

For the Sabbath School.

International S. S. Lesson.

LESSON II.—JULY 8.—LUKE II., 25-38.

(Presentation in the Temple.)

GOLDEN TEXT. "A light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel." Luke ii: 32.

OUTLINE OF LESSON.—(1) The birth of Jesus. (2) The Angels' song. (3) The presentation in the temple. (4) Simeon's hymn of praise, the *Nunc Dimittis*. (5) The wise men from the East.EXPLANATORY.—THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE.—Vs. 21-24. When Jesus was forty days old the Holy Family went up from Bethlehem to perform two ceremonies required by the Jewish law. The first was that of the ceremonial purification of Mary, described in Leviticus xii. For this, two offerings were required,—a lamb for a *burnt offering*, and a turtle dove or young pigeon for a *sin offering*. But any poor person might substitute another turtle dove or young pigeon for the lamb, as we see that Mary did (Luke ii: 24). This was distinctly called "the poor's offering" (Talmud), and shows the moderate circumstances of the family. A lamb was worth 75 cents (or the wages of five ordinary days' work), while a turtle dove was worth about eight cents, and sometimes was as low as two cents.The other ceremony was The Redemption of the First-born, commonly in case of Jesus called the *Presentation in the Temple*, because in his case the ceremony was performed in the temple, though this was not necessary.

Every first-born male child, like the first fruits of the farm, was consecrated to God, belonged to Him, because the first-born of the children of Israel had been preserved from the destroyer who slew the first-born of all the Egyptians (Ex. xiii: 2, 13-15). The oldest sons would naturally become the priests and religious teachers of the people. But God afterwards chose the whole tribe of Levi for these services instead of the first-born (Num. iii: 12, 13). In recognition of this, the first-born son was consecrated to God, and redeemed to the family by the payment of five shekels (\$2.75.)

Consecration of children. Parents should in their hearts and purpose, consecrate their children to God from their birth. For they are the gift of God's love. In them are vast possibilities for good or for evil for themselves or for others, for time and for eternity. We shall best care for the child if we devote him to Christ and His Church (as the Puritans dedicated their college *Christo et Ecclesie*).THE PICTURE OF AN AGED SAINT.—Vs. 25-28. And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon. (The same as *Simon*.) Nothing is known of this aged saint, except what is here revealed; but his present holy state must have been the ripened fruit of long years of true living, and of communion with God.He was a man of spiritual insight. And it was (had been) revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost. In what way we do not know; but the Holy Spirit illumines the mind, purifies the conscience, gives clearer vision of old truths as well as reveals new truth. The Spirit's presence in the soul is like the full daylight after the dimness of twilight. That he should not see death: *i.e.*, should not die; for the only way to see death is by experience. Before he had seen the Lord's Christ: *i.e.*, the Lord's Anointed; "the Messiah whom Jehovah gives and sends."

THE AGED SAINT'S BENEDICTION.—Vs. 34, 35. And Simeon blessed them. Pronounced a blessing upon them.

This child is set for a fall and rising again, or rising up. If the fall and rising refer to the same persons, then the fall is that of consciousness of sin, a feeling of need, of helplessness, a low estimate of one's goodness; and the rising again is into newness of life, into divine favor, into higher hopes, into the family of God.

If the reference is to different persons, "Christ brought downfall to the hopes of those who expected a

temporal prince and a political millennium, and ruin to those whose desire for the kingdom of God was really a personal ambition for place and power in it, as the Pharisees, and notably Judas Iscariot among His own disciples. He brought rising again to those who were willing that God should overthrow their plans and ambitions, and accepted from Him the grander gift of a universal kingdom, prepared for all peoples."

And for a sign. The word translated *sign* is one of the names applied to a miracle, pointing to its design as an evidence, a divine token (chap. xxiii: 8; John iv: 48).

Jesus was a sign of God's love, of God's power, of the new era of righteousness, of the fulfilment of God's promises, of the strong feeling of God against sin, of the only way of salvation. This sign is a great blessing, even though some speak against it. Which shall be spoken against. Jesus was spoken against by the Jews, for His life and example reproved them, his teachings overturned their selfish and ungodly plans and customs, and built up a kingdom which would leave them out unless they repented.

THE BLESSING OF A MOTHER IN ISRAEL.—Vs. 36-38. Christ has had so much to do with the blessing and amelioration of the lot of women, that is eminently fitting that a woman should give her benediction with that of a man.

Anna, the same name as Hannah. A prophetess, one who holds communion with God and speaks forth what He gives her to say. Phanuel, same as Peniel. Aser, same as Asher.

A widow of about fourscore and four years. This is either her age or the time of her widowhood, in which case her age would be over a hundred years.

Gave thanks. Showing that by faith she saw who Jesus was.

Christian Endeavor.

Daily Readings.

First Day.—He gives the new birth.—John iii: 1-8.

Second Day.—He comforts us.—John xiv: 15-21.

Third Day.—He opens blind eyes.—Acts ix: 10-18.

Fourth Day.—He gives power.—Zech. iv: 1-10.

Fifth Day.—He helps our infirmities.—Rom. vii: 22-28.

Sixth Day.—He comes freely.—Acts viii: 17-24.

Seventh Day.—HOW ARE MEN HELPED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT?—John xvi: 7-14.

CONVENTION PRAYER MEETING, July 8.—This is the last prayer meeting before the great Cleveland gathering, and should be devoted to the consideration of the purpose and possibilities of the convention, and prayer for blessing upon it. Our topic may be well turned to account by dwelling upon the absolute need of the presence of the Holy Spirit in order that undoubted dangers may be avoided, and success reached that will be to the glory of God. Let the 13-14 verses of our topic passage be the motto of all attending, and there will indeed be showers of blessing.

BRIEFLY PUT:—Consider a Spiritual convention, Acts ii: 1-14, iv: 31-37. Don't go to Cleveland without the Holy Ghost, Ex. xxxiii: 14, 15. Go looking for Christ, not for good speakers; filled with spiritual joy, not merely soulless enthusiasm.

Vacation Pointers.

Don't go where you can't take Christ.

Don't leave your Bible and Christian Endeavor Pledge at home.

Don't wear your Christian Endeavor pin always on the coat that hangs in the cupboard.

Don't cease Christian Endeavor because it's hot; the Devil likes heat.

Don't go home again without leaving the sweet savor of Christian Endeavor behind you.

Don't neglect a chance to form a Y.P.S.C.E. if there is none where you happen to be.