

The Transfiguration.

JUNE 4.

MARK IX: 2-13.

Golden Text, Matthew 3: 17.

COMPARE Matt. 17: 1-13. Luke 1: 28-36. John, who was an eye witness, gives no account of the Transfiguration, though he possibly alludes to it in ch. 1: 14. V. 2. *After six days*—Luke says, “about an eight days,” meaning six whole days and part of two other days. *Take with him*—the three chosen disciples who so often accompanied him, who witnessed the raising of Jairus’ daughter, ch. 5: 37, and were with him during his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, Matt. 26: 37. *Up into a high mountain*—not necessarily to the top of it; we may rather infer to some sheltered place on the mountain’s side. The precise mountain is not mentioned. Though long supposed to be Mount Tabor, it is now generally believed to have been *Hermon*, one of the Lebanon range, to the north of Cæsarea Philippi, whose snow-clad summit rises to a height of 10,000 feet, (see map). *Apart by themselves*—far enough for seclusion from vulgar gaze. *Transfigured*—Such a change came over his bodily frame as he shall ultimately make in the bodies of his believing people, Phil. 3: 21. Not only was he irradiated with the external glory which fell upon him, but the inherent light of divinity shone through his humanity, Ps. 104: 2. V. 3. Three different terms are used to describe the brilliancy of his raiment, see Dan. 7: 9. The height of the fuller’s art was to remove every stain and produce a web of dazzling whiteness. V. 4. *Moses and Elias*—representatives of the Law and the Prophets; the one the founder, the other the defender of the Old Dispensation which Jesus came to fulfil. Both of them had been favoured by personal interviews with God, both had endured, as Christ did the supernatural fast of forty days, and both had been mysteriously removed from earth. Their presence proved to the disciples the reality of the future state. *Talking with Jesus*—see Luke, 9: 31. Vs. 5, 6. *Tabernacles*—tents or booths such as they were used to make during the feast of Tabernacles. The inconsiderate remark was allowed to pass unnoticed. *Wist not*—knew not, *afraid*, see Exo. 3: 6, and 20: 19. V. 7. *A cloud*—luminous, like that which veiled the mercy seat, supposed to be emblematical of the Holy Spirit. *A voice*—the same as at the baptism. ch. 1: 11, and again later on, Jn. 12: 28. *Hear Him*—see Heb. 1: 1, 2. V. 8. *Suddenly*—at the touch of Jesus they quickly rose up, astonished to find that the heavenly visitant had disappeared, Matt. 17: 6, 7. V. 9. *Tell no man*—because it would be misunderstood. Even the favoured three did not as yet fully understand it. *Till, etc.*—After the resurrection Peter did proclaim it, 2 Pet. 1: 16. V. 10. *The rising from the dead should mean*—this referring not to the general resurrection, which was an article of belief in the Jewish Creed, but to the intimation of his own resurrection as though they inferred that it was to be in some way exceptional. Vs. 11-13. The question of the disciples shewed that they did not know how much significance was attached to the Transfiguration. By his answer Christ gave the true meaning of the passages, Mal. 3: 1 and 4: 5, which the Scribes had misinterpreted

The Afflicted Child.

JUNE 11.

MARK IX: 14-32.

Golden Text, Mark 9: 23.

COMPARE Matt. 17: 14-23; Luke 9: 37-45. The Transfiguration seems to have taken place during the night. V. 14. *When he came to his disciples*—on the morning of the next day, Luke 9: 37. When he came down from the Mount with Peter, James, and John, he found the other nine disciples engaged in controversy with the Scribes, surrounded by a crowd of people, in the midst of whom was a poor demoniac boy brought hither by his father in the hope that Jesus would heal him. Not finding him, he had applied to the waiting disciples who, however, had to confess their inability to do anything for the lad. It was a very bad case, and this failure on their part doubtless gave rise to the dispute in question, as it would give the Scribes an opportunity of twitting the disciples and of challenging the power even of their Master to effect the cure of so aggravated a case. It was a moment of deep humiliation to the disciples, and only a moment of exultation to the Scribes. V: 15. The people less sceptical than the Scribes, hailed the unexpected but reasonable return of Jesus with evident satisfaction. They felt sure that in some way or other He would settle the controversy. Their amazement might be caused by the effects of the Transfiguration still visible in his countenance. Vs. 16-18. *What question ye?* Before the Scribes could answer, the agonized father told him the whole story, V. 19. *faithless generation*,—the rebuke was meant not only for the multitude and the disciples, but also for the whole nation whom they represented. *How long?* Will you ever believe my divine mission? It seemed as though all his past miracles and teaching had been in vain; for even the faith of the disciples had wavered. *Bring him unto me*—The end of all preaching and teaching is to bring sinners to the Saviour, Acts 4: 12. Vs. 20-23. Things often come to the worst before they mend. Man’s extremity is God’s opportunity. *But if thou canst do anything*—struggling betwixt hope and despair there was at least the germ of faith in this exclamation. *If thou canst believe*—using his own form of speech, Christ made him understand that his son’s cure turned on his own confidence in the Healer. *All things possible*—Matt. 17: 20; Acts 16: 31, V. 24. *Help mine unbelief!* In this brief sentence, which has been repeated since by countless millions, there was both a confession of unbelief and a prayer for help against it. It was the best evidence he could give of a change of heart. His prayer was doubly answered (1) in his own enlightenment; (2) in the healing of his son. vs. 28, 29. *Why could not we*—plainly because of their little faith, which may be partly accounted for by the frame of mind in which they then were—excited and discouraged. Instead of wrangling with the Scribes they had been better employed in prayer. vs. 30-32. Christ’s passage through Galilee at this time was not devoted so much to public instruction as to teaching his disciples what was very difficult for them to understand—the necessity of his approaching death and resurrection. *Were afraid to ask him*—lest further details might increase their reluctance to become reconciled to the announcement.