was revealed in all its weakness by the death of the Savior.

The cross is the great touchstone. Wherever it goes, it tests and tries us—even as the crucible tries the metal that is put into it—and lets us know what manner of men we are. Do you love Christ? Do you glory in His cross? Then it is well with you. But do you despise the cross? Do you set up your own righteousness in opposition to it? Are you depending upon anything beside Jesus Christ and Him crucified? Then His cross reveals you to be self-righteous and dead in trespasses and sins.

Our Savior was not only to be received by men, but He was to be welcomed by women also, so now we read—

36-40. *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 fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.*

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.

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