

## LESSON SEVEN

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** As you will probably notice, the 35 pages of the textbook, pp 88-122, preceding this current section have been eliminated. This has been done for two reasons; (1) they present a single subject, Baptism, which we have already covered in depth in our course on Baptism; and (2) because the section is wholly given to explaining Baptism in a way that is not biblical; that is, making OT washings under The Law the pattern of explanation for the NT Christian ordinance of Baptism. Thereby trying to justify the replacement of Baptism by immersion, immersion being the sole definition of the word baptize, with the unscriptural practice of sprinkling as the mode of administration of the ordinance.

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Therefore, the section has been eliminated from this current course.

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Dr. Van

## SIMEON'S SUPPOSED PRAYER.

LUKE ii. 29.—Lord, now lettest thou, etc.

SIMEON appears in the sacred narrative, only in this brief passage. His name occurs nowhere else: nor is there elsewhere any allusion to him. "And, (alluding to the fact, that Joseph and Mary had come up to Jerusalem, to present their son to the Lord:) behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him." His age is not stated: "there was a man," is very indefinite. When Anna is introduced, she is said to be "of a great age;" and it is probable, that had Simeon been of a great age it would have been so stated. There is certainly nothing in the record, to intimate that he was old.

Nor, is there any statement, that he was a priest. Zacharias was a priest; *Luke* i. 5, and "well stricken in years." Anna was a prophetess, of a great age: and the genealogy of both Zachariah and Anna is given: he was of the course of Abia; she the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: but Simeon "was a man in Jerusalem." A very small, inadequate foundation, for any theory of advanced age, or priestly function. His character is given. He was just, devout, waiting for (looking for) the consolation (Messiah) of Israel, and the Holy Ghost was upon him. He was a pious Israelite, expecting the Messiah.

"And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death (not die), before he had seen the Lord's Christ." A more lucid statement could not be presented. God had revealed to him, that the Messiah should come, before the close of Simeon's life;

and that Simeon should see him. A great point with a pious Jew.

“And he came by the Spirit into the temple.” Not that he came to “execute the priest’s office before God in the order of his course;” as with Zachariah, ch. i. 8; for it does not appear, that he had any official act to perform; but merely “came by the Spirit into the temple.” “—and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law; then took he him up in his arms (*kai autos edexato eis tas agkalas*, he also received him into his arms), and blessed God (*eulogeese ton Theon*, lauded, praised, magnified God),” etc. The *kai autos* seems to intimate that others had had the infant in their arms; and now he, Simeon, the just and devout man, who resided in Jerusalem; and who, perhaps, had somewhat bruited the revelation that he was to see the Christ; he also takes him in his arms to acknowledge the fulfilment of the revelation.

In making this acknowledgment, “he said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; (all the nations of the earth; *Gen.* xviii. 18,) a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.” Was this a prayer? Certainly not. It was a declaration of God’s veracity; of his own thankfulness; of the true, divine, view of the relation of the Messiah to all the nations, to Gentile and Jew, to man: all this was incident to his proclamation of the infant Jesus as the Lord’s Christ.

There is no petition in “Lord, now lettest thou depart” (*apolueis*). Not “let thou depart” (*apolue*); but “thou dost let depart.” Meaning that God’s promise had been verified: there was the Christ: the longing of his soul was satisfied: his eyes had seen the Christ, and when death should close them, it would be in peace.

That he died then, soon after, or years after, we are not informed. Had he died then, it is scarcely probable, that his burial would not have been mentioned. The Baptist's burial was mentioned; so Stephen's; even those of Ananias and Sapphira: and it is not probable, that the just and devout Simeon, dying suddenly in the temple, with Christ in his arms, should have been passed by, without notice of either his death or burial. That he did not pray to die then, is certain, if we accept the divine record; which represents him as praising, not as praying: when he did die, is utterly unknown, in the absence of all record whatever.

As Luke represents this good man, as having "the Holy Ghost upon him—as having had a revelation by the Holy Ghost—as influenced by the Spirit;" it is interesting to notice the incidental evidence we have of this, in the expanded, correct views of the Messiah, as to his being the Saviour of *man*; "A light to lighten the Gentiles (*ethnoon*, the nations) and the glory (*doxan*, honor) of thy people Israel." The Messiah was prepared for "all people:" of which "all people," the Gentiles, who had been in darkness, without the "oracles of God," were to have light from "the light of the word;" while Israel, the remaining part of the "all people," were to have the honor, glory, of having produced the Messiah; for which result God had prepared by the election of Abraham, and by the organization of his descendants, for this very production of the Messiah; which event was the purpose and glory of the Mosaic dispensation. When Judaism had produced the Messiah, its function ceased: it came necessarily to a close: in glory; for it had accomplished God's purpose.

## THE VISIT TO JERUSALEM.

LUKE ii. 41-51.

OUR Lord's "parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover." Joseph was compelled to go, *Exod.* xxiii. 14; Mary went voluntarily; boys under twelve were not required to take part in the festival. But, now, Jesus had reached that age, and was at the feast. Was it for the *first* time? It is not very probable.

As both parents went up every year to Jerusalem, to remain a week; is it natural to suppose, that they would leave *such* a child as this, for that length of time, without their personal attention? It is certainly far more likely, that with so many supernatural facts connected with him; his mother would have him in special care. It was not so great a journey as the one into, or from Egypt; and, most likely, when his parents made their annual visit, they took him with them.

This hypothesis might account, too, for the fact of their leaving him in the city, at their starting homeward, at the conclusion of the festival; and relieve Mary of her seeming negligence. He having accompanied his parents annually, one of his bright mind would have become quite familiar with the city; as well as with the movements of the caravans, as to the place and hour of starting; and having never failed to be in place and time, now, when he had reached the age of twelve years, it could not have been thought necessary to keep a strict watch over him. Whereas, had this been his first coming up, it would have been necessary to watch him continuously; as being a stranger to the city, he might have been lost, amid the surging crowds of the occasion.

Then, also, there is no mention of his having accompanied his parents, at this time, as would seem necessary on the part of Luke, had this been his first visit to Jerusalem, at the time of the feast. The record of the tarrying is given; as though this were the *first tarrying*: but there is no record of this as the *first visit*. Yet the natural logic in the case, seems to require a statement of the first visit, if such were the fact: so, that as we are informed that his parents went up every year to Jerusalem, at the feast; supposing Jesus not to have gone with them, because of his minority; the record would be "And when he was twelve years old, then went he up with his parents to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast." But this is not the record: his going up is not mentioned: and the whole air of the narrative intimates, that but for the tarrying, *he* would not be in the incident at all; it being the tarrying that was extraordinary.

On the other hand, the hypothesis that he had been accustomed, not to be left behind, but to have accompanied his loving, careful mother, in the annual journeys to the holy city; the details are natural; when he was twelve years old, having become quite accustomed to the city, and to the coming and going of the caravan; and having never "tarried behind in Jerusalem;" such an occurrence, so unusual, so unapprehended, was extraordinary, and merited record, as accounting for the surprise and anxious search for him by his parents.

It was not until at the end of a day's journey that they missed him, and sought among "their kinsfolk and acquaintance;" as though it were habitual for him to travel with such on the return; for there is no record that they missed him, until they had failed to find him among those, who appear to have become his associates in the traveling. They sought him only there. "And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him." This turning back consumed the second day, and the third day they found him.

He was in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing their expositions of the wise questions he propounded to them; not for his own instruction; but to wake them up from the dreams of phariseeism, to the realities of the Messianic time, and purpose. His questions, very likely, were similar in purpose, to those of *Matth. xxii. 42.* "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" Such questions were of a nature inciting to inquiry; and with a tendency to aid their extrication from the toils of tradition.

Such a scene is unfavorable, also, to the theory, that our Lord was mere *human*, until, at a period of his life, not yet agreed upon, when there came to him the divine consciousness of his great mission. The Scriptural account has nothing of this kind in it, that the present writer has been able to find. "Therefore that holy thing that shall be born (*to gennoomenon hagion*, neuter like *to pneuma hagion*,)

of thee shall be called the Son of God." *Luke i. 35.* Here, in the scene at the temple, Jesus claims to be the Son of God, at twelve years of age. And Luke testifies, that at about thirty years old, he was the Son of God through human progenitors; "being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph—of God." *Luke iii. 23-38.* But when, a few lines on, he represents the devil as calling him "Son of God," it could not be in the sense of having descended from God through Adam. *Luke iv. 3.* That would have been no peculiarity.

The Holy One born of Mary was the Son of God, as the Only Begotten of God, when the child was

“brought forth, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger;” according to the angelic testimony, “\* \* \* unto you is born THIS DAY in the city of David a Saviour, who is CHRIST the LORD; (*hos estin Christos Kurios.*)” So, when “the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.” So, when at twelve years of age, he sat among the doctors in the temple. So, when he came to be about thirty years of age, and Luke is heard reckoning up his genealogy, as though he were a mere man. So, when at his baptism the “voice from heaven said, This is my beloved Son.” So, all through his wonderful life. So, in the garden, amid the horrors that oppressed him there, when he groaned out “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” So, on the cross, when he said of his murderers, “Father, forgive them;” and at the very close, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” When he was born, while he lived, when he died, when he rose, when he ascended into heaven, now, the same, yesterday, to-day, forever: the Son of God.

As to the HOW can these things be? it may be left safely with the record which was “written that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.”  
*John xx. 31.*

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## THE TWO BUILDERS.

LUKE vi. 47-49.

“WHOSOEVER cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them.” Our Lord here describes the steps to be taken, if one wishes to be a Christian. Such person must come to him: as an in-

structor, he has something to say to the sinner, and the sinner should approach; it is of great interest. When arrived, he should hear what this great teacher has to say. But, it is of no avail, unless he conforms to the teaching; obeys the direction. Coming, hearing, obeying. Such is the process; and he who conforms to it, is like a man which built a house properly. Proposing to build, he "digged deep:" a phrase that gives a correct, but not a full meaning of our Lord's language. *Deep*, an adverb, is not found in the phrase: "digged deep" is the rendering of two verbs; and not of a verb signifying *digged* and an adverb signifying *deep*. The two verbs are *skaptoō* and *bathunōō*; in the N. T., found only in Luke; the former three times, the latter but once: *eskapsen kai ebathunen*, he digged and deepened: expressive of continuous persistent digging: he purposed to dig until he should reach the hard rock; upon which to build. Not simply he "digged deep;" but he "digged AND deepened;" continued to dig; did not pause in the digging, until he had satisfied himself, that he had a sufficient foundation.

Yet this digging is a laborious process: and in digging a foundation, the men who do that work are not the most esteemed of the employees. No work is of more importance than theirs; and, yet, no workmen about the building are less esteemed. So this digging the foundation for the spiritual edifice, is toilsome, and humiliating. But the humiliation, like that of the digging, is in the seeming; not in the reality. Repentance, the digging, are of first importance: each indispensable; a *sine qua non*: and how can it be really humiliating, to be engaged in a work of the greatest moment? The faithful digger merits not only his pay, but respect and thanks for his indispensable work: and the penitent man, with those around him, should have sense enough to understand, that ceasing to do evil and learning to do well, so far from being humiliating, is ennobling.

The figure in the passage, is that of a man, who begins work, with the intention of finding a good foundation; and continues digging, until he finds it. This is very clear as to the thinking to be done, the attention to be given, and the perseverance necessary, to have a sure support for our religious character, our part in the salvation that is in Jesus the Christ: who is the Rock to be sought for. No other name is given: for no other would suffice: not Wesley, Fox, Luther, Campbell, Canterbury, Knox, Calvin, the Pope: not any Church relation, or ritual: nothing will do but Christ. It is of no use to depend upon frames, feelings excitement, impulses, hopes. Other foundation than Christ is useless; of no avail. Not that God *will* have it so, as a mere arbitrary decision: but, because it must be so of necessity; nothing else being trustworthy; and he is in earnest for our salvation.

When one digs into the gospel, and persists until he sees the Rock; he may immediately begin to build: he can do so safely. The clear belief that Jesus, the Christ, suffered in our stead; washed away our sins with his own blood; satisfied the law, in our behalf, paying all that it claimed from us; and thus reconciled us to God; relieves the conscience of a sense of guilt, and fills the heart with love for him, who loved us and gave himself for us. We build up our hope of heaven, our Christian character, upon this sure rock—Jesus died for me, and is my reconciliation with God. And nothing can shake down our edifice. We believe the Truth; and the Truth is without variation. Frames, feelings, vary; fluctuate; sometimes, rapidly, and to our discouragement and grief: but the gospel of Christ ever remains the same; ever makes the same statement; and happy is he who draws sufficiently nigh to hear its message; attends to it with prayerful meditation, until he understands it; obeys it by returning to the Father with

penitent, loving confidence, and yields his powers and life to his will. He is the successful builder.

The unsuccessful comes, hears, but instead of obeying by digging down to the rock; he builds on the surface; is a Wesleyan, Friend, Baptist, Lutheran, Ritualist, constructing his character and hope "upon the earth;" upon the varying, unstable, unsatisfying; and when the storm comes, "the ruin of that house is great."

Salvation is by Faith. Faith comes by hearing. Hearing is by the word of God; *i. e.* nothing need be heard, nothing should be heard but the word of God, the gospel, for the production of faith: faith being nothing other than an intelligent belief of the gospel; and, working by love, it purifies the heart; bringing us into harmony with our God and Saviour; and into love and charity toward men.

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## WHY DID SHE LOVE MUCH?

LUKE vii. 47.—"Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much."

**W**AS her having loved much, the cause, or occasion, of her many sins being forgiven? Or, her many sins having been forgiven, the cause of her having loved much?

A careful reading of the passage, will, perhaps, lead to the opinion, that the former question should be answered in the negative; the latter, in the affirmative.

A pharisee having invited our Lord to take a meal with him, "they sat down to meat;" and a woman of

the city, a sinner, a poor disgraced creature, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in that house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping. The sitting at meals, was really a *reclining* upon a couch, (*katakeitai*), so that she would have access to his feet extended on the couch, outward from the table. Her tears falling profusely upon his feet, wet (*brechein*) them; not that it was her intention; but weeping in natural mitigation of the fulness of her heart, painfully expanded and laboring with loving gratitude, the tears fell upon the feet she was kissing, and "began to wet them" (*eerxato brechein*). She wiped away the tears with her abounding hair; continued the kissing; and anointed his feet with the ointment. It is not stated that she said anything. Her heart was too full for utterance. It was as the deep river in its silent flow.

The pharisee, who had been somewhat impressed by the wonderful doings of Jesus; and, possibly, had conceived some respect for the opinion, that he might be the Christ, or a prophet, appears to have been disappointed; as it seemed to him, that our Lord, if even a prophet, would have known the character of the woman; and would have refused to be touched by her polluted hands. He dismissed all idea of such a person being even a prophet; for the idea of his being the Christ, to him, was ridiculous. He had not learned of the woman's conversion; nor had he any thought of the Christ as a Saviour from sin. With him, Christ was to save Israel from the hands of their enemies: to be a horn of salvation for Israel: as to his being a Saviour of men, sinful men, Jew and Gentile; and therefore, should have been expected to "receive sinners;" such a thought had not occurred to him.

Our Lord, who was not only acquainted with the character and conversion of the woman, but also with

the thoughts and error of Simon's mind, addressed him in a manner, that should have indicated his mistake to him; and led him to understand, that the coming of the Christ, had respect to sin, rather than the national elevation of Israel. "Simon," said he, "there was a certain creditor which had two debtors: one owing him five hundred pence; the other fifty. And when they had no means of paying (and he might have cast them into prison, hopelessly); he frankly forgave (*echarisato*, freely forgave) them both." Neither had paid any part of the debt: neither had any means of paying: they had NOTHING wherewith to pay: but the kind, compassionate creditor, unhesitatingly, frankly, forgave them both. "Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most?" Here was a leading question. The Christ plan might, after all, be a plan of forgiveness of sin: all are sinners: all then would have an interest in Christ: but Simon, as the other Jews, was slow of understanding, looking not at the Scriptures, but at the traditions of the Elders. He answers, "I suppose he, to whom he forgave most." "Thou hast rightly judged," said our Lord, and then reviewed the conduct of the woman, by the light of this principle, to which Simon had assented. *What* was the principle? Evidently, that where much is forgiven, much love will be enkindled: much love will ensue much forgiveness. But, no reader of this passage will fail to perceive, that the woman is represented as loving much. "She hath washed my feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head: she hath not ceased to kiss my feet: she hath anointed my feet with ointment: for she loved much." So, she had had much forgiven; here is the proof of it: first the much forgiveness, then the much love; according to the principle agreed upon: the principle stated by Simon, and declared correct (*orthoos ekrinas*) by our Lord.

The debtors had *nothing* wherewith to pay: and it would not be consistent, to suppose, that our Lord would represent this woman, as having the means to purchase forgiveness: especially, as the creditor "frankly forgave (*amphoterōis echarisato*) them both:" nothing was taken into consideration, but their inability to pay: he frankly, freely, forgave them both. The consistency of the narrative, as well as the principle illustrated, requires the interpretation that she loved much, because her many sins had been forgiven: and *not* that her sins were forgiven because she had loved much: the latter hypothesis showing that she had something to pay; and that she had not been frankly forgiven. "Wherefore, I say unto thee, Simon, her sins, which are many, (*hai hamartiai hai pollai*) are forgiven:" (*apheoontai*, 3 pl. per. pass. and meaning *they have been*, they continue to be, forgiven: this great love that this woman has exhibited, is because her many sins have been forgiven; she is now grateful for the forgiveness: and he, cheerfully, reminds the woman of the forgiveness, as if to assure, confirm her faith.) He does not say to Simon, I *will* forgive her sins: nor, I *do* forgive her sins: nor does he say to the woman, I *do* forgive thy sins: but, in the perfect tense of the passive voice, he says to Simon *apheoontai autees hai hamartiai hai pollai*, her many sins *are* (have been) forgiven; and to the woman, in kind reminder, thy sins (not mentioning the MANY) *are* (have been, *apheoontai*) forgiven.

To the writer, this is the most natural, consistent interpretation. It was not the first time, this, that the overburdened sinner had been in the presence of her Lord and Saviour. Not that it is so stated; but the entire air of the incident suggests the fact. She hears that he is at Simon's; and enters, taking her station at once, without inquiry as to which was he, at his feet; in modest silence; noticing no one else; asking no

favor ; not weeping over her sins, but relieving her grateful heart's swollen emotion, by the tears that fell like gentle rain-drops on the Saviour's feet. Not pleading for forgiveness, and acceptance ; but manifesting her deep, vast love, under a sense that her MANY SINS WERE FORGIVEN. Surely she had been in his presence ere this, though we know not where ; and had had a happy experience of the great fact, that "the Son of man hath power to forgive sins." Since the beginning of the world, did any such woman as Simon knew this to have been, behave after this subdued, silent, grateful manner, except in sequence of forgiven sin ?

WINER : The Perfect is used for the Present, (a.) Only so far as the Perfect denotes an action or state whose commencement and occasion were completed in time past : *Moousees, eis hon eelpikate*, Moses, in whom you hope.

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