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THE TEACHER.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1873.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, October 26th.

The Transfiguration.—Matt. xvii. 1-8.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only." Matt. xvii. 8.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 1-4.

SUMMARY.—In the glory of the glorified Christ departed saints share, and saints on earth long to share.

ANALYSIS.—I. The glorious form vs. 1-3. II. Peter's request vs. 4. III. The Father's testimony vs. 5. IV. The disciples' fear vs. 6-8.

EXPOSITION.—Connection.—We saw in our last lesson that Jesus had reached a turning point in his ministry, as it stood related to his disciples. Peter, as their representative, acknowledged his Divine Sonship; and Christ now begins to state, with a plainness and fulness not before used, that he was to be crucified at Jerusalem, and to rise again in three days. This ran so counter to their desires and hopes concerning him and themselves, that it provoked Peter's representative rebuke of Christ, and the consequent emphatic rebuke of the rebuker, and the clear exhibition of discipleship as rooted in self-denial and cross-bearing for Christ's sake. This was the hardest lesson to learn that had ever been given to them, and that has ever been given to men. It was not to be learned by itself. With it goes, naturally and necessarily, the lesson of the glory of cross-bearing. Hence Jesus, at that central point in his ministry, joined with that lesson of darkness the grand lesson of light beyond. This, with the interval of but a week, he gave in the fact of the TRANSFIGURATION.

Again. The narrative of the transfiguration stands immediately connected with the promise in chap. xvi. 28, that those then standing by should not die till they should see "the Son of Man coming in his glory," or, as Luke has it, "the kingdom of God." This event, when the Lord spoke, was some forty years distant. Compare Matt. xxiv. 34; John xxi. 22; James v. 8, 9. Still, the transfiguration links itself to that event, as well as to the ultimate glory of Christ, because in that event was a manifestation of his terrible majesty, as that Son of God and Divine King who, on the peril of destruction, should be heard.

Verse 1.—After six days. Luke says (ix. 28) "about an eight days"—counting in the day from which and the day to which. Matthew and Luke refer to the six days between them. Just a week was allowed to pass. This gave time for reflection on the hard lesson respecting the cross, and so prepared them the better to receive this new lesson. Peter, James and John. The legal number of witnesses to establish an event was "two or three" (Deut. xix. 15), and the pre-eminence of the theme here chosen made them the fit persons to be spectators of an event of such transcendent importance. For the record of like distinctions at other times, see Matt. xxvi. 37; Luke viii. 51. One design of the transfiguration was to be realized after the resurrection, when it was to be made public by these witnesses. Up into a high mountain. The tradition, dating from the fourth century, which names Mount Tabor, or Galilee, as the scene of this event, is generally, and for good reason, rejected as false; while it is with more reason believed that Mount Hermon, which was near Caesarea Philippi, was the place. Tabor was inhabited to its summit, and was remote from the place where Christ seems then to have been. We cannot but notice Christ's custom of retiring to high hills or mountains, in order to commune with God. Matt. xiv. 23; Luke xxi. 37; John vi. 15. There is something in the elevation and solitariness of these summits congenial to such communion. Notice also the giving of the Law on Sinai, and the heathen custom of having "high places" of worship, and John iv. 20. It is not stated God is in fact nearer to the mountain-top (John iv. 21, 24), but physical realities suggest and impress spiritual realities through their symbolical and analogical relation to them.

Verse 2.—And was transfigured before them. The word translated "transfigured" is that from which comes our word metamorphosis, and means change of form—necessarily, however, change of shape.

Luke says, "The fashion of his countenance was changed." The face shone as the sun, and the raiment was white as the light; or, as Mark writes, "shining, exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them." Or, as Luke, "glistening white." From Luke ix. 37, it would seem that it was in the night; and hence the surprising brilliancy would, by contrast, appear all the greater. We are reminded of the appearance of this same Jesus to Saul, on his way to Damascus, when, though the sun shone in the brightness that appeared was above that of the sun. Acts xxvi. 13; and to John, in Patmos, Rev. i. 13-15. The word thus translated is used in the following places in the Acts vii. 31; ix. 10, 12; x. 5, 17, 19; xi. 5; xii. 9; xvi. 9, 10; xviii. 9. This changed appearance of Christ was seen only through such change in these witnesses as was wont to pass upon those who, in former and in later times, had received revelations of spiritual beings and realities in the way of vision.

Verse 3.—Moses and Elias, talking with him. In the same glorious form and appearance, as is seen from Luke ix. 31. They were at once recognized as Moses and Elias, as appears from Peter's words, vs. 4. How they were known is not told; but the conditions of the supernatural here existed. Does this intimate that in glory we may at once know those with whom we mingle, though before unknown? Why were Moses and Elias [Elijah], rather than any others of the dead, revealed? Because this was a symbolic event, showing Christ's position in the economy of the world's salvation. Moses represents the law, and Elijah represents prophecy, and they wait on Christ and are glorified with and in Christ, because Christ is the fulfilling of the law and of prophecy. We recall here Christ's conversation with the disciples on the way to Emmaus, after his resurrection, and his demonstration to them that the Old Testament made necessary the crucifixion. How splendidly fitted was this event to dispel the sorrow and disappointment which the lesson of the preceding week had brought!

Verse 4.—Peter. Yes, of course, it must be Peter who shall speak. Good for us to be here. So entranced with the scene, so satisfied with the vision, rapt in admiration and love. If thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, etc. He spoke in that trance-condition, in which things did not assume their right relations in which the earthly and heavenly were combined and confounded.

Verse 5.—While he yet spake. The movement of the two saints to depart, so promptly met by the Father's movement to receive them. A bright [luminous] cloud over shadowed them. Says Trench, "A cloud is the constant symbol, or if not always this, the accompaniment of the Divine presence." Exodus xiv. 19; xix. 16; xxxiii. 9; xl. 31; 1 Kings viii. 10; Psal. civ. 3; Isa. xix. 1; Dan. vii. 13. When dark, it signifies wrath; when light, favor. And the same cloud was dark on the one side, toward God's foes, and light on the other, toward his friends. Behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying. Thrice did God thus bear witness, once at the baptism, Matt. iii. 17; once near the time of crucifixion, John xii. 28;—"at the beginning, at the middle, and at the close of his public ministry." This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him. See 2 Peter i. 17. Son, and hence King. Ps. ii. King of kings—specially chosen and beloved of God, and hence to be "heard," i. e., obeyed; according to Heb. i. 1. All Scripture is to find its interpretation in him and in his words. It is not that there is any other or higher authority in Christ's words than in those of inspired prophets or apostles; for there is no authority higher than God's, and no truth that is more than true.

Verse 6.—Fell on their face and were sore afraid. With the fear of awe and reverence.

Verse 7.—Jesus came and touched them. He always gives to us assurance and comfort, when there is fear as sinners in God's sight. Compare Dan. x. 10; Jer. i. 9; Isa. vi. 7; Rev. i. 17. We see here the sympathy of Jesus most affecting shown.

Verse 8.—They had lifted up their eyes. After their return to their natural state. Thus passed the vision, and they kept it to themselves, as commanded. Mark ix. 9, 10.

QUESTIONS.—Vs. 1. The subject of our last lesson? How long after the events of that lesson was the transfiguration? vs. 1; Luke ix. 28. Why did it so soon follow? Matt. xxvi. 37; Luke viii. 51.

Vs. 2. Meaning of the word "transfigured"? What did Christ's appearance become? On what other occasions did he appear in like manner? Acts xxvi. 13; Rev. i. 13-15. Of what is light or whiteness the symbol? Rev. iii. 4, 5; 1 John i. 5. Why is this event called, in verse 9, "a vision"? Why, think you, was Christ transfigured?

Vs. 3. Who appeared with Christ? Of what did they converse with him? Luke ix. 31. Why should these two, rather than any others, appear? Why converse about the crucifixion? Luke xxiv. 25-27.

Vs. 4. Who of the three disciples spoke? At what time? Luke ix. 33. What did he say? What prompted these words? Was the request proper? Luke ix. 33?

Vs. 5. What now occurred? Of what was a cloud the symbol? Exodus xiv. 19; xix. 16; xxxiii. 9; xl. 34; Daniel vii. 13; Matt. xxvi. 64. When was the symbolic cloud dark, and when light? On what other occasions did the Father thus testify for Christ? Matt. iii. 17, John xii. 28.

Vs. 6-8. Why did the disciples fear? How were their fears removed?

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Scripture Catechism, 148, 149.

SUNDAY, November 2nd.—Jesus and the Young.—Matt. xix. 13-22.

Youths' Department.

SHOWERS.

The children awoke one Sabbath morning to find the sky dressed in her Quaker mantle, and shedding oceans of tears for the absent sun.

"O, dear!" sighed Minnie Rea, "I declare, it's too bad! It always rains just when we don't want it to; and I was going to wear my new piqué dress and kid boots. O, dear me!"

"That's so," rejoined Lizzie; "besides it is Sunday school concert to-night, and I have a piece of poetry to recite; but of course mother won't let us go, if it rains."

"I know it," responded Minnie, dolefully; and the little girl turned over on her pillow, and would very likely have had "a good cry" at the unpleasant prospect, if Aunt Light had not just at this moment peeped in. A real Aunt Light she was, to be sure, with her shining golden hair, her bright, happy face, and her wonderful faculty of finding the silver lining to every dark cloud such as had just spread itself around the children.

"Why, Minnie, dear," said she, after kissing the little girls good-morning, "you're not going to cry, are you, because our Father is kindly sending the rain so much needed now? Why, just come down stairs, and watch the little flowers lifting up their pretty faces to catch every drop, and see how bright and thankful the thirsty grass looks; then I'm sure that Aunt Light's little rays won't complain."

"Well, but, Aunt Light, it does seem too bad that it should rain to-day, for a Sunday at home is so long and dull!" said Lizzie, doubtfully.

"Never mind, Lizzie; we'll see to-day if we can't make a Sunday at home as pleasant as one at church. So, come down soon, and we will have a little sermon from Robbie after breakfast," and, so saying, she went down stairs.

Robbie Rea was only five years old, and so you may be sure that his sisters were eager to hear what sort of a sermon the little parson would preach. He was awake and dressed when Aunt Light went into the library, and was talking very fast about the rain and the flowers; so Aunt Light thought, "Ah! here's a nice subject for my Robbie's sermon." She took him on her knee, and asked if he would like to preach a little sermon to Lizzie and Minnie all about the rain and him who sent it.

"Yes'm," said Robbie, "but I don't know only that it rains, and God sent um, 'Now I lay me, and 'Our Father.' However, he felt quite important that he knew even so much.

"Well, if Robbie will be a good boy, and try to remember, Auntie will tell him what to say."

To which he meekly responded, "Yes'm," then folded his hands, and shut his eyes, as he had seen his papa do when engaged in deep thought. He did listen, and after breakfast sat in Aunt Light's lap, and preached away to his heart's content. He clasped his chubby hands, and, looking steadily at a picture of "Little Samuel" before him, said, solemnly, "God makes it rain, and he knows when it is time to"

—Then glancing slyly at Auntie, and fixing his bright eyes on Lizzie, he put into his sermon an idea of his own, "And he knows better'n you Lizzie Rea, 'cause 'cause He's older. So!"

Every one laughed at this burst of eloquence, as it was Lizzie's favorite argument

when persuading her younger brother or sister to do anything she wished, "I ought to know, because I'm older than you."

Robbie now proceeded, "If there wasn't ever any rain, the little flowers would starve; so there wouldn't be any to take to our teachers. Do you see?"

They all saw; but at this point in his sermon he forgot what was coming next, so Aunt Light had to prompt him with, "What should we do if there was a fire and"——

"O, yes!" interrupted Rob, "s'pose it didn't rain for ever an' ever so long, and all the water was drunk up; then s'pose my papa's barn should be on fire, why, it couldn't be put out, and would burn all up; and perhaps the house, an' the pig-pen, an' the hen-house with all the little chickens in it, and Rover too, and"—— Here the little parson was obliged to stop for want of breath, and tired of his present congregation, led Rover off to the bay-window for a private lecture on racing and chasing butterflies on Sunday. Just then Mr. Rea came in, saying that he thought the sun would make his appearance before noon, and with this hopeful prospect before them and Rob's little sermon in mind, they brought their lessons, to recite to mother and Aunt Light. In a little while, sure enough, out came the smiling face of the sun from behind the gray clouds, and it continued to smile on the children all day long.

Months after, when our city was lighted by the red glare of a terrible fire, Lizzie, Minnie, and Rob sat by Aunt Light, watching for hours the flames, and sparks, and dull red smoke. When at last the fire was stayed, and the children heard their father say, "One half-hour more, and I should have lost all," Minnie looked up into Auntie's face and said, "Auntie, supposing it hadn't rained so much, and there wasn't water enough!"

Aunt Light smiled, kissed the little faces turned up to hers, and said, "Robbie's little sermon did do some good after all"; and the children resolved never again to fret at the little showers.

—W. & R. COUSIN NELLIE.

THE STORY OF A CUP.

"This cup was one of your grandmother's presents when she celebrated her Golden Wedding," I said, carefully gathering up each fragment of the cup, which had just slipped through May's fingers, and was now strewn over the carpet—a wreck of guilt-and-white.

"An old friend of hers sent her one of those pretty tête-à-tête sets, and with it a note, which you will find in the little drawer of my desk. I really think that mother valued the gift more than the offering of gold and silver of that day." May found the note and I read to her:

"I am happy to join my congratulations to those of other friends on the anniversary of your wedding-day. May it be truly a golden day; golden in the precious memories of a well spent past; golden in the present consciousness of rectitude, and golden in bright promises of peace and happiness. I ask your acceptance of the accompanying trifle, as a token, not a measure, of my sincere regard. If it reminds you of the olden times when the logs blazed on the hearth, and the little black teapot steamed before the fire, it is well! If it further reminds you of the many changes wrought, of the gray hairs and wrinkled brow, it is still well; for the gray hairs are only the traces of old Father Time's blessing hand, and the wrinkles are but notches with which he scores the well-spent years. Though there is but a single cup, I trust there may long be two to enjoy it. May there never be a lack of the wholesome leaf which cheers but not inebriates," and as in long years you have drained together the one cup of joy and sorrow, so may you long share mutually each innocent pleasure of old age, till at last, in that land where there is "no marrying or giving in marriage, you may drink from that stream which supplies the city of our God."

"We all said father should use the cup for awhile, and then mother, and so, as the children say, 'take turns' drinking from it. Father only lived to use it a few short weeks. I shall never forget the first time we sat at the table after his death. I had put the cup away, thinking the sight of it might add to mother's grief, but she noticed the omission, and asked for it, and taking it in her trembling, wrinkled hands, bowed her head over it, and said, softly, 'Not my will, but Thine.' I knew she was thinking of that other cup, a bitter cup of sorrow, which God had just held to her lips, and when she turned to me and said, 'While I am here I will use this—it will only be a little while,' she said it with such a sweet smile. I could only choke back my tears and wonder at her Christ-like submission. But mother never again

seemed the same, and when the spring came, she said one day, 'I shall never see the grass torn from brown to green again, and it is well. Not only the threescore and ten but fourscore years have been given to me. My days have been long in the land, and now I can go home.' Before the winter's snow fell we laid her by father's side. I brought home the cup they had both drunk from, but it seemed to me a sacred thing, and I never used it. I laid it away, asking that God would give me strength and grace in this life to drink the cup he filled for me patiently and submissively, and that like theirs my life might be golden to the end."

"And then," said May, softly, "May we all 'walk the golden streets.'"

THE ECHOES OF SONG.

BY MRS. S. T. PERRY.

Jerusalem, my happy home! Name ever dear to me!

Many years ago, on the hills of Scotland, was a lowly home where a Scottish mother dwelt. She had one little boy; and at evening, when she rocked him to sleep, she always sang the hymn commencing with the lines I have just quoted above. The words were the echoes of the thoughts of her own soul. The Lord had caused her to pass through many trials, and the labours of life had been arduous and wearing. To sing of "rest and joy" in the "city of our God" was very comforting to her tried soul, after the day's long, weary work was over. As the boy grew older in years, the mother still continued to sing the same old hymn. When she sat at her spinning, her voice kept time to the music of the wheel. When harsh words fell upon her ear, no murmur escaped her lips, only the sweet words—Blest seats! though rude and stormy scenes, I onward press to you.

When the boy came home at evening, bringing the cattle across the lea, his mother's voice and the words of that hymn met his ear long before he came to the threshold of the door. Up into his little room, under the roof, when he was going to sleep, did the same words follow him. They wafted him away in dreams, through "pearly gates" and "streets of shining gold." But there came a time when the mother's voice grew weaker, and the boy heard her sing this verse oftener than any other—

Why should I shrink at pain or woe,  
Or feel at death dismay?  
I've Canaan's goodly land in view,  
And realms of endless day.

Each day the voice grew fainter, until at last it was still. The boy heard it no more, for it had passed from the lowly Scottish home up to the choir of the sweet singers of Jerusalem. The mother had gone to the "City of our God," and the cold clay was laid in the sild kirkyard. The boy was motherless; the light and joy had gone out of his home for ever. The father was a hard man, and the boy had not the grace to endure the persecutions which his mother had borne so patiently for years. One night he stole softly out of that desolate home, with his little bundle, comprising his mother's Bible and a few clothes; and after stopping a few moments at the grave so dear to him, in the kirkyard, he left the scenes of his boyhood. He became a wanderer. He crossed the ocean to America. There he mingled with evil associates, and in time became like them, reckless and godless. "Jerusalem, my happy home!" and that mother's voice were forgotten. For years he led a most dissolute life, until, worn out with dissipation, his strong frame gave way, and, in an upper room of a tenement house in the city of New Orleans, he lay down to die. A minister found him there, and talked with him about his soul's conversion. But the labours, prayers, and entreaties of the good man were of no avail; the dying man's heart seemed impenetrable. Day after day passed, and the efforts of the persistent pastor were fruitless. One evening, discouraged and broken in spirit, he turned away from the dying one, and with his face towards the dingy, broken window, which looked towards the west, he began humming, "Jerusalem, my happy home!" Before he had finished the first verse, the wanderer's eyes were filled with tears. "My mother used to sing that hymn!" he exclaimed. The minister drew nearer, and sang the whole hymn. When the singing was finished, the dying man was melted. His mother's voice had come back to him as in years long since gone by. He forgot who it was that had been singing. In that hymn he lived over the days when he was rocked in his mother's arms, the nights under the low thatched roof, in that lowly home in far-off Scotland, when her voice lalled him to sleep. "Oh, that