

bright clothing—R. V. "Four days ago, until this hour, I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house." There is no mention of "fasting" in the oldest manuscripts. Cornelius was stationed at Caesarea, 15 miles north of Joppa, and was a centurion, or captain, in a cohort, or regiment (27: 1). The ninth hour (3 p. m.) was one of the stated hours of prayer amongst the Jews. The vision had occurred on the third day previous for the Jews included both the first and last in the count. Bright clothing is characteristic of heavenly messengers (Luke 24: 4; Matt. 28: 3; Rev. 15: 6).

31. And said, Corne'lius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God—We are not told what the prayer of Cornelius was (compare Luke 1: 13) but doubtless he sought divine guidance in the way of life. The idea is that his prayers and his good deeds had ascended like incense before God (Rev. 8: 3, 4; 5: 8; Ps. 141: 2). The portion of the meat offering which the priest was commanded to burn upon the altar to be an offering of a sweet savor unto the Lord (Lev. 2: 2) was called a "memorial" and the allusion is to offerings of this kind. (Lumby).

32. Send therefore to Jop'pa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon, a tanner, by the seaside, who, when he cometh shall speak unto thee—The last clause is omitted in the R. V. It is not found in the oldest manuscripts. Peter's version of the angel's words given in ch. 11: 15 is "who shall speak unto thee words whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy house." Tanners were not allowed to live within the walls of a town, their occupation being esteemed ceremonially, as well as really, unclean. Ancient tanners' vats have been discovered near the traditional site of Simon's house, and there is the necessary spring of water in the courtyard.

33. Immediately therefore I sent to thee, and thou hast well done that thou art come, now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God—He obeys with alacrity. The request is conveyed with due respect. Two household officers, and a god-fearing soldier are sent to escort the apostle. Peter was prepared by the

vision to see that God, too, had sent them. Cornelius acknowledges the courtesy of Peter in taking the toilsome journey, for "well" is literally "beautifully" (see also Phil. 4: 14). The humble and teachable spirit of Cornelius is remarkable. He is ready to receive Peter's instructions as from God (1 Thess. 2: 13).

34. Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons—This solemn and impressive beginning denotes the importance of the truth enunciated. Probably, we have but an outline of Peter's discourse. He learns three lessons, on this occasion, of the profoundest importance to the church: (1) That association with a gentile cannot defile him in God's sight (verse 28); (2) That the soul of a gentile was as precious in God's sight as the soul of a Jew (verse 35); and (3) That the Holy Spirit could dwell in the heart of a true believer whether he was circumcised or not (11: 17). That God was impartial was no new truth (Deut. 10: 17; 2 Chr. 19: 7; Job 34: 19; Rom. 2: 11, &c.), but that he would accord equal religious privileges to all men was far from the view of Peter, or any other Jew up to this time.

35. But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him—R. V. "acceptable to him." God will receive without any external limit of circumcision, or baptism, or creed, all of any nation, or rank, or condition of men who sincerely seek after him (Rom. 10: 12, 13). (Lindsay). If there are, or have been, such in heathen lands as are here described; those who lived up to the best light they had and yearned for a better state, we may believe that Peter's words apply to them, they are "acceptable to" God.

36. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: he is Lord of all—The construction in verses 36-38 is involved and the meaning somewhat obscured in our version. The meaning is "(Ye know) the word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching the glad tidings (gospel) of peace by Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all);—ye know that word which was published throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;—(ye know) Jesus of Nazareth, how that God anointed him with the Holy Ghost &c." Peter wishes to