

3. It was seen as a present salvation, not, as seen by the prophets of old, a future salvation. v. 30.

4. It was seen as a universal salvation, for all people. v. 31. 32.

5. It was seen as a strange and mysterious salvation, causing some to fall and others to rise. v. 34.

6. It was seen as a salvation bringing sorrow as well as rejoicing. v. 35.

CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

6. What doth your baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, oblige you to do?

My baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, obliges me first to renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh; secondly, that I should believe all the articles of the Christian faith; and, thirdly, that I should keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of my life.

ENGLISH TEACHER'S NOTES.

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In old romances it is not uncommon for the story to turn upon the hero's fate being dependent on the occurrence of some strange event. Some venerable bard or astrologer has foretold that his life is safe until a certain very unlikely thing happens. And at the crisis of the story that unlikely thing does happen, and the hero meets his irrevocable doom. All my readers will remember Macbeth, for instance, who, the witches said, might rest secure "till Birnam Wood should come to Dunsinane," and whose defeat and death were heralded by what seemed to be the wood of Birnam Hill marching toward him.

Now, of course, in all these cases we find every hope and effort concentrated upon avoiding and averting the catastrophe as long as possible. And is not this natural? Let me suppose, for illustration's sake, that to one of us now a message came from heaven, telling us that we should not die till—say, till a certain person came from the other side of the globe. How fervently we should hope that he would not come just yet? Anything to prolong life; anything to defer death! It is true that a fretful person will sometimes utter the thoughtless words, "I wish I were dead!" But if at that moment a naked sword were pointed at his breast, he would run away far enough.

How was it with old Simeon? He really did have a supernatural intimation regarding his destiny. And it was no mere augury of an astrologer. It was a divine word. "It was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ." What effect had this revelation upon him? As year after

year passed away, and his strength grew feeble, and his step more uncertain, was he getting more and more nervous and anxious lest one day he should hear the rallying cry, Messiah has come? And at last when he saw the humble carpenter bringing his young wife and her new-born child, with the lowly offering of their poverty, (ver. 24; see Lev. 12. 8.) and when the Divine Revealer pointed out to him that helpless infant as "the Lord's Christ," did his heart fail him, and his cheek blanch, and his tongue refuse to speak, from terror at the long-dreaded hour having arrived?

Surely it is an impressive scene from this point of view. "Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God." And why did he bless God? Because Messiah had appeared at last? Certainly, but with this joy for his nation's sake, he might have had nothing more than a kind of resigned submission on his own account. Yes, he might say, it is a grand thing that the Christ has come; and as for me, well, I must try and not murmur; God has been good to me in letting me live so long. But it was not so at all. He rejoiced to see the Child, not only for what he was to do and to be for Jew and Gentile, but also because his appearing was the signal for his own release. "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

The words themselves are remarkable. The word rendered "Lord" is not the usual one, *Kyris*. It rather means "master." Nor is it one of the words usually found where Christ is called "Master," meaning teacher, or superintendent. It is *Despota*, and expresses the relationship of master and slave. "Servant," too, is literally "slave." Simeon speaks as one in bond-service, who after long waiting is receiving his manumission, and is in sight of freedom. "Master," he says, joyfully, "now at length art thou releasing thy slave."

Now we do not wish to encourage false sentiment in this matter. We do not desire the careless phrase, "I wish I were dead," to become a true utterance in any one's mouth. There is a popular hymn of Faber's which was much sung, (for the sake of its swinging tune,) a few years ago, and you might hear a large congregation lustily shouting out, "O Paradise! O Paradise! Wherefore doth death delay?" Nothing could be more painfully unreal. At the same time, I think the foregoing line of illustration and contrast may usefully be employed in this lesson to show how happily a godly man can meet death. He will take care of the life and health God has given him, and thank God for them; and yet, whenever the summons does come, he will