

A VISION OF COMING GLORY.

LUKE 9:28-36. – JULY 29.

– *"This is my beloved Son: hear him."* –

CONTINUING his lessons to the apostles, showing them that his glory and Kingdom could not come until after his suffering and death, our Lord declared, "There be some standing here who will not taste of death until they see the Son of Man coming in his royal majesty." (Matt. 16:28; 17:1.) Then, six days later (or eight days, counting the one in which this was uttered and the one in which it was fulfilled) our Lord took Peter, James and John, the three apostles most advanced in faith and zeal, into a high mountain, and while praying with them the transfiguration scene of our lesson ensued.

It was a further lesson of instruction in harmony with what he had already explained, viz., that the Son of Man must be set at naught by the chief priests and the elders, and must be crucified, and must rise from the dead, ere he could enter into his glory; – the Kingdom in which he had promised them a share. The transfiguration scene was therefore a picture or "vision" of the Lord's glory in his Kingdom, and was intended to assure the apostles respecting the certainty of the Kingdom, notwithstanding the apparent failure of all kingdom-hopes in our Lord's crucifixion. And this vision was doubtless essential as an assistant to the apostles' faith in Jesus as the promised Messiah, since the course of events which would follow in the next few months would be so different from everything that they had expected.

Peter, one of those present on this occasion, fully substantiates this view – that the transfiguration was a vision of Christ's dignity and glory in the Kingdom – for writing respecting it he says: "We have not followed cunningly devised fables in making known to you the presence and power of our Lord Jesus, but were eye-witnesses of that majesty, for he received from God the Father honor and glory, when

there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory – 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' And this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the holy mount." – 2 Pet. 1:16-18.

The several accounts show that our Lord entered into the mountain to pray, and that the apostles fell asleep during the prayer, but subsequently awakened and beheld the vision, the Master's face shining like the sun, and his garments glitteringly white, and in his company two persons who, for some reason, they recognized as Moses and Elijah, altho of course they had never seen either of these men, and would not have known them without assistance. These they overheard talking with the Lord, the subject of the conversation no doubt being intended for the ears of the disciples – to convince them that the matters which would occur before long in Jerusalem and on Mount Calvary would all be features of the divine plan, harmoniously working out the blessed results promised and longed for, through the Kingdom. "They spoke of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem."

What is the interpretation of the picture? is a proper question. We reply, that it represented, first of all, that altho our Lord Jesus must suffer death, even **[R2659 : page 204]** the death of the cross, in harmony with the divine plan, "being made a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13), nevertheless, he was still the Son of God, whose glorious majesty and kingly power would later on be fully shown forth. And Moses and Elijah, representing the Law and the Prophets, illustrate how the death of Christ was fully attested beforehand. Moses spoke of the sufferings of Christ in all the arrangements of the Law, its sacrifices, etc., and the prophets declared not only the coming glories, but also the sufferings which must precede them, as our Lord subsequently pointed out to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, saying, "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Messiah to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" – Luke 24:25-27.

Again, this picture may be understood to represent the Kingdom during this Gospel age – the Kingdom as recognized by the Lord's people, but not recognized by the world. In this view of the vision, our Lord's face shining as the sun, and his garments glistening white, would represent him in his present condition, as no longer the man Christ Jesus, but the risen, glorified Son of the Highest, a spirit being. In this view of the matter, Moses might be understood to represent the faithful of the past ages, and Elijah the faithful of this Gospel age, the body of Christ in the flesh,* who are to be associated with him in the glory of the Kingdom, and who meantime behold his glory with the eye of faith, and recognize the great transaction of Calvary as the basis for all Kingdom hopes and blessings.

[*See MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. II, Chap. 8, "Elias Shall First Come."](#)

In harmony with this view is the fact that at the same time that this vision was taking place the other disciples of the Twelve at the foot of the mountain were contending with the Adversary, seeking to cast out the devil from the young man. Thus the Lord's people of the present time are still in the valley of conflict, still contending with the will of the flesh and the devil; yet their eyes of faith behold at the top of the mountain the glorious Lord, with all power in heaven and in earth, their Friend, their Teacher, and soon to be their deliverer, who will cause them to share in the glories of his Kingdom into which he has already entered.

We have called this scene on the mountain a vision, and so indeed our Lord calls it, in the account given by Matthew (17:9): "As they came down from the mountain Jesus charged them saying, Tell the *vision* to no man until the Son of Man be risen from the dead." And indeed a vision was just as useful to the purpose as a reality could have been. Thus it was that the Lord showed many things later on to one of these three witnessing disciples on the Isle of Patmos. He showed him in vision, angels and thrones and crowns and multitudes and dragons, etc., in a manner which served the purpose equally as well as tho all those beasts, dragons, etc., had been actually created for the purpose.

So in this vision: Our Lord's transfiguration was merely an *appearance* – *actually* he had undergone no change. He appeared like as spiritual beings are described, bright, shining like the sun, etc., yet he was not yet a spirit being, and did not become such until his resurrection from the dead; he was still "the man Christ Jesus." But in the "vision" his countenance and his garments were caused to *appear* to be bright, glistening, etc., and the *appearance* served every purpose. Likewise, Moses and Elijah appeared to be present, but they were not actually present, because it was merely a "vision." The Apostle distinctly informs us that Moses and Elijah and the others of the ancient worthies are not yet made perfect – and that they cannot be made perfect until after the Church, the body of Christ, is complete and glorified with the Head, "God having provided some better thing for *us*, that *they* without *us* should not be made perfect." – Heb. 11:40; John 3:13; Acts 2:34.

As a part of the "vision" came a misty cloud of light, which enveloped the group, including the disciples, who were fearful as they entered the cloud. This cloud, as a part of the vision, might properly be understood as saying to the apostles and to us, Altho the glory and majesty of the Lord Jesus are unquestionably his, as testified to by the Law and the Prophets, and as a result of his faithfulness unto death, nevertheless that glory will in a considerable measure be hidden, covered, obscured for a time, so that you will see your glorious Lord and King only with the eye of faith, which, altho more or less cloudy, will nevertheless be bright to those who look unto him. And the voice of God speaking in that cloud and testifying to Jesus as the Son of God, and instructing that we should hear and obey his word, would seem to represent how that all through this Gospel age, while the misty cloud surrounds the glory of the Lord, we will have great need to continually hearken to the Word of the Lord, and to repose faith in its declaration respecting the Son of God, our Redeemer.

After the vision the Lord and the apostles descended from the mount to engage in the duties of life – to complete the lessons of faith

and obedience, battling against the world, the flesh and the devil; and yet, as the quotation from the Apostle Peter's letter clearly shows, the influence of this vision continued with the apostles through coming days, as it still encourages us today. And may we not learn a lesson to the effect that as this vision was granted when Jesus and the disciples were at prayer, so all those who seek God in prayer may, to a large extent, with the eye of faith realize this same [R2660 : page 205] blessed vision of the Kingdom – the glories to come – and may, to some extent, with the hearing of faith recognize the voice of God saying, "This is my beloved Son" – to some extent be enabled to realize that as members of the body of Christ their sacrifice must also be accomplished in actual death before they can enter into his glory, since it is written that "if we suffer with him we shall also reign with him."

We cannot build tabernacles on the mountain heights of faith and hope, and expect to dwell there in enraptured vision always. We must remember that the duties and trials of present experiences in conflicts with sin and with self and with the Adversary are essential to our development and part of our covenant; but like the Master we should frequently seek the heavenly Father's blessing in prayer; and in proportion as we use this privilege will our hearts and our faces shine; and proportionately we will be enabled to "show forth the praises of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light," and who has shined by his grace into our hearts, "to give the light of the knowledge of God as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord."
