

know that his work on earth is finished, and he will go joyfully to his rest.

But now let us turn to the event itself, which was to old Simeon the signal of his release. It was the appearance of "the Lord's Christ," or Messiah. But observe, Simeon's thoughts about that Coming One so long promised were not like the thoughts of many others at that day. The notion of most people was of a warrior-king who should drive out the Romans and "restore again the kingdom to Israel." Others were looking for a great Rabbi; the Samaritan woman, for instance, who said, "I know that Messias cometh; when he is come he shall tell us all things." What Simeon desired and expected we can gather from two interesting expressions. He is represented "as waiting for the consolation of Israel," and his own word is, "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation." It will be a useful thing to base the chief teaching of this lesson on these two terms.

1. *Consolation.* In what sense was Messiah to be the Consolation of Israel? And is there any sense in which he can be our Consolation?

What does the word mean? To answer this question, let me suggest an illustration. A timid and retiring boy goes to a new school. His more boisterous comrades quickly make him the butt of their practical jokes, and torment him with the peculiar mercilessness we only see in school-boys, (at least we see it in English school-boys.) But one kind-hearted elder boy takes his part. He makes friends with him, cheers him up, protects him, teaches him to stand up for himself, helps him in a thousand little ways. Now this illustrates exactly what is meant by the "consolation" or "comfort" of the New Testament. It is not merely what the word "comfort" means to us. The kind protector at school is indeed a great comfort to our poor young friend, but why? Not because of his soothing words and friendly manner only, but because also of his active help. "I like Brown," writes the youngster to his mother or sister; "he takes my part." Taking our part—this familiar phrase just expresses the scope of that Greek word which in the Gospel of John is translated Comforter, and in the Epistle of John, Advocate; and the noun "consolation" is closely connected with it. Our English word "comfort" originally had more of this meaning. Thus, in Wycliffe's version of Isa. 41. 7 we read, "And he countforteth him with nailes that it should not be moved," where our version has "fastened." And so in Phil. 4. 13, "Christ that strengtheth me" is in Wycliffe, "that countforteth me."

The "Consolation of Israel." One to take the part of God's people, to be on their side,

to care for them, pity them, comfort them, strengthen them, help them, plead their cause, be identified with them as their Advocate—that is what Simeon was waiting for; that is what Christ came to be; that is what he will be to us if we will only accept his advocacy and companionship.

2. *Salvation.* This, too, here, does not stand for what Christ brings, but for Christ himself. It is a stronger word in the Greek than the usual one, and denotes the agency by which salvation is procured. "Mine eyes," said Simeon, "have seen thy salvation," that is, the very Saviour himself, in the person of the little infant in Mary's arms.

What is the difference between Salvation and Consolation? To revert to my illustration, the school-boy knows well the difference in his own case. His friend may take his part bravely, but he may not be able to save him entirely from his tormentors. An Advocate seeks to save, but even if he falls, his help is still valued. Better suffer with a sympathizer than without one. But a Saviour saves. Christ is a successful Advocate; and therefore he is a Saviour too.

Let the question be pressed home, Is he your Saviour? What from? From the condemnation of sin now, at once—by his atoning death. From the power of sin we go on in life—by his indwelling Spirit. From the presence of sin—when he takes us one day to himself. Simeon rejoiced to see him in his humiliation; shall we rejoice to see him in his glory?

BEREAN METHODS.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Sketch the character of Simeon: (1) A righteous man; (2) A devout worshipper; (3) Endowed with the Spirit; (4) Waiting for the Saviour.... A word-picture of the meeting in the temple.... The offering, why, and what?... Explain "Consolation of Israel;" "Holy Ghost upon him;" "Custom of the law;" "Fall and rising again," etc., etc.... Present the view of Christ as given in this lesson.... What are our privileges as compared with Simeon?

References. FOSTER'S PROSE. Vol. I. 2098, 662, 720, 5157. Vol. II. 7181, 7197. POETICAL: 1207, 2037. FREEMAN: The "Consolation," 752.

Primary and Intermediate.

BY M. V. M.

REVIEW on names of Jesus given thus far, briefly explaining each, and dwelling especially on Peace and Good-will as being the Father's thought toward us, which he sent Jesus to reveal.

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