

V. 2. The character of Cornelius is now described. *A devout man...one that feared God.* He was probably a proselyte, worshipping the God of Israel, and attending the services of the synagogue, but not circumcised. *With all his house;* household, including, besides the members of his family, those of his soldiers who were his close attendants, and his servants. *Gave much alms to the people;* that is, to the Jewish people about him. Almsgiving was a practice very highly esteemed amongst the Jews, Ps. 41 : 1. *And prayed to God alway;* habitually. Likely he observed the regular Jewish hours of prayer, 9 a.m.; 12 noon; 3 p.m.

Vs. 3-6. *In a vision evidently;* Rev. Ver., "openly", to mark it as a genuine vision, and no deception of the senses. *Ninth hour.* See on v. 2. *An angel of God coming.* V. 30 calls the visitor "a man...in bright clothing". *Being affrighted* (Rev. Ver.); at the sight of a being whom he perceived was supernatural. *Prayers...alms are gone up* (Rev. Ver.); like the smoke of the incense rising heavenward (compare Ps. 141 : 2; Heb. 13 : 15; Phil. 4 : 18). *Memorial;* "a remembrance offering", like the portion of the meal offering which was burnt with the sweet-smelling frankincense (see Lev. 2 : 1, 2, 9, 16, Rev. Ver.). Cornelius' prayers and alms had won the favorable regard of God. *To Joppa.* See Geography Lesson. *Simon...surnamed Peter* (Rev. Ver.); to distinguish him from Simon the tanner (see ch. 9 : 43). *By the sea side.* The tanner's calling being regarded by the Jews as unclean, it had to be carried on outside the city.

Vs. 7, 8. *Called two...household servants;* attendants closely associated with the family. *A devout soldier;* "a trusty orderly in constant attendance on his superior, bound to him by the bond of a common piety". *Sent them to Joppa;* thirty miles away.

II. Peter Prepared, 9-16.

Vs. 9, 10. *On the morrow.* The distance to be traveled was equal to a day's journey, but the start was made late the day before. *Upon the housetop.* The flat roof of the Eastern house was used for many purposes, worship being amongst these (see 1 Sam. 9 : 25; Jer. 19 : 13; 32 : 29). *Sixth hour;* 12 noon, one of the regular hours of prayer. *Hungry.*

He had probably been observing one of the special days of fasting. *Fell into a trance;* a condition in which the mind, so to speak, passes out of the body, and sees things invisible to the bodily eye.

Vs. 11-14. *Saw heaven opened;* to show that the teaching of the vision was from God. *A certain vessel descending...as...a great sheet...let down* (Rev. Ver.); Weymouth, "What seemed to be an enormous sail was descending, being let down to the earth by ropes at the four corners". *Fourfooted beasts...creeping things...fowls;* representatives of the whole animal creation. *Rise, Peter; kill and eat;* a divine command, setting aside the law of Moses, which permitted some, and forbade other, animals to be used for food (see Lev. ch. 11). *Not so, Lord.* Peter recognizes the speaker as divine; but in his reply we hear the self-willed and impetuous Peter of the Gospels, Matt. 16 : 22; John 13 : 8. His Jewish prejudices die hard. *Never eaten anything...common;* literally, "shared by all", food that ordinary people may eat, but which is forbidden to a Jew. *Unclean;* impure, as forbidden to a holy nation like Israel.

Vs. 15, 16. *What God hath cleansed.* God had given to Moses the laws about food, and He could also revoke them. *Call not thou common;* an echo of Christ's teaching, Mark 7 : 15. *Thrice;* to give emphasis. This was a suggestive number for Peter, who had three times denied his Lord. *Received...into heaven;* to make it doubly sure that the vision had come from God.

III. Peter Sent, 17-20.

Vs. 17-20. *Peter doubted;* Rev. Ver., "was much perplexed". He wondered if the vision meant more than distinctions in food. *Spirit said;* speaking as the infallible Teacher and Guide. *Go;* with the men who had come from Cornelius. *Doubting nothing;* without hesitation as to its lawfulness.

The words which Peter speaks in Cornelius' house at Caesarea, open with the newly gained assurance that God is willing to accept and welcome Gentiles as well as Jews. This message has come through Jesus, the Messiah of all nations. The life of Jesus is then briefly outlined. The apostles are witnesses of all these things, as also of His resurrection. And