

had any man risen to such a clear idea about Christ.

II.—*Christ commends Peter*, vs. 17-20.

Christ pronounces Peter blessed, happy, honored, of God, in having this made known to Him.

"Upon this Rock," v. 18. A much discussed passage. The idea probably is, that as Peter was the first to make the confession upon which the Christian Church is builded, viz., that Christ is the Son of God, that he was in this way the first stone, a foundation stone, in that temple of living stones, and that one after another, making the same confession, should be builded into it, until it is at last complete. "Builded upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner Stone."

"The Keys," etc., v. 19. Whatever power is here given was to the other disciples as well as Peter. See Matt. 18: 18, 19. "Kingdom of Heaven" here means the Church which He was founding. "The Keys" means the symbol of knowledge and power in that Church. The key was in ancient times a badge of office. Jesus, by these words, entrusts to the disciples the organization, the teaching, and discipline, of His Church after His departure, and in this they were to be Divinely guided (see Mark 15: 14, Acts 1: 15), and therefore infallible.

He charged them not to tell that He was Christ. People were not yet ready to receive that truth, and telling it too soon would only hinder rather than help His cause.

III.—*Christ foretells His death*, vs. 21.

Not until the disciples realized that His was a Spiritual Kingdom, did He tell them of His coming death. He now does so for the first time.

IV.—*Christ rebukes Peter*, vs. 22, 23. Ever foremost, Peter speaks privately to Christ, and says that this must not be. But while, a few minutes previous, Christ had commended him, now He rebukes him. Peter, after all his confession, was taking a low, earthly, human view of Christ's kingdom, and is rebuked as strongly as he had been commended.

LESSONS.

1. What say ye of Christ?
2. Now, as then, the Spirit must reveal Christ as Saviour.
3. Every believer is a living stone in Christ's temple.
4. Evil can never destroy the Church of Christ.
5. Christ gives Peter no preëminence over the other Apostles.
6. He commends Peter in one sentence for his right words, and strongly rebukes him in almost the next sentence for his folly.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

3 February.

Les. Luke 9: 28-36. Gol. Text, Matt. 17: 5.  
Mem. vs. 29-31. Catechism Q. 7.

Last lesson was about Peter's declaration that Christ was the Son of God, and Christ first foretelling His death.

It would tend to discourage the disciples to know that He was to be put to death, and, to strengthen their faith, there took place, a few days afterward, the transfiguration.

It was a night in early summer, the third year of Christ's ministry. The place is not known, but it was probably near Cæsarea Philippi.

I. THE SAVIOUR AT PRAYER—vs. 23, 29.

In Gethsemane and at other times, Peter, James, and John were brought nearer than the

other disciples. They understood Him better, and were thus better fitted to receive higher instruction.

As He prayed the human seemed to pass away, and as in a glorified body He shone. Compare the accounts in Matt. 17: 1-13; Matt. 9: 2-13.

II. THE HEAVENLY VISITORS—vs. 30, 31.

Moses and Elias (Elijah), representing the Law and the Prophets, in their glorified, heavenly bodies. It was, in appearance and reality, "like a little heaven below."

Their talk shows how deeply interested the dwellers in heaven were about Christ's death.

III. THE WONDERING DISCIPLES—vs. 31, 32.

As in Gethsemane, it was night, and the disciples were sleeping when Christ was praying. They awakened, and with darkness all around the three shining ones were luminous with light. (Compare the garden scene). And the disciples perhaps heard them talk of that death of which Christ had told them a week before.

They stood silent and amazed, listening to the wondrous converse, until the "good-byes" were said and the visitors were going away, and then Peter, ever forward, as if to prolong the bright vision, cried out, scarce knowing what he said, but as if he would say—Master this is good, keep them here, and we will make three booths for you and them.

IV. THE VOICE OF GOD—vs. 34-36

A bright cloud, and the voice of God out of the cloud, declaring what they had confessed a week before. A strange experience. They had never known the like. Prostrate in reverence they fall. Then, as on the stormy lake, they hear the sweet voice—"Be not afraid." They look up. The light and visitors and voices have gone. They tell no man until after days of the wonders they have seen, but the memory of that day they will never forget.

LESSONS.

1. Christ our example in prayer.
2. True prayer transfigures the whole being
3. The cross the central theme of heaven as of earth.
4. The voice of Jesus ever says to His people—"Be not afraid."

**To S.S.** A note from Miss May Dougan, Teachers, of Indore, to a friend in Canada, may be helpful to S.S. teachers. She says:

"I am glad you told me about your Sunday School class. That was my favorite work at home, when some of the letters 'from home' speak as if the work we are doing is so much greater than that at home, I wish they could see things as they really are. You have such almost limitless opportunities for winning the love of the children there. And here there is so much to keep us apart. It is so long before we can speak at all, then our halting words, how can they win attention? In very, very few cases dare we invite the children to our homes, and then if we should offer them anything to eat it is probably the last we see of them. And more than all we cannot win the parents. But we shall conquer through Him in whose strength we have come forth. And India, fair India, will bow at His feet, for not one word of all His good promises has failed."