

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

and listens, corrects and even reconstructs. Above all, he prays. He lives "in the Spirit," and rises from his knees full of the mind of the Spirit. Pedantry is not in him, nor vulgarity. He longs and struggles to catch the dialect in which men may speak worthily of the things of God. And so his work lives. In his own Hindustani New Testament, and in the recovered parts of the Old Testament in which he watched over the labours of Fitrut, his work is still a living influence; men find "reasons for reverting" to it. His earlier Persian, and what is demonstrably distinct from it, his Persic translation, or rather Sabat's, done under his superintendence, these indeed have gone. They did not survive his visit to Persia. Nor did the Arabic, which, as this paper shows, was the chief acknowledged motive of his journey. But what a gifted man is here, and what a splendid sum total of work, that can afford these deductions from the results of a five or six years' struggle with illness, and still leave behind translations of the New Testament in Hindustani and in Persian; the Hindustani version living a double life, its own and that which William Bowley gave it in the humbler vocabulary of the Hindi villages! We live in hurrying times; our days are swifter than a shuttle. New names, new saints, new heroes ever rise and dazzle the eyes of common men. So it should be, for God lives, and through Him men live and manifest His unexhausted power. But Martyn is a perennial. He springs up fresh to every generation. It is time, though, to take care that he does not become simply the shadow of an angel passing by. His pinnacle is that lofty one which is only assigned to eminent goodness, but it rests upon, and is only the final of, a broad-based tower of sound and solid intellectual endowment.

W. J. EDMONDS.

ART. II.—THE TRANSFIGURATION.

IT might be considered superfluous at this age of the Church to try to impress upon its members the importance, the duty, and the necessity of studying the predictive portions of the Scriptures—those which direct our faith onwards to the great winding up of the world's mysterious history at the appearing of the Son of man, the subject having been presented now so many years to the attention of men, both in the press and in the pulpit. But the tone of recent commentaries and expositions shows incontestibly that there still exists an imperative necessity to urge Christian men "to take heed unto

the sure word of prophecy."¹ Our Lord's warning exhortation ought surely to be sufficient, "Behold I have told you before. What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch;" the certainty of the event and the uncertainty of the time adding emphasis to His teaching—in fact, giving it all its peculiar force.

In accordance with this is all the teaching of the Apostles in their respective writings. Believers in the Christ are described as those who wait for, look for, love His appearing. St. Paul expresses his own individual expectation: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." To Titus he writes that the grace of God brings salvation, teaching us to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; and as regards the future, teaching us to look for that blessed hope, even the appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Men have substituted for this an entirely different hope, even on death to go up to heaven, there to dwell for ever with the Saviour, regardless of the resurrection at His coming. In direct contrariety to this, St. Paul instructs the Corinthians (2 Epis. v. 1-4), "earnestly desiring—*ἐπιποθοῦντες*" (longing, R.V.)—"to be clothed upon . . . not for that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon, that what is mortal—*τὸ θνητὸν*—may be swallowed up of life—*οὐθέλωμεν ἐκδύσασθαι*—we do not desire to be unclothed." The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and the gathering together unto Him is, then, our desire, our hope, according to the Scriptures, and at His coming the establishment of the kingdom of God.

The coming of the Lord and the kingdom are so intimately connected that they cannot be conceived as ever separated; hence the expression, "coming in His kingdom," and the penitent robber's petition, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom," a petition in accordance with Daniel's account of his vision, in ch. vii., verses 13, 14. This vision is the source of all those passages in the New Testament which speak of our Lord coming in, or with, the clouds of heaven.

Now, though the life of our Lord was one of the deepest humiliation and suffering, yet on certain occasions He thought fit to assert His true dignity, and to exhibit His real glory, as the result of His sufferings, as "the joy that was set before Him, for which He endured the cross, despising the shame." Such an occasion was His manifestation to the Gentiles, when the gifts and homage of the eastern sages were an earnest of the

¹ 2 Peter i. 19. This passage should be read thus: "We have the word of prophecy *made* more sure (*i.e.*, confirmed). Whereunto ye do well that ye take heed (as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise) in your hearts"

homage of the whole earth (Ps. lxxii. 8-15; Isa. lx. 6-10). Another similar occasion was His riding into Jerusalem a few days only before His death, when He openly avowed Himself the Messiah King. But especially on the Mount of the Transfiguration did He exhibit the glory in which He will appear when He shall "take unto Him His great power and reign; when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of the Lord and of His Christ." The reference of this scene to His coming and kingdom must at the outset be established. The account of the Transfiguration occurs in the first three Gospels, and in each is immediately preceded by a declaration by the Lord, that the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with the holy angels. This is followed by the promise, in evident connection with the statement—might we say *suggested* by it?—"There be some of them that stand here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom" (Matt. xvi. 28); "till they see the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark ix. 1); "till they see the kingdom of God" (Luke ix. 27). "The Son of man coming in His kingdom" and "the coming of the kingdom of God with power" are only two different forms of expression conveying the same truth—"the Son of man shall come in the power of His kingdom and set up the kingdom of God on earth."

In fulfilment of this promise was the scene on the Mount, when, a few days after—"six days," "about eight days"—Jesus brought Peter, James, and John up into an exceeding high mountain, and exhibited to them His glory—"His own glory" in which He will appear when He "cometh in His kingdom." St. John's reference to this scene is short but pregnant: "The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory—glory as of the only begotten from the Father)"—the glory of the incarnate word, the glory of the Son of man, when He shall appear in the power of the kingdom of God.

St. Peter's appeal to what he and his companions witnessed on the Mount is decisive as to the character and design of the revelation. The great subject of his teaching, as of that of all the Apostles, was the coming of the Christ and the "salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." He desired, even gave diligence, that the Christians for whom he wrote his Epistles might after his departure (*ἔξοδον*) be able to call these things to their remembrance at all times. On his own mind the reality of the coming and kingdom was deeply impressed. He had all the evidence that could possibly reach his understanding. The sure word of prophecy had revealed all to him; and he had that word confirmed to him by the evidence of his own eyesight, than which nothing could be more convincing. With confidence, therefore, he asserts, "We have not followed cunningly-devised

fables, when we made known to you the power and coming (or presence) of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye-witnesses of His majesty." This majesty was therefore "the power and coming" of the Christ, "the coming of the Son of man in His kingdom," "the coming of the kingdom of God with power." Nor does he leave us in any doubt as to the time and place when and where he saw this coming and kingdom. He adds: "He received from God the Father honour 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 we heard when we were with Him in the holy mount." From all these references no room is left for doubt that the Transfiguration was "the coming of the Son of man in His kingdom, the kingdom of God come with power, the coming and power of our Lord Jesus Christ."

We have now to consider the scene itself in its details. We have of these: 1. Our Lord Himself in glory. 2. His two glorified companions. 3. The unglorified disciples. 4. The cloud. These are the principal incidents.

1. The scene was designed to manifest the glory of the Christ especially, not His Divine glory as abstract Deity, but His glory as the word become flesh; the glory of the Man Christ Jesus. The language in which the change in His appearance is described is a strong proof of this: "He was transfigured;" the word imparts a change of form, that is, His humble human form, in which His Deity tabernacled, was transfigured for one of glory. In St. Luke ix. 19 it is said, "the fashion of His countenance was altered;" and St. Matthew and St. Mark say, "His face did shine as the sun; and His raiment became white as snow" (compare Rev. i. 13-15; Ezek. i. 26; Dan. vii. 9). He did not lay aside His human body, but was glorified in it. The utmost importance attaches to this, because of our interest in it; for in His glory we see that to which He designs to conform us, in the day when, rising from the dead, we shall see Him as He is, and be like Him (see 1 John iii. 2; Col. iii. 4; Phil. iii. 20, 21). In the glory of Christ as God the redeemed can have no share; they cannot be manifested in it, nor personally be interested therein; they can be interested only in that glory which Jesus has earned for Himself as their Redeemer. As surely as Christ suffered for them, so surely was He glorified for them. By suffering in human nature He has procured for it glory, which He claims as the reward of His righteousness and obedience unto death; a glory for that nature which He has thus raised in His own person. To Him in His pre-existent state it was unnecessary, possessed as He was of all the glory of eternity. The voice from "the excellent glory" confirms this, that it was the reward of His

obedience unto death, as it is written, "Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. Wherefore" (because of this humiliation and death) "God hath also highly exalted Him," etc. (Philip. ii. 8, 9). As at His baptism the words, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," conveyed the Divine sanction for the work He was about to undertake, and His perfect qualification, when the Spirit descended on Him from on high and abode with Him, so here they convey to men for their comfort and peace, in anticipation, the Father's approval of His work as perfected, and His acceptance of human nature, not before, since Adam's fall, acceptable in His sight.

2. The two saints who appeared in glory with Christ. I conceive that this adds to the evidence already adduced, that the glory was not the Divine glory, but that which the Saviour vouchsafed to obtain for man. By introducing into the scene two of His redeemed invested with like glory, He gave a strong confirmation that the glory was an earnest of that which is to come; and by seeing two of its members so invested, the Church has an indisputable assurance that the glory is its own.

But why were Moses and Elias specially selected for the occasion? Can we hesitate to answer, because in their respective persons they represented the two classes of the saints who shall pass into glory from this mortal state?—the first, by death, followed by resurrection in immortality and incorruption at the coming of the Lord; the second, by translation, without dying, caught up to meet Him as He descends. Thus we read, "We shall not *all* sleep, but we shall *all* be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52). Somewhat more fully: "Them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you, by the Word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent" (precede, R.V.) "them that are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we be ever with the Lord" (1 Thess. iv. 14-17). Though in a moment all shall take place, yet there will be order. The voice of the archangel shall waken the saints sleeping in their graves, who, rising in life immortal and incorruptible, shall mingle with the living saints on earth their mortal bodies also changed into immortal and incorruptible, bodies; and then both, one glorious multitude, shall be caught up to meet the descending Lord, and "the Lord God shall come

and all the saints with thee" (Zech. xiv. 5). Of these two ways in which believers pass into glory Moses and Elias were examples, or types; Moses slept—he died; Elias died not—he was translated, caught up into heaven. Thus was the whole Church represented in this scene of the coming glory and kingdom of the Redeemer, sharing the glory and consequently reigning with him.¹

3. The persons who were privileged to witness the glorious scene, and who also fulfilled a representative character in it. "He took with Him Peter, James and John, and was transfigured before them"—three unglorified believers. As one reason why they were present, we can quote Peter's own words, when vindicating the Church's hope as not following "cunningly devised fables" when looking for "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." He says: "We were eye-witnesses of His majesty." No description or historical record could bring such convincing proof to the minds of believers as the testimony of three eye-witnesses who could say they had beheld His majesty and glory.

But, similarly as Moses and Elias, they occupied a representative position, even of the nations of the earth, converted to Christ when He comes, but not glorified. Thus when we look to the Mount of the Transfiguration we behold Christ's future kingdom, so to speak, *in miniature*. It is on earth; our Lord is there in His glorified humanity; His saints are with Him sharing His glory—His saints both risen and translated; risen as Moses, translated as Elias; the converted nations of the earth, as represented by Peter, James and John, in ordinary, not glorified, humanity. Such will be the kingdom of the Christ at His appearing.

4. Another accompaniment of the vision, which is of the utmost moment in deciding its character and reference, must be specially noted, the "bright cloud which overshadowed them." It overshadowed Jesus, Moses and Elias, and "they (the

¹ "They spake of his decease—*ἐξοδος*, departure—which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem." This word *ἐξοδος* is remarkable, "because in its wider range of meaning it covered all the special phenomena connected with the close of the ministry of the law-giver and the Tishbite (comp. Deut. xxxiv. 5, 6; 2 Kings ii. 12), and not less so the resurrection and ascension of our Lord, as well as the crucifixion."—*Bishop Elliott's Commentary*. "The word, as Godet shows, is especially chosen to include the death and ascension of Christ."—*The Speaker's Commentary*. "Vocabulum valde grave, quo continetur passio, crux, mors, resurrectio, ascensio."—*Bengel*. May we not conclude from this that the scene was designed for the Lord Himself, to strengthen Him to pass through the fearful ordeal that was before Him, but which should eventuate in the glory of His kingdom? "For the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Apostles) feared when they (the glorified ones) entered into it." It was a cloud of heaven's own glory. In the prophecies this specially marks "the coming of the Son of man in His kingdom." In the vision of Daniel (chap. vii.) we read, "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And then was given Him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (vers. 13, 14). His kingdom to be shared with the saints—"And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom *under the whole heaven* shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him" (ver. 27). In these two quotations from Daniel we have an exposition of the scene on the Mount of the Transfiguration.

Our Lord appropriates this prophecy to Himself. "Then shall appear¹ the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth (land) mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. xxiv. 30). Again, in answer to the adjuration of the High Priest, "Tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God" (xxvii. 63, 64), He answered: "Thou hast said; nevertheless, I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." It was surrounded with the bright cloud of heaven's glory that He ascended into heaven: and the promise given to console the disciples on their Master's departure was, that He "shall so come in like manner—that is, in the clouds—as they saw Him go into heaven" (Acts i. 11).

Once more, the subject of the Book which specially is "the revelation of Jesus Christ" is, "Behold He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him," etc. (Rev. i. 7).

Thus have we given to us a defined view of our future state. The Church in these latter times has a most undefined view of that future. The hope of the resurrection from the dead, that most blessed hope, which speaks to man's nature, and to his sympathies, is exchanged for the being unclothed, disembodied: the pagan view of the future in ignorance of the Divine revelation of the resurrection being adopted by the Church. Alas! *immaterialized being*, which is most undesirable, substituted for the substantial reality of the resurrection unto life.² "Not that

¹ "The sign of the Son of man" is the Son of man Himself, just as "the sign of the prophet Jonas" was Jonas himself.

² Perhaps a mistaken view of the words "spiritual body" has mainly

we would be—*οὐ θέλωμεν*—unclothed, but clothed upon that mortality might be swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. v. 1-5), the almost identical words the Apostle uses in 1 Cor. xv., where he treats so fully of the resurrection. Until the resurrection mortality triumphs. It is then that this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible shall put on incorruption. In the body, while it is unregenerate, we groan, being burdened because of sin; but can we not look to the time when it shall be builded up anew in holiness? Can we not look upwards to Christ, who, in holy, risen, and glorified flesh, is now seated on the Father's throne, and in the sure and certain hope of being like Him, await the resurrection? Until then we cannot be like Him in glory. Until then this body of our humiliation shall not be fashioned like unto the body of His glory. He Himself, in prophecy, looked forward to His resurrection: "My flesh shall rest in hope, for Thou wilt not leave My soul in hades, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." And though, unlike Him, we shall see corruption, unless we shall be alive and remain unto His coming, yet shall we be like Him when we shall awake from the sleep of death to die no more. "I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness."

The scene on the Mount substantiates to us our hope, and the vision may be translated into the words of St. Paul: "Behold I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last

contributed to this. St. Paul distinguishes between the *σῶμα ψυχικόν* and the *σῶμα πνευματικόν*; the former the body of the present life, the mortal body; the latter the body of the resurrection, the immortal body. The former derived from the first Adam, who became *ψυχήν ζῶσαν*; the latter from the second Adam, who became *πνεῦμα ζωοποιόν*. The life gives to the body its characteristic. The *ψυχή* life actuates the present body; the *πνεῦμα* life quickens the future, the resurrection body. The body is in each case the same; the life is different. The body in each case is "flesh and bones," not "flesh and blood." Our Lord's own statement is peculiarly full: "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; handle Me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold Me having" (Luke xxiv. 39). The same flesh and bones as before His death, but the life, the actuating force, totally different. Our Lord's resurrection was altogether distinct from the resurrection of Lazarus and others, who were recalled to *ψυχή* life by a fiat of power, but to die again. His resurrection was a birth into an altogether new life. The spirit of life. God, the Holy Spirit, begat in His dead body, as it lay in the tomb, spiritual life. He was thus "born, begotten from the dead" (Psa. ii. 7, Col. i. 18, Rev. i. 5). And because the Church shall also be thus born from the dead, He is designated "the first-born—the first begotten of, or from, the dead." Hence His body was spiritual—*i.e.*, having spiritual life; not immaterial, but as material as when He was born of the Virgin. "See," He says, "it is I Myself; handle Me; feel My material hands and feet; and be assured I am the very Jesus you associated with before I died." The bearing of this on various matters of controversy will at once be recognised.

trump ; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible ; and we shall be changed."

Further still, the Transfiguration reveals perfected humanity—humanity as in the eternal purpose of God. At its creation human nature was imperfect, surrounded with infirmities, weak and mortal. "The Word became flesh," as thus weak and mortal ; He hungered, thirsted, was weary, felt sorrow deeply and keenly, and died. He rose, leaving for ever all these infirmities and mortalities ; He rose to die no more ; He rose the perfected man. The Resurrection was the completement of the Incarnation. At the Transfiguration He appeared, in anticipation, the perfected man, the fulfilment of the purpose of God, as He now is and will be for ever, "the image of the invisible God."

But He was not alone, the individual Christ, for "Moses and Elias appeared in glory," one with Him in His glory, therefore one with Him in His risen life, exhibiting there the full union for which He prayed (John xvii.) between Him and His people. For the life of the head is the life of the body, and the glory of the head is the glory of the body. The type of the marriage of the first Adam and the first Eve, "signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and His Church," was thus fulfilled in the perfected humanity of both the risen Christ and the risen Church, one for ever.

Who can tell the far-reaching issues of the scene on the Mount of the Transfiguration ?

THEOP. CAMPBELL.



ART. III.—THE LANGUAGES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.—PART III.

I NOW turn to the language in which "the Gospel" was written. There is a considerable interval betwixt the Ascension of the Lord and the appearance of the first *written* document connected with the new faith. Our Lord, like Elijah and John the Baptist, left behind Him nothing in writing. His work was oral, and we have no indication that His companions and hearers caught up and recorded His words at the time. In Luke xvi. 6 we read that the Lord, in the parable of the unjust steward, used the following words : "Take thy bill and *write* fourscore." The word "write" never passed His lips save in that parable. He knew how Jeremiah had written, "Write all the words that I have spoken," but He himself gave no such orders. The eyes of his followers were darkened. One Evangelist, who had special knowledge, tells us that there were many other things which Jesus did, of which we have no