

Lesson II.

PETER, ÆNEAS AND DORCAS

April 13, 1902

Acts 9 : 32-43. Commit to memory vs. 40-42. Read Luke 10 : 1-24.

32 And it came to pass, as Pe'ter¹ passed through-out all ² quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lyd'da.

33 And there he found a certain man named Æne'as, which had kept his bed eight years,³ and was sick of the palsy.

34 And Pe'ter said unto him, Æne'as, Je'sus Christ maketh thee whole : arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.

35 And all that dwelt at Lyd'da and Sa'ron saw him, and turned to the Lord.

36 Now there was at Jop'pa a certain disciple named Tab'itha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas : this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.

37 And it came to pass in those days, that she⁷ was sick, and died : whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber.

38 And forasmuch as Lyd'da was nigh to Jop'pa,

Revised Version.—¹ Went; ² Parts; ³ For he was palsied; ⁴ Healeth^h thee; ⁵ Straightway he arose; ⁶ In Sharon; ⁷ Fell sick; ⁸ Two men unto him, entreating him, Delay not; ⁹ Come unto us; ¹⁰ Raised; ¹¹ Became; ¹² On; ¹³ Abode.

EXPLANATION

Connection—Saul's courage in preaching Christ stirred up the Jews of Damascus to kill him, ch. 9 : 22, 23. His escape by the city wall in a basket, his visit to Jerusalem, the further attempt on his life there, and his journey to Casarea and Tarsus, are recounted in vs. 24-30. The churches now had rest and strengthened and grew. The persecution ceased perhaps because of the troubles the Jews were having with their Roman rulers. They themselves were being persecuted, and this left no time or opportunity for them to persecute Christians.

32. Peter. He was the first of the disciples to acknowledge Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (Matt. 16 : 13, 16); great honor was put upon him (vs. 17-19); and he was foremost, as we have lately seen, at Pentecost and during the persecutions that followed. Passed throughout all parts; on a tour of visitation to the newly-formed churches and breaking fresh ground—a sort of "superintendent of missions." The saints; the sanctified or "set apart" people, hence holy.—a common New Testament name for Christ's followers (ch. 26 : 10; Rom. 1 : 7; 1 Cor. 1 : 2; 2 Cor. 1 : 1; etc.) Lydda; the birthplace, according to tradition, of St. George, "the patron saint of England."

33-35. Sick of the palsy; and had been for eight years—an incurable case. "Palsy," a contraction for paralysis, include then such diseases as catalepsy (violent cramp, with temporary suspension of the senses), lockjaw, etc. Jesus Christ maketh thee whole. As in ch. 3 : 6, Peter heals, not in his own name, as Jesus always did, but in Christ's name. Make thy bed. The illustration shows the process. Immediately. The miracle was apparent and the effect great. All . . . turned unto the Lord—the whole country-side, as it were. Saron is the beautiful plain of Sharon, which ran along the sea-coast from Joppa to Casarea (Sol. Song 2 : 1; Isa. 33 : 2).

36, 37. Joppa. The Palestine coast has no real harbor, but Joppa (now Jaffa) has always, as now, been the port of Jerusalem. The spread of the gospel thither was natural. Tabitha, Aramæic or spoken

and the disciples had heard that Pe'ter was there, they sent⁸ unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come⁹ to them.

39 Then Pe'ter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber; and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.

40 But Pe'ter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tab'itha, arise. And she opened her eyes; and when she saw Pe'ter, she sat up.

41 And he gave her his hand, and¹⁰ lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.

42 And it was known throughout all Jop'pa; and many believed¹² in the Lord.

43 And it came to pass, that he¹³ tarried many days in Jop'pa with one Si'mon a tanner.

Hebrew; Ziblah (2 Kings 12 : 1), Hebrew; Dorcas. Greek; all meaning "gazelle," a beautiful wild deer. Almsdeeds; an old English word for works of charity. The Greek word means a generous disposition and the deeds that flow from it. When they had washed, etc. The details are given to show that Dorcas was really dead.

38, 39. Nigh to Joppa. See "Time and Place." Entreating him, Delay not (Rev. Ver.) Apparently the burial was put off in hope that Peter might restore her to life. He had done other miracles. Peter . . . went. He would comfort, and if it should please God, would do more. All the widows stood by weeping. She had been their leader, the president as we should say, of the "Dorcas" society. Coats, the closely fitting undergarment; garments, the loose flowing outer robe. Care for the poor is a mark of discipleship, Matt. 25 : 34-46; Jas. 1 : 27. 40, 41. But Peter . . . presented her alive. The mode of the miracle vividly recalls Mark 5 : 41, 42. He first turned to God, then to the dead



Oriental Rolling up His Bed

body—a lesson for Christian workers. When one has laid hold of God by prayer as Peter did, then he can lay hold of those dead in sin and they will rise.

42, 43. Many believed in the Lord; an advance, it would seem, on v. 35. Simon, a tanner; a hateful trade, because of its necessary contact with dead bodies. Peter was, however, already beginning to overcome Jewish scruples.