

• The Quiet Hour. •

*The Transfiguration.

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About eight days after these sayings (v. 28.) Matthew and Mark say six days after Peter's great confession. Luke means the same, about a week, including the day of the confession and the day of the transfiguration. This splendid and wonderful scene made a great impression. Both Peter and John specially refer to it (2 Pet. 1: 16-18; John 1: 14; 1 John 1: 1, 2).

He took with Him Peter and John and James (v. 28). The three special intimates of Jesus beheld the glory; he who keeps closest to Christ is most favored with revelation of Him. The mountain was undoubtedly Hermon, in the neighborhood of which Jesus now was; it was pre-eminently "the" mountain, towering ten thousand feet, and gleaming at its summit with perpetual snows. On some lower spur of Hermon the great scene was enacted.

Went up into the mountain to pray (v. 28). Prayer was His constant habit; let it be ours. The object of the transfiguration was, doubtless, to strengthen the faith of the disciples; to furnish them prop and stay. Through Peter the disciples had lately made confession of their acceptance of Jesus as veritable Messiah. Jesus had told them what of suffering, shame, death, were included in the Messianic duty. The transfiguration now shines as illustration of the essential glory of the Master. As they were soon to descend with Him into the darkness of the crucifixion, these foregleams of His essential glory were meant to hearten them amid it all, to hearten our Lord Himself also as He approached His abysmal sacrifice. So are we tenderly treated; so are various helps furnished us; so to us vision-hours are sometimes granted that we may be furnished for our sacrifice and duty.

As He was praying (v. 29). The path into vision-hours is the path of prayer.

The fashion of His countenance was altered (v. 29). Always our Lord was glorious; now His glory burst forth. Our Lord's face flamed with radiance, and His garments even became, as from an inner light, effulgent. Learn the essential majesty of your Lord, even amidst His earthly humiliation; what it must be to behold His glory as we shall in heaven; what it must be to become ourselves, at last, like Him, as we shall become (1 John 3: 2); what a dignity it is to be a Christian, the heir of such glory.

Moses and Elijah (v. 30). The great law-giver and the great prophet, the two chief representatives of the old dispensation. They talk with the transfigured Christ, and mark especially the subject of their discourse—"the decease," literally "the exodus." He is to "accomplish," literally "to make full," fill up, consummate, at Jerusalem. This, amid the glory, was the chief thought and interest of the heavenly visitants and the transfigured Christ; certainly it ought to be ours. Goulet has suggested an interpretation here which seems to me more significant. Christ's character was perfect; He had achieved a completely sinless life. The wages of sin is death,—its pain, dissolution, misery; such, anyway, is part of sin's wages. Conversely, the wages of righteousness is other than death,—rather a glorious lifting

into the other life. Since Jesus had precisely matched the claims of the holy law, His wages could not be the death we sinners die, but must be a transforming into the heavenly, the triumphal passage thither of the conqueror of sin. The transfiguration was the first step in His glorious ascent. But Christ refuses this glory now. He chooses rather the shame and cross that by atonement He may bring many with Him into glory.

Peter and they that were with Him were heavy with sleep (v. 32). The verb is perfect, better, "had been heavy with sleep." But they were not now. All this was no dream, then; it was veritable fact.

Let us make three tabernacles (v. 33). Suppose Peter's prayer had been answered; suppose he had been permitted to build the leafy booths he wanted to, and all had remained upon the shining mount. Then there could have been no atoning decease at Jerusalem, no glorious resurrection and ascension, no present priestly intercession for us by our great High Priest in the unseen holy. It is better to go on than to stay, even amid vision-hours. Often we pray, as did Peter, not knowing what we really ask for.

There came a cloud and overshadowed them (v. 34). The "cloud" was doubtless the Shekinah, the ancient and special symbol of the divine presence. Well might these disciples, sinful men, fear. Give special heed to what the divine voice said speaking out of the awful cloud. Learn the supreme authority—Jesus Christ; not, as in the old time, Moses and Elijah, the law and the prophets; not, as in our time, churches, creeds, ministers, but "Christ"; whatever clashes with Him must be refused and disowned; whatever He commands is to be yielded to and obeyed.

Jesus was found alone (v. 36). Whatever else may pass, we have Jesus.

They held their peace (v. 36). It is right for us to have unspoken-of heart-treasures of experience. But let our vision hours fit us for better service.—Christian End. World.

Explanatory Notes.

Other accounts of the transfiguration are given in Matt. 17: 1-13 and Mark 9: 2-13. *Decease (v. 31).* The Greek word here is "exodus," the word commonly used to describe the Israelites' departure from Egypt. It occurs in 2 Pet. 1: 15, and in some other writers, with the meaning "death"—*Heavy with sleep (v. 32)* From verse 37 it appears that they came down from the mountain on the following day, so that the transfiguration probably took place in the night.—*They (v. 33).* Moses and Elijah.—*Not knowing what he said (v. 33).* Mark 9: 6 gives fear as the reason for his confusion.—*They (v. 34).* Whether the pronoun here includes the apostles cannot be decided, but probably not.

Prayer should be the key of the day, and the lock of the night. At night covering, in the morning armor.

The aim of conduct, as Jesus conceived it, is not abstract saintliness, but full, rich, useful life. We are not here to spend our efforts in cultivating and nursing some deep, hidden thing called virtue. We shall have life, and have it abundantly, by doing the will of God in our plain, ordinary situations.—Charles R. Brown.

A Prayer of St Anselm.

O God, thou art Life, Wisdom, Truth, Bounty and Blessedness, the Eternal, the only true Good! My God and my Lord, thou art my hope and my heart's joy. I confess, with thanksgiving, that thou hast made me in thine image that I may direct all my thoughts to thee, and love thee. Lord, make me to know thee aright, that I may more and more love and enjoy and possess thee. And since, in the life here below, I cannot fully attain this blessedness, let it at least grow in me day by day, until it all be fulfilled at last in the life to come. Here let the knowledge of thee be increased, and there let it be perfected. Here let my love to thee grow, and there let it ripen; that my joy being here great in hope may there in fruition be made perfect. Amen.

Pilgrims With Shining Faces.

A young man who had listened without repentance to many sermons intended to convert sinners, once heard a sermon by Dr. Addison Alexander on "A city which hath foundations," read aloud in a parlor full of Christians. In a short time he called upon the pastor to ask what he must do to be saved, and said he had had no peace since hearing that sermon.

"What was there in that sermon to bring you to repentance?" asked the preacher.

"Ah," said the young man, "I looked around and saw a roomful of people on their way to heaven; their faces were shining with joy and hope; but I had no part in it, and I stopped and asked myself for the first time, 'Where, then, are you going?'"

The Apostle's Creed.

Dr. John Clifford, pastor of Westbourne Park Chapel, London, has commenced a short course of sermons on Sunday evenings on the Apostles' Creed, taking the articles of the creed for separate study. After an introduction to the course, the first article was dealt with historically and practically, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth." The second article, "And in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord," was treated in a practical and constructive manner. He said that in the first article we were at one with the Jew and the Mahomedan, but when we came to the second article we part company with them and enter another realm—the Christian. If we accept the second article it sheds a brilliant light on the first article. The second article shows us the highest and noblest life ever lived on this earth, in complete filial relationship with the father. It also humanizes the first article takes it out of the abstract domain, and makes God personal. He said to the poor woman at the well, "God is a spirit," thus revealing his personality. In his closing appeal Dr. Clifford referred to the Greeks, who said, "We would see Jesus." May you, my young friends, be animated with this desire; see Jesus for yourself, listen to his teaching, take it into your life, and you will see the Father in all his loving and redeeming character; for Christ said, "They that have seen me have seen the Father."—The Record.

If it is not right, do not do it. If it is not true, do not say it.—Marcus Aurelius.

Even the wisest are long in learning that there is no better work for them than the bit God puts into their hands.—Garrett.

*Lesson for July 29. GOLDEN TEXT.—This is my beloved Son: fear Him.—LUKE 9:35.