

THE Teachers' Preparation Leaflet

LESSON 2.

JUNE 8th, 1894.

3rd QUARTER.

Presentation in the Temple. Luke 2: 25-38.

GOLDEN TEXT: "A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." Luke 2: 32.

COMMIT TO MEMORY verses 27-32. **CHILDREN'S HYMNAL**, 30, 19, 31, 61.

PROVE THAT—God answers prayer. Matt. 21: 22.

SHORTER CATECHISM—Quest. 83. Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous?

DAILY PORTIONS.

(The Selections of the International Bible Reading Association.)

MONDAY.	TUESDAY.	WEDNESDAY.	THURSDAY.	FRIDAY.	SATURDAY.	SABBATH.
Luke 2: 25-38	John 8: 16-21	Isa. 49: 5-12	1 Pet. 2: 1-10	Heb. 12: 1-6	John 10: 25-30	Isa. 42: 1-8

Five Minutes Opening Drill. Who Wrote the Gospels?

MATTHEW or Levi, son of Alphaeus. A publican, or collector of Roman taxes. One of the Twelve.

MARY, the Roman surname of John, cousin of Barnabas. Lived at Jerusalem. Mother's name was Mary. Supposed to have been the young man who fled naked when our Lord was betrayed. Accompanied Peter in his travels.

LUKE. A native of Antioch, a gentile (Col. 4: 11, 14.) A physician. A close companion of Paul. Wrote also the *Acts*.

JOHN. Brother of James and son of Zebedee. A fisherman of Bethsaida on the sea of Galilee. Was probably the youngest of the Twelve, and outlived all the others. Wrote also three Epistles and the *Revelation*.

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—The circumcision of Christ is very properly emphasized by the selection of its anniversary as New Year's day. By this rite our Saviour's subjection to the law is set forth (Gal. 4: 4); his descent from Abraham and the fulfilment of God's promise to that patriarch were certified; and his course as the Redeemer of the covenant people officially began. Although he needed not the circumcision of the heart, yet, becoming in all things like unto his brethren (Heb. 2: 17: 4: 15), in this, as in his baptism, he fulfilled all righteousness (Matt. 3: 15.) As against the heresy that our Lord's body was a mere appearance and not a reality, the fact of the circumcision proves it to have been as real as that of other babes. The beautiful custom of the Jews of formally naming the child at circumcision was peculiarly significant in the case of Christ. While undergoing the ceremony which symbolized man's sinfulness, he was announced as the Saviour from sin.

THE TEACHERS' PREPARATION LEAFLET is published weekly by the General Assembly's Sabbath School Committee, Presbyterian Church in Canada, at 35 cents a year, or 25c. If four or more copies are sent to one person. Address Rev. S. F. Fotheringham, 167 Hazen Street, St. John, N. B. Editing Committee: S. F. Fotheringham, Jas. Turnbull and Principal Kirkland.

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 shows 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

bursting forth from them to irradiate mankind. For his sake the nation was called into existence; the hope of his coming was the inspiration of its patriots and prophets; and the whole world now looks for salvation to One who was born of the tribe of Judah and the house of David.

II. SIMEON'S PROPHECY. 33. Joseph (R. V.)—"His father," see on verse 27. Christ did not give him this name, see vs. 49. **Marvelled**—Every new incident increases their astonishment. They did not clearly understand what kind of a Saviour Jesus was to be and Simeon's words perplex them still more. In him they hear the ancient prophets speak.

34. Blessed them—Invoked God's blessing upon them. He addresses his words to Mary whose peculiar relation to the Child he knows by inspiration. He is speaking "in the Spirit." **Is set**—lit. "lies" "is appointed." The same word is used in Phil. 1: 17; 1 Thess. 3: 3, "appointed." **The falling (R. V.)**—The reference here is to two classes of persons, one of whom should reject Christ to their destruction and the other receive him to their spiritual exaltation. Isa. 8: 14, 15; 28: 16; Matt. 21: 44; 1 Cor. 1: 23, 24; 2 Cor. 2: 16; 1 Pet. 2: 7, 8. If we take the words as referring to the same persons, they mean that those who are humbled for sin will rise again through the pardon he offers. (Luke 14: 11.) **A sign**—A divine token. **Spoken against**—The opposition to Christ culminated in the crucifixion, and the offence of the cross is not yet ceased. Acts 24: 5, 14; 28: 22; 1 Pet. 2: 12; 4: 14.

35. A sword shall pierce—The common view of this clause is the simplest and most natural. Mary would experience the bitter sorrow of witnessing her Son's rejection. The words of Simeon found their fulfillment when she saw him on the cross (John 19: 25.) Others, who understand the previous verse as referring to but one class of persons, say, "the sharp pangs of sorrow for sin must pierce her heart also." (Alford.) Others say that it refers to the martyr death of Mary, or to doubts regarding his messiahship which would trouble her. But on the whole we prefer the old view. "He gives the name 'sword' to that most piercing and bitter pang, which went through the heart of Mary, when her son was nailed to the cross." (Euthymius Zigabenus.) Painters and poets have rightly named her, as she gazes in anguish on her crucified Son and Saviour, "Mater dolorosa," "mother most sorrowful." **That the thoughts**—This was God's purpose when he "set" or appointed Christ. "What think ye of Christ?" Is the test question for everyone. He brings out all the best in the hearts of those that receive him, and the evil in the hearts of evil men shews itself when he is offered to them. Read John 9: 39; 3: 19; 1 Cor. 1: 23; 2 Cor. 2: 15, 16. Neutrality with regard to Christ is impossible, Luke 11: 23.

III. ANNA'S TESTIMONY. 36. Anna—Same as Hannah. **Phanuel**—Same as Penuel, Gen. 32: 30. **Asher**—This was one of the tribes carried away by Shalmanezzer, (2 Kings 17: 6.) Many of these returned at the close of the captivity when the tribal distinctions were obliterated and the nation became consolidated. Isa. 11: 13; Ezek. 37: 22; Ezra 6: 17. **A prophetess**—She was known to be such by previous utterances "in the Spirit." Compare Ex. 15: 20; Acts 21: 9.

37. Fourscore years—The exact age of Anna is not a matter of much consequence. Either she was eighty-four years old, or she had been a widow eighty-four years. Constancy in widowhood was very highly honored in the East. Compare 1 Tim. 5: 3, 5, 9. How often Queen Victoria is praised for cherishing so sacredly the memory of Prince Albert. **Night and day**—Women were not permitted to reside in the temple, but she lodged near it, and spent her whole time in the duties of religion. Night is mentioned first to "make the fervency of her pious temple service the more prominent." (Meyer.) Acts 26: 7; 1 Tim. 5: 5.

38. Coming up at that very hour (R. V.)—It is implied that she came suddenly and unexpectedly, while they were still wondering at Simeon's words. **Likewise gave thanks**—The words suggest responsive singing. She took up the theme of Simeon's song, but the words are not given. **To the Lord**—R. V. "To God," both mean the same, "Lord" stands for "Jehovah." **Spake of him**—Of whom? It is not necessary to say. **Looked for redemption**—The news does not seem to have made a lasting impression. Perhaps these were but obscure persons like the disciples afterwards, or their prejudices may have quenched their faith and zeal, or the departure into Egypt and subsequent residence of the family in a distant Galilean village may have dissipated the impression made. When Herod made his enquiries of the priests and scribes they do not seem to have been aware of these incidents, or they were purposely silent regarding them. **Redemption in Jerusalem**—R. V. "The redemption of Jerusalem." It is more likely that the expectations of pious Jews took this form.

SUMMARY AND REVIEW.

By Mr. James Bell, Toronto, Ont.

The first part of this lesson presents a picture of an aged saint, Simeon a **just** and **devout** man.

Notice that he was not only just, a man of upright character observing the law living a moral life, walking circumspectly before men, but that he was also a devout man, a man of piety, possessing deep religious feeling, a godly man.

In the 25th verse, it is stated that the Holy Ghost was upon him. in the 26th verse, that he was taught of the Holy Ghost, or that it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost: in the 27th verse, that he was led by the Holy Ghost. In other words, Simeon lived in the spirit, or rather the spirit lived in him. this was the secret of his holy and beautiful character. Simeon was **waiting** for the consolation of Israel, waiting to welcome the Saviour. Ask your scholars, if they are prepared to welcome Jesus when He comes again. Unless they are living for God as Simeon did, they will not be ready to welcome the King of Kings when He comes again in **Glory** with His holy angels.

The second part the lesson describes the Mission of the Saviour, as outlined by Simeon's Song, the *Nunc Dimittis* "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation," vs. 30. Jesus our **Salvation**, our only hope, the only Saviour, the only way from sin to Holiness. Jesus the **Light of the World**, vs. 32. Just as the world was a dark, and lifeless chaos before God created light; so are our sinful hearts until Jesus the Sun of Righteousness beams in and gives us light. "In Him was life, and the light was the light of men." John 1 : 4.

The third division of the lesson consists of the Prophecies of Simeon and Anna. "Behold this child is set for the **falling and rising again**," etc., vs. 34. Before we can rise to the position of a child of God we must fall before our Saviour's feet as a penitent sinner. We must suffer humiliation before we can enjoy exaltation. "That the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed," vs. 35. It is only God who can see our hearts and read our secret thoughts. All things are open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. "To all them that looked for **redemption**," vs. 38. Jesus has redeemed us, i. e., brought us back, He paid the price with His own life on Calvary and opened up a new and living way whereby all men may be saved.

An Aged Saint.

Just and Devout.

Waiting for Christ.

The Saviour's Mission.

Our Salvation.

The Light of the World.

Prophecies of Simeon and Anna.

J
E
S
U
S

Set for the Falling and Rising of many.

Reveals our hearts.

Has brought us back.