

heard, lamentations and weeping, and great mourning; Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." Jer. xxxi. 15; Matt. ii. 18. These words were spoken about 620 years before they were fulfilled, so that we learn how certain is that text—"Every word of God is true."

Something else had happened that we should bear in mind. When Mary and Joseph went up to Jerusalem to do for Jesus after the manner of the law, an old man had uttered some strange words about the greatness of Jesus. It was old Simeon, a good man, just and devout, to whom a promise had been given that he should not close his eyes in death till he had seen the Lord's Christ. But, when he looked on Jesus, and knew that He in truth was the Saviour of the world, he took him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen the salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people, to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of thy people Israel." But with these words of comfort, there came a sad foreboding of a future ill: to the young mother Simeon spoke, and while he blessed her, said, "Behold this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." Luke ii. 29—35.

There was a widow in the temple at that same time, eighty-four years old, and she gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spoke of Jesus unto all the Godly in Jerusalem. All this meant something: God did not send angels from heaven—God did not send the shining star to move across the sky—God did not let the old man Simeon and the good widow utter these strong words for nothing; he had sent Jesus into the world for a great and solemn purpose, and this was why the angels sang, and the bright star shone.

And for twelve years the history is almost silent—for twelve long years of summer's heat and winter's cold, this is all we know of Jesus—"the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him." Surely this is all we need to know.

Now among the Jews there were certain great festivals; days of rejoicing, in memory of some great event. On the sabbath they rested from their work, and no business was carried on; for they remembered that "in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day." Then there was the feast of Purim, in memory of the Jews being saved from the cruelty of wicked Haman; Esther ix. 20—32. The feast of the dedication; John x. 22. The feast of tabernacles, when the people dwelt in tents made of the branches of trees, in memory of their fathers wandering in the wilderness. There were many other feast days—the feast of trumpets, and the feast of Pentecost; but perhaps the greatest of all was the feast of the passover; this feast reminded them of the kindness of God in sparing their fathers on the night when he slew the first-born in Egypt. Exod. xii. 14.

Every year, at this feast of the passover, Mary and Joseph went up to Jerusalem. It was a solemn time, a holy service; every door was marked with blood—every family was to eat unleavened bread, with the roasted flesh of the paschal lamb, and bitter herbs. What could make Jesus, a child but twelve years old, be with his mother and Joseph at Jerusalem? He loved God's house, he loved God's people, he loved God's services, and this was why he went.

Nazareth is about seventy miles from Jerusalem, so that they had a long and weary way to go; but we do not mind the distance when we expect to meet with pleasure in the end; and so it was with them; many groups would join them upon the road, many friendly greetings, and friendly faces,