

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1882.

SECOND QUARTER.

Lesson X.—JUNE 4, 1882.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

Mark ix. 2-13.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vss. 5-8.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And, lo! a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matthew iii. 17.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

M. The Lesson, Mark ix. 2-13.

P. Peter's Comment, 2 Peter i. 12-21.

W. Death of Moses, Deut. ch. xxxiv.

T. Translation of Elijah, 2 Kings ii. 1-12.

F. Glory after Death, 2 Cor. v. 1-9.

S. Glory at the Second Coming, 1 Thess. iv. 13; v. 11.

S. Eternal Glory with Christ, John xvii. 13-26.

FOREGLEAM OF THE COMING GLORY.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Jesus Transfigured, Vss. 2, 3. II. Heavenly Visitors, Vss. 4-8. III. Two M. stories, Vss. 9-13.

QUESTIONS.—Review last lesson; also Lessons IV., V., and VI.

Vs. 2, 3.—Meaning of "transfigured"? What prediction in chap. ix. 17? How soon was it fulfilled? What transformation in Jesus? Who were the witnesses? How did they write of it afterward?

Vs. 4-8.—Who were they? What did they represent? How had they left the earth? How do you think the apostles knew them? What did Peter think? What did he propose? What look place? What voice? How did Moses and Elijah depart? Of what was this whole scene a foretaste and promise?

Vs. 9-13.—What directions did Jesus give? Why did not the disciples understand? What does this show of the power of prejudice? When did they understand this mystery? What puzzled the disciples concerning Elijah? What did Jesus say of himself? Who was "the Elijah" that had come? (Luke i. 17).

Special Subjects.—Tabor or Hermon? How could Moses, who had died, appear "in glory" with Elijah? Contrast of this glorious scene with the incantations and follies of "spiritualism." Connection of the Transfiguration and the kingdom.

In the last two lessons, the Kingdom of Jesus must have seemed, to his disciples, one of sorrow. There he told them that he must "suffer many things and be rejected," and that his followers must deny themselves and bear the cross. The scene of this lesson, as a revelation of his true glory, was needed to strengthen both Jesus and the three for the approaching end.

NOTES.—I. Transfigured, (Vs. 2-6).

Vs. 2.—Six days. So also Matthew, (xvii. 1); but Luke, (ix. 28), "about an eight days,"—the about showing a less precise reckoning. Peter, James, and John. Specially honored of Jesus at other times also. See v. 37; xiv. 33. High mountain. Not identified, but no longer supposed to be Mount Tabor, which would not then have afforded the solitude signified by *apart by themselves*; but, perhaps, one of the peaks of snow-clad Hermon, which was a "high mountain." Jesus was in the region of Hermon just before his transfiguration; and there is no notice of his change of place. Transfigured. Literally, changed in form, or outward appearance. The transfiguration, most likely, occurred at night; and the description shows that surrounding darkness would add to its impressiveness. Jesus had gone up into the mountain to pray, (Luke ix. 28), and night was his special time of prayer; that the apostles were heavy with sleep, (Luke ix. 32), and that they are said to have descended from the mountain "on the next day," (Luke ix. 37). Before them. In their sight, and not while they slept. They marked the process of the change, and were "eye-witnesses of his majesty." (1 Pet. i. 16).

Vs. 2, 3.—His raiment, etc. Here we see only his garments; but Matthew and Luke speak also of the glory in his face. By figures derived from both nature and art, Mark endeavors to describe the transcendent brightness of that light which shone out from the body and garments of the Saviour. Elias. Elijah. With Moses. The veritable Old Testament worthies. Talking with Jesus. For the subject of their conversation, See Luke ix. 28. The cross is the central theme of all time.

Vs. 5, 6.—Peter . . . said. No revelation, however marvelous, could check the tongue of this impetuous disciple. Luke considerably adds: "Not knowing what he said," (ix. 32). Good for us to be here, it was and is always good to be on the mount with Jesus; but duty calls us to descend and go about

doing good. Three tabernacles, temporary structures, made from branches of trees. Why he proposed this is only a subject of conjecture, as it was not clear to his own mind; for he wist not what to say. Yet this outburst of Peter in his astonishment is so like him, that it is one of the features that attest the truthfulness of this narrative.

II. The Cloud and the Voice, (Vs. 7, 8).

A cloud, Matthew, "bright cloud,"—the usual symbol of the Divine presence. This cloud overshadowed them, i. e., Jesus, and Moses, and Elijah; and under the cover of its intense light, the latter two disappeared. This tabernacle from the sky was better than the booths which Peter proposed. "A voice came out of the cloud" Peter says, in his second Epistle, (i. 17), that this voice was from the "excellent glory." The same voice as at the baptism of Jesus (Matt. iii. 17); and the same announcement attesting his divinity. Hear him. The hearing Christ implies obedience to Christ.

Matthew relates that, upon hearing this voice, "they fell on their faces and were sore afraid," and that Jesus reassured them both by a gentle touch and by the loving words: "Arise, and be not afraid." Having arisen, they suddenly looked round about, and discovered that the celestial visitors had gone. They saw no man any more, save Jesus only. The Law and the Prophets depart; the Gospel attides. Jesus was henceforth all and in all to him.

III. Down from the Mountain, (Vs. 9-13).

Vs. 9, 10.—Tell no man. Silence is sometimes as important a duty as speech at others. This injunction, however, extended only to the Lord's resurrection; when, by the descent of the Holy Spirit upon them, they would be fitted for it. Questioning what the rising from the dead should mean. Even these three favored ones stumbled at Christ's prophecies of his sufferings and death; and when they occurred, they came to them as unexpected events, (Luke xviii. 34).

Vs. 11.—Why say the Scribes that Elijah, etc. The sight of Elijah on the mount, doubtless, suggested this question. The Scribes, the professional expounders of the law, interpreted Mal. iv. 5, as demanding Elijah's re-appearance before the expected Messiah should come. But here was Elijah on the mount, appearing after the Messiah had come. They were perplexed by what seemed an inversion of the order of events.

Vs. 12, 13.—Elias verily cometh first. He confirms the interpretation of the Scribes as to the order. The work of Elijah is one of restoration, (see Mal. iv. 6). How it is written of the Son of man, etc. Jesus speaks again of his own sufferings, as a matter of prophecy, not only to impress the fact of his rejection upon their minds, but also to couple his treatment with Elijah's. It was not an Elijah of glory, as on the mount, that was to precede him; but an Elijah of suffering. Elias is indeed come. The true forerunner was one who was despised and rejected, like his Master. Jesus says that John is the Elijah of Mal. iv. 5.

SUGGESTED LESSONS.

The Christian Dispensation is not in antagonism to, but in harmony with, that of the Law and the Prophets. Moses and Elijah are seen in loving converse with Christ.

We have proof of the reality of the spirit world, and of the conscious existence of departed saints. The soul-sleeping heresy cannot stand before the revelation of this lesson.

There will be no difficulty about the recognition of friends in heaven. The message to us from heaven is, implicit obedience to Christ. Hear Him.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

One day, after Jesus and his disciples had been traveling through the country, they came to a high mountain, called Mount Hermon. It was toward night; but Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up Mount Hermon. The rest of the disciples waited at the foot. It must have been dark night when they got up into the mountain. They all knelt in the darkness, and Jesus began to pray. And as Jesus prayed, his face began to shine like the sun; his clothing grew whiter and brighter than the snow; it looked like sunlight. When Peter, James, and John looked, Jesus was shining all over. It was no longer dark on the mountain. Let us close our eyes, and try to think how bright and beautiful Jesus must have looked. The Bible says Jesus was transfigured; that means that he was changed.

As the disciples looked, they saw two more men talking with Jesus. Tell of Peter's suggestion, reading verses 5, 6. What did the Father say of Jesus? When did the Father speak these words before? How glad the disciples must have been that Jesus had not left them! If Jesus is only with us, that is best of all!—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

A Converted Thief's Letter.

The following letter was read at one of Mr. Moody's meetings. We reproduce it, with the slang expressions as originally written, as we felt that by translation it would lose much of its point. For the better understanding of the allusions, we may remark that the son (the "Charlie" addressed) of a minister of the Gospel was imprisoned for robbery, and was converted while awaiting his trial. He was convicted of the crime (or rather confessed it), and while undergoing his sentence he endeavored to lead the writer of the following letter to the Saviour, with what success the sequel will show:—

ST. LOUIS.

Mr. W.—friend Charlie, if I may call you so—I know you are surprised to get a letter from me; but I hope you won't be mad at my writing to you. I want to give you my thanks for the way you talked to me when I was in prison; it has led me to try and be a better man. I guess you thought I did not care for what you said, and at the first go off I didn't; but I knowed you was a man who had done big work with good men, and worn't no "sucker," nor worn't "gasing;" and all the boys knowed it. I used to think at night about what you said, and I knocked off swearing five months before my time was up, for I saw it wasn't no god, nohow.

The day my time was up you told me it would "shake the cross" [quit reading] and live on the square for three months; it would be the best job I ever done in my life. The State agent gave me a ticket to here, and on the car I thought more of what you said to me, but didn't make up my mind. When we got to Chicago, on the cars from there to here, I pulled off an old woman's leather [robbed her of her pocket-book]. I hadn't no more than got into it, when I wished I hadn't done it; for a while before that I made up my mind to be a square bloke for three months on your word, but forgot it when I saw the leather was a gif [easy to get]. But I kept close to her, and when she got out of the car at a wayside place, I said—

"Marn, have you lost anything?" She tumbled [discovered] her leather was off.

"Is this it?" says I, giving it to her.

"Well, if you ain't honest!" says she. But I hadn't got cheek enough to stand that sort of talk, so I left her in a hurry.

When I get here I had \$1 and 25 cents left, and I didn't get no work for three days, as I ain't strong enough for a roust-about [deck hand] on a steamboat. The afternoon of the third day I spent my last 10 cents for two moons [large round sea biscuits] and cheese, and I felt pretty rough, and was thinking I would have to go on the dip again [pocket-picking], when I thought of what you once said about a fellow calling on the Lord when he was in hard luck. I thought I would try it once anyhow; but when I tried it I got stuck on the start, and all I could get off was, "Lord, give a poor fellow a chance to square it for three months, for Christ's sake. Amen." I kept a-thinking of it over and over as I went along. About an hour after that I was in Fourth Street, and this is what happened, and is the cause of my being where I am now, and about which I will tell you before I get done writing.

As I was walking along I heard a big noise, and saw a horse running away with a carriage with two children in it. I grabbed up a piece of box-cover from the side-walk, and ran into the middle of the street, and when the horse came up, I smashed him over the head as hard as I could drive. The board split to pieces, and the horse checked up a little, and I grabbed the reins and pulled his head down until he stopped. The gentleman that owned him came running up, and as soon as he saw the children were all right, he shook hands with me, and gave me a \$50 green-back. My asking the Lord to help me came into my head just then, and I was so thunderstruck I couldn't drop the reins nor say nothing.

He saw something was up, and coming back to me said, "My boy, are you hurt?" The thought came into my head just then to ask for work; and I asked him to take back the bill and

give me a job. Says he, "Jump in here, and let's talk about it; but keep the money." He asked me if I could take care of horses, and I said, "Yes," for I used to hang round livery stables, and often would help to clean and drive horses. He told me he wanted a man for that work, and would give \$16 a month and board me. You bet I took that chance at once. That night, in my little room over the stable, I sat a long time thinking over my past life, and of what had just happened; and I just got down on my knees and thanked the Lord for putting me up to it, and asked Him to help me to square it, and to bless you for putting me up to it. The next morning I done it again, and got some new togs [clothing] and a Bible; for I made up my mind, after what the Lord had done for me, I would read the Bible every night and morning, and ask Him to keep an eye on me.

When I had been there about a week, Mr. Brown (that's his name) came into my room one night and saw me reading the Bible. He asked me if I was a Christian, and I told him "No." He asked me how it was I read the Bible instead of papers and books? Well, Charley, I thought I had better give him a square deal on the start; so I told him all about my being in prison, and about you, and how I had almost given up looking for work, and how the Lord got me the job when I asked Him, and the only way I had to pay Him back was to read the Bible and square it. I asked him to give me a chance for three months. He talked to me like a father for a long time, and told me I could stay; and then I felt better than ever I had done in my life, for I had given Mr. Brown a fair start with me, and now I didn't fear no on-giving me a back cap [exposing his past life] and running me off the job. The next morning he called me into the library, and gave me another square talk, and advised me to study some every day, and he would help me one or two hours every night. He gave me an arithmetic, a spelling, a geography, and a writing book, and he hears me every night. He lets me come into his house to prayers every morning, and got me put in a Bible-class in the Sunday-school, which I likes very much, for it helps me to understand my Bible better.

Now, Charley, the three months on the square are up two months ago, and, as you said, it is the best job I ever did in my life. I commenced another of the same sort right away; only it is, God helping me, to last a lifetime. Charley, I write this letter to tell you I do think God has forgiven my sins, and heard your prayers, for you told me you should pray for me. I know I love to read His Word, and tell Him all my troubles, and He helps me, I know; for I have plenty of chances to steal, but I don't feel inclined to as I once did. Now I take more pleasure in going to church than to the theatre, and that wasn't so once. Our minister and others often talk with me, and a month ago they wanted me to join the church, but I said, "No, not now; I may be mistaken in my feelings; I will wait a while." But now I feel that God has called me, and on the first Sunday in July I will join the church.

I am doing well. I put \$10 a month in bank, with \$25 of the \$50. If you ever want any or all of it, let me know, and it is yours. I wish you would let me send you some now. I send you with this a receipt for a year of Littell's Living Age. I didn't know what you would like, and I told Mr. Brown, and he said he thought you would like it. I wish I was near you, so I could send you chuck on holidays. It would spoil this weather from here; but I will send you a box next Thanksgiving anyway. Next week Mr. Brown takes me into his store as light porter, and will advance me as I know a little more. He keeps a big wholesale granary store.

I forget to tell you of my mission-school Sunday-class. The school is on the Sunday afternoon. I went out on two Sunday afternoons, and picked up seven kids [little boys], and got them to come in. Two of them knew as much as I did, and I had them put in a class where they could learn something. I don't know much myself, but as these "kids" can't read, I get

on nicely with them, I made sure of them by going after them every Sunday half-an-hour before school time. I also got four girls to come.

Tell Mack and Harry about me. If they will come out here when their time is up, I will get them jobs at once. I hope you will excuse this long letter and all mistakes. I wish I could see you, for I can't write as I can talk. I hope the warm weather is doing your lungs good; I was afraid when you was bleeding that you would die. Give my respects to all the boys, and tell them how I am doing. I am doing well, and every one here treats me as kind as they can. Mr. Brown is going to write to you some time; I hope some day you will write to me. This letter is from your very true friend,

C. W.

FOREIGN MISSIONS.

AKIDU.—Rev. John Craig writes the Canadian Missionary Link: "I am at present touring on the south-west half of my field, the same section that I visited in November last I have been out all this month and expect to remain out till the beginning of March, that is, some seven or eight days more.

I have visited nearly all our villages where we have Christians, and many that our preachers visit regularly, but where as yet none have professed faith in Christ.

This is the nineteenth village that I have visited on this tour; I wish to see eight or nine more before I return to Akidu.

Of course where there are schools, I have examined the children to see how they were progressing. At present we have in all fourteen schools. I think the average attendance must be about two hundred. But this refers only to the past three or four months. Before that there were not so many schools. Of the two hundred pupils, about one hundred and forty are young men and boys and the remainder are girls. The proportion of girls is still rather small, but it is better than it was a year ago.

Some months ago I announced my intention of giving a copy of the New Testament to every one who would learn by heart and recite the Sermon on the Mount. You will be glad to hear that a large number of Testaments are likely to be won in this way, and that most of them will go to scholars in our village schools. I have already given thirty-four books, and others have been won. The Gospel of Matthew is being used as a reading book in many of the schools. The pupils all learn to sing a few nice hymns. Perhaps I should add that many of the scholars are children of heathen people.

The pupils are very young as a rule, but there are a few young men among them. I was particularly pleased a few days ago, when I visited Tarakaturu, one of our villages, to find three or four young men learning to read. These are all Christian young men, hence they may become teachers in their own and other villages. By their zeal they show that they have good stuff in them. Their studies have been carried on chiefly at night, after the day's work was done.

Miss Hammond also writes to the Link:—Our Conference covered the greater part of four days. The longer I live among the Hindus, the more I feel my need of these meetings, and greater is the benefit which I derive from them. After Conference our Upper Province friends had the pleasure of organizing a Telugu Association. This brought together many native Christians, more than I ever saw before, and the way they looked, talked and acted, gave a new impetus to my rather wearied energies. It was a good evidence of what the Gospel is able to do for the sons and daughters of India; and though at present we have not many Christians up North, we believe the Lord is drawing near to us in blessing.

Mr. Hutchinson is making the proposed tour alone, and my last news from the field was, that three people had been baptized at Aukalampara, and two at Tickaly. We hope this is only a little of what this year has in store for us. It is a pleasure to rest, a joy to work; each has its place in this life, and just now my duty lies with the former.

THE MORAVIAN BROTHERS will celebrate in the month of August the 150th anniversary of the foundation of their missions amongst the heathen. It was 1732 that the Brothers Lepold and L. Dolby landed at St. Thomas in the West Indies.

THE MORAVIANS number at home twenty thousand, and have gathered seventy-three thousand heathens into the fold, twenty-four thousand of whom are communicants. "The Christian Monthly" of England says, "Their work in Labrador and Greenland has been so successful that the Christianization of the Esquimaux there is now almost complete. They have four stations among the American Indians in the West Indies they have labored among the negroes so long and with such good results, that they hope in ten years to be able to withdraw, as missionaries, from the field. They have toiled also for many years at Surinam in Dutch Guiana, and have broken ground more recently in British Guiana at Demerara. They have besides six stations on the Mosquito Coast; and, to crown all, they are to be met with in South Africa among the Kaffirs, in Australia among the aborigines, and even in a high valley of the Himalayas among a Mongolian race of Buddhists. It has been the aim of the Moravians to do good to the sunken races of the world, to remember, in a high evangelical sense, 'the poor.'"

Addressing a meeting at Gateshead recently, "General" Booth announced that there had been a proposal to hold a Salvation Army service in St. Paul's Cathedral, London. No arrangements had yet been made, but he had received a hint that if application for such a service were made it would receive the fullest consideration.

The Buddhists in Japan have become so much aroused over the spread of Christianity and decline of Buddhism that they have sent a high dignitary to India to investigate the condition of Buddhism there, and afterwards to go to Germany and England, and study the influence of religion upon the governments and people of those countries.

A little Moslem child accounted for her preference for the christian religion by saying: "I like your Jesus because he loved little girls." Our Mohammed did not love little girls. With unerring instinct he had seized upon at least one of the great differences between the two religions.

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