



LESSON III.—APRIL 17.

Jesus Transfigured.

Mark ix., 2-13.

Golden Text.

A voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. Mark ix., 7.

Home Readings.

Monday, April 11.—Mark ix., 2-13.
 Tuesday, April 12.—Luke ix., 18-27.
 Wednesday, April 13.—Dan. vii., 9-18.
 Thursday, April 14.—Ezek. i., 15-28.
 Friday, April 15.—Rev. i., 10-20.
 Saturday, April 16.—Rev. xiv., 12-20.
 Sunday, April 17.—Luke ix., 28-36.

2. And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them.

3. And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.

4. And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.

5. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

6. For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid.

7. And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and . . . a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear . . . him.

8. And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.

9. And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen . . . from the dead.

10. And they kept that saying . . . with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising . . . from the dead should mean.

11. And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes . . . that Elias must first come?

12. And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought.

13. But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have . . . done unto him whatsoever they listed, . . . as it is written of him.

(By R. M. Kurtz.)

INTRODUCTION.

At the very outset we meet an apparent difficulty in this lesson. The question naturally arises as to the time the Transfiguration occurred, and we find, in comparing the accounts given in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, that the last named writer speaks of the events of this lesson as 'about eight days after these sayings,' while the first two simply say, 'And after six days.' Like many other difficulties of this character, it disappears after a little study. Matthew and Mark evidently refer to the time intervening between the event last recorded and the departure for the scene of the Transfiguration, while Luke seems to speak inclusively, that is, he has in mind the time during which

Jesus has been presenting the 'sayings' to which Luke refers, which would thus be more than the six days of the other two synoptists.

The place is not named, and is uncertain. Tradition has long said Mt. Tabor, but the circumstances would point rather to Mt. Hermon, which was nearer Caesarea Philippi, where we last found Christ. Read also Matthew xvii., 1-13, and Luke ix., 28-36.

THE LESSON STUDY.

Verses 2, 3. 'And leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves,' etc. There are two leading thoughts in these two verses.

The location is not given. Had this been a merely human event, recorded by uninspired men, we would probably have had the exact spot indicated; and to-day it would be suitably marked, so that imaginative pilgrims might stand there and try to picture the scene. How much grander the divine way of leaving out needless detail. The Transfiguration was not a matter of Mt. Tabor or Mt. Hermon, but of Christ. We do not know what ancient hill was lighted by the radiant Christ, but we do know the grander fact, that upon that day this earth held its glorified Lord as he received the heavenly messengers and the voice of divine approval.

Again, Peter, James and John, the three so often mentioned together, were taken 'apart by themselves,' with their Lord. It was not on the crowded shores of Galilee, in the sacred temple at Jerusalem, nor even in the home of either, but this glimpse of Christ's glory was caught when they were taken apart from the common haunts of men. Have you ever rebelled or complained when the Master would lead you up some rugged bypath of the mountain, away from your dearest earthly matters, without letting you know the reason? If so, you may have missed the vision and the glory that came to those who go apart with their Lord.

4-6. 'And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses.' You notice it says, 'unto them,' not 'unto him.' The vision was made theirs as well as Christ's.

Peter, evidently overcome and 'sore afraid' with the other two, still must relieve the tension upon his impulsive soul, by voicing a wish. He would make a tabernacle, or tent, for each of the three glorified ones before his eyes, so that they might remain. Luke says Peter said this as Christ's heavenly visitors were parting from him, and that he did not know what he was saying, as Mark also says 'he wist not what to say.'

7. 'And a voice came out of the cloud.' Poor Peter's well meant but confused suggestion was passed unanswered. A cloud suddenly shadowed them. John says, 'a bright cloud,' and Luke adds that 'they feared as they entered into the cloud.' It was an hour of rare blessing for the three disciples, yet calling forth the reverent and fearful awe that divine manifestations inspire. Again Christ is recognized by his Father before men. And the command is given to 'hear him.'

8-10. 'He charged them that they should tell no man.' Suddenly the scene resumed its natural appearance, with no one there but Christ, and as they came down from the mountain with him he charged them to keep to themselves the glorious scene they had witnessed, until after his Resurrection. The devout soul, in our day as in that of Peter, James, and John, sometimes is made a sharer in divine secrets that 'that natural man receiveth not.' The Transfiguration must not be published now, when it might be a cause of confusion, but, in the light of the Resurrection it would be better understood. Thus one event of Scripture illumines another.

11-13. 'Why say the scribes that Elias must first come?' The identity of Christ was not a question in their minds, but they were troubled to reconcile his presence with the prophecy of Malachi iv., 5, 6. You see that even his nearest disciples were troubled by perplexing questions of prophecy. Christ, however, shows that Elijah

(Elias) will indeed come; but in the person of John the Baptist, Christ had a forerunner also at his first coming. This is an example of 'the law of double reference' in the application of prophecy.

In making this explanation Christ also called attention to his approaching death, which terrible event their recent exalted hour must not be allowed to drive from their minds, lest they be overwhelmed by its coming. Their range of experience, like that of Christians since, included now the glory of the Mount of Transfiguration, now the gloom of Calvary, and now the joy of the Resurrection.

The lesson for April 24 is, 'The Mission of the Seventy.' Luke x., 1-16.

C. E. Topic.

Sunday, April 17.—Topic—How Christ transforms lives. Rom. xii., 1, 2; Phil. iii., 20, 21.

Junior C. E. Topic.

HOW THE CHINESE WORSHIP.

Monday, April 11.—God's command. Ex. xx., 3-6.

Tuesday, April 12.—'Take good heed.' Deut. iv., 15-19.

Wednesday, April 13.—Forgetting God. Ps. xlv., 20, 21.

Thursday, April 14.—'Wholly given to idolatry.' Acts xvii., 16.

Friday, April 15.—'A god that cannot save.' Isa. xlv., 20.

Saturday, April 16.—Making a god. Isa. xlv., 6, 7.

Sunday, April 17.—Topic—How the Chinese worship. Acts xvii., 22, 23; Matt. xxviii., 19, 20.

A Decision Day Warning.

From the Rev. John T. Faris, of Mount Carmel, Illinois, comes the following timely and significant incident.

Some years ago a bright girl of twelve heard the invitation to confess Christ given from the pulpit. Later in the day she shyly told her pastor she was ready, and asked if she might unite with the church. A moment's conversation convinced him of her readiness, and he promised to talk with her parents. Next day her father positively refused to permit her to take the step. He said he thought she had better wait a few years.

On the day before that announced for the reception of members the pastor was in the child's home. While he waited for the parents to come into the room, the four-year-old sister talked to him.

'Mary feels so bad to-day,' she prattled. 'She does want to join so much. Why can't Mary join?'

Oh, the pity of it! the father blinded by prejudice, while his baby daughter sympathized with her sister in her grief.

If only that father—and other fathers like him—could hear the bitter cry of an earnest Christian mother as she talked with her pastor of a wayward son! She had been telling of her longing to have him with her in the church.

'Oh, why did I not encourage him, when, as a child of ten, he told me he wanted to join the church?' she said. His teacher had talked to him. Others in the class were ready, and he said he too was ready. But I persuaded him to wait a year or two. Obediently he waited. He is waiting still. He will not listen to me when I mention the church to him. What a mistake I made!—'S.S. Times.'

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