

Forty days after his birth, the law required the performance of two ceremonies. (1) *For the mother.* In order to embody in religious act the truth expressed in Ps. 51: 5 and Eph. 2: 3, every Hebrew mother was required to present a lamb for a burnt offering, and a pigeon or a turtle dove for a sin offering. If too poor to give a lamb, a pigeon or a turtle dove might be substituted for it. That Mary availed herself of this provision shews the humble circumstances of the family. (2) *For the child.* Being a first-born son he was claimed for the Lord in memory of Egypt (Ex. 13: 2.) The ransom price was five shekels, about \$2.75: (Num. 18: 15, 16.)

In the festivals of the Christian year, "The Purification of the Virgin Mary" falls on Feb. 2nd and was formerly called "Candlemas" from the Romish custom of consecrating on that day all the candles that were to be used in the church during the year. The lighted candle was symbolic of Christ, "the light of the world."

LESSON PLAN. I. Simeon's Song. vs. 25-32. Simeon's Prophecy. vs. 33-35. III. Anna's Testimony. vs. 36-38.

**I. SIMEON'S SONG. 25. A man in Jerusalem**—The words do not suggest that he was famous, although, since they were written for gentiles, they may merely denote that the readers were not expected to be aware of his Jewish reputation. Even Gamaliel is called "one" "a pharisee." (Acts 5: 34.) **Simeon**—Same name as "Simon." Some suppose that he was the son of Hillel, and the father of Gamaliel. (Acts 22: 3.) His sayings are never quoted by the rabbis, as are those of less famous men. Perhaps they bore testimony to Jesus as the Messiah. **Just**—R. V. "righteous." A man of blameless life. **Devout**—Conscientious in the performance of his religious duties. Micah 6: 8. **Waiting for**—With expectancy, as others also were (Mark 15: 43.) **The consolation**—Compare Acts 28: 20. The same word is applied to the Holy Spirit, "the Paraclete," "comforter" (John 14: 16; 15: 26, and to Christ in 1 John 2: 1 "advocate." This was a common name among the Jews for the Messiah, and is based upon such passages as Isa. 40: 1; 49: 13.

**26. It has been revealed (R. V.)**—i. e. supernaturally, as to an inspired prophet. Compare David's inspiration Matt. 22: 43. The word means first "to do business with," then "to answer after deliberation," then "to give response as an oracle." It is translated "spake" in Heb. 12: 25; Moses uttered the divine responses, etc. **See death**—But "see Jesus" first. Compare "taste death" in Matt. 16: 28; Heb. 11: 9, experience death as the event dreaded by all men. Contrast Phil. 1: 23; 2 Cor. 5: 8. **The Lord's Christ**—"Jehovah's Messiah" or "Anointed One." There were many false Messiahs at that time but Simeon expected that the true one would be pointed out to him, as he was afterwards to John the Baptist, John 1: 33.

**27. He came in the Spirit (R. V.)**—He was under the influence of the Holy Spirit and divinely prompted to go into the temple just at that moment to receive the fulfilment of the promise given to him. While in this spiritual state his words were inspired. Compare Rev. 1: 10; Matt. 4: 1. **Parents**—This was the light in which they would be regarded by the priests before whom they appeared. Joseph was the legal father of Jesus. **The custom of the law**—See Introduction.

**28. There is no evidence that Simeon was a priest.** He suggests rather the prophetic office. This episode is most naturally imagined as distinct from the ceremony before the priest, and immediately on the entrance of the child. See Mal. 3: 1.

**29. Lord**—R. V. marg. "master." **Depart**—lit. "now loosest thou." He speaks like a servant who has been in attendance and is now dismissed with his reward. The natural inference from the whole narrative is that Simeon was a very aged man whose life had been prolonged that he might have the happiness of beholding the Christ. He now expects that his long vigil is ended, but he may have lived for some time longer. Compare Gen. 46: 30. From the first two words in the Latin version this song is called the *Nunc Dimittis*.

**30. Salvation**—Not "Saviour," but the means by which salvation is to be accomplished. His mind is full of the glorious results to be obtained. The same idea occurs in Luke 3: 6; Acts 28: 28; Isa. 52: 10; Acts 4: 12.

**31. Before the face of all people (R. V.)**—Not the Jews only, but all mankind, are invited to behold and receive Christ.

**32. A light for revelation to the gentiles (R. V.)**—Isa. 46: 2; 49: 6; 9: 2; Acts 13: 47. The heathen are represented as sitting under a thick cloud which envelopes them in darkness (Isa. 25: 7.) The light of the gospel dispels the darkness of ignorance and sin. Christ is the "glory" of Israel, the culmination of their history, the veiled "hechinhah" now