

bursting forth from them to irradiate mankind. For his sake the nation was called into existence; the hope of his coming was the inspiration of its patriots and prophets; and the whole world now looks for salvation to One who was born of the tribe of Judah and the house of David.

II. SIMEON'S PROPHECY. 33. Joseph (R. V.)—"His father," see on verse 27. Christ did not give him this name, see vs. 49. **Marvelled**—Every new incident increases their astonishment. They did not clearly understand what kind of a Saviour Jesus was to be and Simeon's words perplex them still more. In him they hear the ancient prophets speak.

34. Blessed them—Invoked God's blessing upon them. He addresses his words to Mary whose peculiar relation to the Child he knows by inspiration. He is speaking "in the Spirit." **Is set**—lit. "lies" "is appointed." The same word is used in Phil. 1: 17; 1 Thess. 3: 3, "appointed." **The falling (R. V.)**—The reference here is to two classes of persons, one of whom should reject Christ to their destruction and the other receive him to their spiritual exaltation. Isa. 8: 14, 15; 28: 16; Matt. 21: 44; 1 Cor. 1: 23, 24; 2 Cor. 2: 16; 1 Pet. 2: 7, 8. If we take the words as referring to the same persons, they mean that those who are humbled for sin will rise again through the pardon he offers. (Luke 14: 11.) **A sign**—A divine token. **Spoken against**—The opposition to Christ culminated in the crucifixion, and the offence of the cross is not yet ceased. Acts 24: 5, 14; 28: 22; 1 Pet. 2: 12; 4: 14.

35. A sword shall pierce—The common view of this clause is the simplest and most natural. Mary would experience the bitter sorrow of witnessing her Son's rejection. The words of Simeon found their fulfillment when she saw him on the cross (John 19: 25.) Others, who understand the previous verse as referring to but one class of persons, say, "the sharp pangs of sorrow for sin must pierce her heart also." (Alford.) Others say that it refers to the martyr death of Mary, or to doubts regarding his messiahship which would trouble her. But on the whole we prefer the old view. "He gives the name 'sword' to that most piercing and bitter pang, which went through the heart of Mary, when her son was nailed to the cross." (Euthymius Zigabenus.) Painters and poets have rightly named her, as she gazes in anguish on her crucified Son and Saviour, "Mater dolorosa," "mother most sorrowful." **That the thoughts**—This was God's purpose when he "set" or appointed Christ. "What think ye of Christ?" Is the test question for everyone. He brings out all the best in the hearts of those that receive him, and the evil in the hearts of evil men shews itself when he is offered to them. Read John 9: 39; 3: 19; 1 Cor. 1: 23; 2 Cor. 2: 15, 16. Neutrality with regard to Christ is impossible, Luke 11: 23.

III. ANNA'S TESTIMONY. 36. Anna—Same as Hannah. **Phanuel**—Same as Penuel, Gen. 32: 30. **Asher**—This was one of the tribes carried away by Shalmanezzer, (2 Kings 17: 6.) Many of these returned at the close of the captivity when the tribal distinctions were obliterated and the nation became consolidated. Isa. 11: 13; Ezek. 37: 22; Ezra 6: 17. **A prophetess**—She was known to be such by previous utterances "in the Spirit." Compare Ex. 15: 20; Acts 21: 9.

37. Fourscore years—The exact age of Anna is not a matter of much consequence. Either she was eighty-four years old, or she had been a widow eighty-four years. Constancy in widowhood was very highly honored in the East. Compare 1 Tim. 5: 3, 5, 9. How often Queen Victoria is praised for cherishing so sacredly the memory of Prince Albert. **Night and day**—Women were not permitted to reside in the temple, but she lodged near it, and spent her whole time in the duties of religion. Night is mentioned first to "make the fervency of her pious temple service the more prominent." (Meyer.) Acts 26: 7; 1 Tim. 5: 5.

38. Coming up at that very hour (R. V.)—It is implied that she came suddenly and unexpectedly, while they were still wondering at Simeon's words. **Likewise gave thanks**—The words suggest responsive singing. She took up the theme of Simeon's song, but the words are not given. **To the Lord**—R. V. "To God," both mean the same, "Lord" stands for "Jehovah." **Spake of him**—Of whom? It is not necessary to say. **Looked for redemption**—The news does not seem to have made a lasting impression. Perhaps these were but obscure persons like the disciples afterwards, or their prejudices may have quenched their faith and zeal, or the departure into Egypt and subsequent residence of the family in a distant Galilean village may have dissipated the impression made. When Herod made his enquiries of the priests and scribes they do not seem to have been aware of these incidents, or they were purposely silent regarding them. **Redemption in Jerusalem**—R. V. "The redemption of Jerusalem." It is more likely that the expectations of pious Jews took this form.