

in the world, glistening in its mantle of snow, added to the rest with which all parties came together. The Governor and Lady Elliott were exceedingly affable, having pleasant words of cheer for each missionary, as they enquired after their work, and taking special pains to introduce the missionaries and officials, residents and tea-planters who were present. After an hour's very pleasant social intercourse, during which refreshments were served to all, Sir Charles passed through the company, inviting all to come to the "Durbar Room," or reception hall used on State occasions, and the company was soon seated on sofas, divans and chairs placed in an unconventional manner all round the spacious room.

Pleasant conversation ran on for a few minutes, and then order was called, and the Governor, stepping to a table at the head of the room, gave a brief address of welcome, which was so pleasant and so telling that I have written it out briefly, that others, too, may enjoy it and be helped and stimulated by it.

Sir Charles spoke substantially as follows.—

"Missionary friends, ladies and gentlemen, I wish, in a few words, to say what a very great pleasure it gives Lady Elliott and myself to welcome so many missionaries here as our chief guests this evening, coming as they do from all parts of our presidency, as well as from other presidencies and provinces of India, and representing so many different missionary societies from so many different countries.

"We are very glad that so many missionaries can come up to this delightful climate from the burning plains for a little well-earned rest and recuperation after their soul-absorbing and arduous toil at their stations, for it will fit them the better for the heavy work ever before them.

"It gives us real pleasure to tender to them this small amount of hospitality, with a large amount of sympathy and good-will and of appreciation of the noble and, to India, all-important service that they are rendering.

"My long experience in India, in the different presidencies and provinces, has taught me that the British Government in India cannot possibly do the work which, in the providence of God, is our only justification for being here, namely, the civilization, enlightenment and uplifting of the whole people of India, without the aid of the missionaries. For extended observation and careful study of the people have produced in me the profound conviction that nothing can lift these millions of Hindus up to the standard of our Western Christian nations in probity, morality and nobleness of life but that Gospel of Christ that has lifted us.

"I view, then, the missionary work as an indispensable, unofficial and voluntary auxiliary of the Government in carrying out its highest aspirations—the ennobling of the whole Hindu people. Always, in our tours in the provinces, Lady Elliott and myself find our greatest pleasure in looking up and trying to help and encourage the missionary work of all societies wherever we go. We are grateful to you missionaries for your self-sacrificing labours, and for the help you thus render the Government, and assure you that you will always find sympathy both in 'The Shrubbery,' where we now are, and in 'Belvidere House,' in Calcutta, so long as we continue to occupy it.

"I wish, further, to say that Lady Elliott and myself have to-day invited you, the leading residents and visitors at Darjeeling, and tea-planters of the district, that you may meet these missionaries and learn of their work, and learn to know them personally, and so, henceforth, take a much greater interest in their work, and render them the more liberal help. If they give their lives to the work, it is only fair that we should aid in furnishing them abundant supplies.

"I congratulate you all that the last census and the signs of the times all point to a very positive and somewhat rapid progress of the missionary work in India. There is unquestionably an undercurrent working among the higher classes in India toward Christianity, in spite of all the open manifestations against it; and we may look forward with confident expectation to the day when all India shall bow at the feet of Christ, who alone can uplift, purify and save."

At the nomination of the Governor, Bishop Johnson, the Anglican Bishop of Calcutta and Metropolitan of India, then took the chair, and in a brief address, thanking Sir Charles for his outspoken testimony to the missionary work, and him and Lady Elliott for the kind conception and kind action which had assembled this company, went on to say that his duties as Metropolitan of India, taking him from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, and from Karachi, on the sea of Arabia, to Burmah and Assam, on the borders of China, gave him the opportunity of gauging any progress made in the missionary work not alone of the Church of England, but, to some extent, of all other societies within those wide limits; that when he first came to India a decade ago he did not at once appreciate the amount of preparatory work that had been done. Not to be tabulated in any statistics, not apparent to the eye of the casual observer, but which he now saw to be the chief element of hope for the speedy evangelization of India. He told of the numbers of educated native gentlemen who, to his knowledge, were now privately reading the Bible and endeavouring to conform their lives to its precepts, while still outwardly adhering to Hinduism, who, ere long, when the Spirit of God should mightily move among them, would come over as a mighty host into the Christian Church. He spoke of the wonderful uplifting power which Christianity had already manifested in the Madras Presidency, in those regions where very large numbers of converts had been gathered, and referred to the remarkable

declaration of the Director of Public Instruction in Madras, in his last official report on the progress of education, to the effect that, if the percentage of increase during the last twenty years be maintained, the native Christian population of that presidency would, within the next two generations, have surpassed the Brahmin in education, in material prosperity, in influence and in official position. He intimated that he had come to India interested, indeed, in missions, but practically a pessimist as to their progress; that a decade of close observation had converted him into an optimist, for the well-marked indications now were that India would, in the not very distant future, become an integral part of the kingdom of Christ.

Rev. Archibald Turnbull, B.D., the senior missionary in the Darjeeling district of the Church of Scotland, to which seems to be committed the evangelization of the Eastern Himalayas, gave a terse and interesting account of the work going on among these hill people with their fifteen catechists and twenty junior assistants at Darjeeling, and twelve out-stations reaching to the base of the mountains—Nipali catechists for the Nipalis, who have immigrated in such numbers from the adjacent kingdom of Nepal in connection with the tea industry, Lepcha catechists for the Lepchas from Sikkim, and a Bhutia catechist working among the Bhutias who have flocked in from Bhutan, and told of the little churches they had already established here with 600 communicants and 1,700 adherents, with baptisms of new converts every month. He also spoke of the Scotch Ladies' Zenana Mission in Darjeeling, consisting of three Scotch ladies and one native woman, who carry on their work in four languages, and meet with much encouragement.

Miss Edith Highton, of the English Church Zenana Mission in Calcutta, followed with an intensely interesting account of their methods of work, their hindrances, and their successes.

Rev. F. B. Gwinn, of the Church Missionary Society, in charge of their Boys' Boarding School and Training Institution in Calcutta, then told of his work, and instanced remarkable cases of conversion of young men of the higher classes from their study of the Bible in mission schools, who had indeed lost all of property, position and friends, but had gained Christ, thus effectually answering the oft-repeated taunt that Hindus only become Christians for worldly gain.

Rev. J. A. Graham, M.A., of the Young Men's Guild Mission of the Church of Scotland at Kalimpong, in British Bhutan, spoke of the exceedingly hopeful work in his mission, with two hundred baptisms of mountaineers last year, and told how the native Church had organized among themselves a Foreign Missionary Society to send the Gospel into the kingdom of Bhutan adjacent, into which no European can yet enter, and how the senior and highest paid native evangelist of the mission, who had commenced the work at Kalimpong twelve years ago, had now resigned his connection with the mission, that he might go forth as the first foreign missionary of the native Church to the turbulent and dangerous regions of Bhutan, receiving only the voluntary contributions of the native Christians to support him in Bhutan and his family in Kalimpong, since they could not accompany him.

He also spoke for the Scottish Universities' Mission in Independent Sikkim, now under the efficient charge of Rev. Robert Kilgour, B.D., of Glasgow University, who, with his fifteen native assistants, is pushing the work up into Eastern, Central and Western Sikkim, building their little churches almost on the borders of the perpetual snows—for in Sikkim rise those giant mountains twenty-three, twenty-five and twenty-seven thousand feet high, towered over by their Monarch, Kichiu, Janga, the "Golden Horn," 28,177 feet high, the second highest mountain in the world.

With a hearty vote of thanks to the chairman, the speakers and to Sir Charles and Lady Elliott, and a cheering cup of coffee as we passed again out through the refreshment-room, we scattered with the intensified conviction and determination that from the eternal snows of the Himalayas to the scorching sands of Cape Comorin, Jesus shall be King.

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INTERNATIONAL LESSONS

Oct. 16,

PETER'S VISION.

Acts x.

GOLDEN TEXT.—O that I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.—Acts x. 34.

INTRODUCTORY.

Peter was warmly attached by spirit and tradition to the Jewish ideas and forms of worship. He was called the apostle of the Jews, while Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles. It is remarkable and not without significance that he should be selected by God as the instrument for opening wide the door for the admission of the Gentiles to the kingdom of God. Hitherto the daily increasing body of disciples was drawn from among the Jewish people, and many who were not Jews were received into the fellowship of the Church, but these latter had to conform to the Jewish modes of worship. The means used by God to prepare the mind of the Jewish apostle for the more extended application of Gospel privilege and liberty form the subject of to-day's lesson.

I. Coming to the Light.—Caesarea was at the time of Christ and His apostles the seat of the Roman Government of the Province. It was built by Herod the Great, and named in honour of the Emperor Augustus. It was situated on the shore of the Mediterranean, about thirty miles to the north of Joppa. Living then at Caesarea was an officer in the Roman army named Cornelius, who was in command of a hundred men, hence his title of centurion. He belonged to the Italian band, a cohort of soldiers who were natives of Italy. This Roman officer, though a heathen, was striving to live up to the measure of light he possessed, and as a consequence he was desirous of obtaining more. He had outgrown the absurdities of heathenism amid which he had grown up. He feared God, that is, he reverence and worshipped the living and true God. The influence of his religious character was felt in his home, for Luke adds that "he feared God with all his house." He was kind and charitable to those in distress, for "he gave much alms to the people." He was a man of prayer, for it is stated that he "prayed to God always." He was in the habit of keeping up the stated hours of prayer. The bright vision he saw was at the ninth hour of the day, about three o'clock in the afternoon of our time, and was the hour for worship among the Jews. It is a universal feeling of the human heart that it must worship. Men turn away from the Great Creator and worship the creature instead. They will worship objects fashioned by their own hands, or objects even the most degrading, but they will worship. The number of heathens that follow the light they have, the light of reason and conscience, may not be large, but those who do follow God's leading find the way of life. Are there not too many in Christian lands who have more heavenly light than they are willing to avail themselves of?

II. Receiving Light.—While engaged in devotion there appeared to Cornelius a glorious vision, "an angel of God coming in unto him." The sudden appearance of this angelic messenger startled him. He gazed intently and recognized him as an angel of God; he asked, "What is it, Lord?" The angel reassures him by telling him that his "prayers and alms are gone up as a memorial before God." Whatever is done for God's glory and for the good of others, when arising out of pure and sincere motives, obtains favour in God's sight. We are not to make the mistake so often made that good deeds can atone for sin; salvation from sin is not purchasable. The forgiveness of sin is God's gracious and free gift to all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ who died for the remission of sin. The good works done from pure motives come up before God like incense and a pure offering, but they cannot atone for guilt. God is pleased with them, because they accord with His holy and beneficent will. The angel was divinely commissioned to tell Cornelius to send men to Joppa, where Peter was at the time engaged in preaching the Gospel. Full instructions were to find the apostle were given. Cornelius prepared at once to comply with the advice given him. He did not delay until the vivid impressions made by the sight and words of the angel had faded out and become dim, but obeyed immediately. He sent two of his household servants and a devout soldier, one who had no doubt been benefited and impressed by his officer's teaching and example, to Joppa, inviting Peter to visit him at Caesarea.

III. Peter's Vision.—While Cornelius was receiving his message from God at Caesarea, Peter also was being prepared by a vision at Joppa to respond to it. The day following, Peter went up to the housetop where he could be alone to observe the noon hour of prayer. He became very hungry, and while the midday meal was being prepared he fell into a trance. His hungry condition would make the vision more impressive. Heaven appeared to open, and he saw descending a great sheet, symbolic of the wide world, knit at the four corners, which former interpreters regarded as indicating that all quarters of the earth were now opened for the preaching of the Gospel. In this sheet there was a promiscuous collection of animals, clean and unclean, according to the classification of the Mosaic code. There came to him a voice saying, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat." Here was an indication to Peter that old things were passing away. He could satisfy his hunger without adhering to the distinctions of the old law. Now the Gospel age was wider and freer in its scope. At first Peter does not comprehend the meaning of the vision, for he answers, "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." To this the voice replies, "What God has cleansed, that call not thou common." God had provided for the means by which men all over the world could be cleansed from their sins. It was not then for man to make distinctions. The apostle was being instructed to obedience to promote the large purpose of God. The vision was thrice repeated so that the impression might be deep and the meaning of the vision made clear. Peter thought deeply over what he had seen and heard. Cornelius' messengers had arrived at the gate of Simon, the tanner's house. While Peter is puzzling over what the vision should mean, its significance is made plain by the direct utterance of the Holy Spirit which said to him, "Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them." Peter hesitated no longer. Like Cornelius, he too was obedient to the heavenly vision. Thus God both in providence and grace provides opportunities for expanding the minds of His servants, thus preparing the way for the extension of His Kingdom until it shall embrace within its sweep all nations.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

Living up to the measure of light possessed leads to God. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God."

A devout soul is usually a generous soul. The centurion gave much alms to the people.

God remembers the good deeds that are done for His glory and for the love of fellow-men.

God gives light to those who endeavour to walk in the light. His revelations of truth are to be obeyed.