

remarkable, as we know of no man at this time as a prophet in Israel.

"In times of spiritual degeneracy," writes Godet, "when an official clergy no longer cultivates any thing but the form of religion, its spirit retires among the obscure members of the religious community, and creates for itself unofficial organs, often from the lowest classes. Simeon and Anna are representatives of this spontaneous priesthood."

Anna presents in several respects a contrast to Simeon. The latter came into the temple impelled by the Spirit. *Anna lives there.* Simeon has no desire but to die. Anna seems to recover the vigour of youth to celebrate the advent of Messiah.

She lives only for the service of God; to the outer world she is dead. Her real life is in speaking continually of the Christ.

"The Pharisees expected an outward triumph from the Messiah. Sadducees expected nothing. Between them were the faithful who expected the consolation of Israel. It was these last who were represented by Anna and Simeon; and it was among these that Anna devoted herself to the work of an evangelist.

She is by no means the least interesting figure in the New Testament Scriptures. She is mentioned as one well-known in all the details of her history; the wife of Phanuel and of the tribe of Asher, one of the tribes carried into exile by Shalmaneser, seven hundred and twenty years before.

The house of God was her home, and the service of God the business of her life. Jewish writers were of opinion that she was employed in the temple in trimming the lamps and such minor services while she was waiting for Him who is the light of the world.

She was a Galilean, and as a patriotic and devout woman must have passed through years of pain and sorrow for her country. She had lived through the long, sad period of war, conquest, and oppression which made such havoc of her country. She must have remembered the fatal struggle between the Asmonæan brothers, Aristobulus and Hyrcanus, which had brought all the misery of her people in its train. She had seen the legions of Pompey, when, after viewing the sacred city from the ridge of Olivet on the east, they swept round the city to encamp on the level ground on the western side. The rise of

Herod was a recollection of her middle life, and its dreadful story of war, murder, and crime must have sunk into her heart.

Without mentioning here the other women of Luke's Gospel, we may turn to the woman of Samaria mentioned by John.

She was not a prophetess, but she was a very successful preacher. She received such a disclosure of the Messiahship of Jesus as none other had received.

It was to a woman Christ unveiled his greatness in the marvellous. "I that speak unto thee am He." And it was a woman who could believe that the way-worn, travel-stained stranger, was indeed the long-expected Messiah. He could see into her soul, read her whole heart, and understand that she was worthy of so much honour. All real faith is of the heart; with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, or, in other words, religion is an affection of the soul.

This Samaritan woman has been transformed into a minister of Jesus Christ.

"She went her way into the city and saith to the men, come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did, is not this the Christ?" Filling this woman's soul with light and life was for the Master "the meat" which the disciples in their narrow materialism "knew not of."

Already her mission has borne fruit. The fields are white unto the harvest. It was then as it is now, "one soweth and another reapeth." "I have sent ye to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour; other men laboured and ye are entered into their labour."

The Lord had sown the good seed in a woman's heart. She had sown broadcast the wonderful truth she had received, and the fields are white unto harvest. The disciples "marvelled that Jesus talked with the woman;" but the Master was about His Father's business. It was His meat to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to finish His work. "Many of the Samaritans of that city," we are told, "believed on Him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all things that ever I did,"

A veil hangs over the two days our Lord remained with them. Was He this woman's guest? Did she, like another woman, sit at His feet learning with wrapt joyfulness from His lips? What more did He teach them.