

readiness to receive his message.

I. The Centurion's Servant, ch. 8 : 5-13.

Vs. 5, 6. *A centurion* ; an officer, in the Roman army, over a hundred men, the sixtieth part of a legion ; this one was probably an officer in the army of Herod Antipas, which was modeled after that of the Romans. The man was a Gentile, although Luke (ch. 7 : 1-10) says he was a friend of the Jewish church. Centurions have a good character in the New Testament (see ch. 27 : 54 ; Acts 10 : 22 ; 22 : 26 ; 23 : 17, 23, 24 ; 24 : 23 ; 27 : 43). *Servant*. The Greek word may mean either "son" or "servant." Many think that the sick one was the centurion's son. *Lieth* ; "lieth prostrate," too ill to be brought to Jesus. *Grievously tormented* ; a specially severe case of paralysis. Luke says, "ready to die," Luke 7 : 2.

V. 7. *Jesus saith . . . I will come*, etc. ; an unusual sign of Jesus' willingness to help, all the more striking because the man was a Gentile. Only once did Jesus go to a sufferer,—to Jairus' daughter, ch. 9 : 18-26.

Vs. 8, 9. *I am not worthy*. He would not have the famous rabbi defile himself by entering the house of a Gentile. This soldier is "modest, humble, appreciative of the exceptional kindness and condescension shown him." *Speak the word only*. He knows, from personal experience, what a word from a person in authority can do without personal presence. *A man under authority* ; a subordinate officer, and yet his commands are obeyed by the soldiers under him ; how much more power there must be in a command of Jesus, who is under authority to no one. *Go . . . Come . . . Do this*. He commands his soldiers and servants. In like manner, Jesus has at his bidding, unseen spiritual agents who carry out his will without his moving.

V. 10. *Marvelled, and said*. Jesus shared our human emotions, and he could not conceal his admiration of this signal manifestation of faith. *No, not in Israel* ; where faith might naturally be expected. "The alien beats the insiders."

Vs. 11, 12. *East and west* ; the Gentile world. The coming of the centurion is a prophecy of the welcome to be given to Christianity by the heathen. "The West has already come ; the day of the East is

dawning." *Sit down* ; recline at a feast. The Jews often spoke of the joys of the kingdom of heaven under the image of a banquet. *The children of the kingdom* ; the Jews, who thought the Messianic kingdom was theirs by inheritance of birth.

V. 13. *Go thy way* ; a compressed intense command. In ch. 4 : 10 it expresses intense abhorrence ; here, intense admiration. The story closes with the complete cure of the servant.

II. The Needy Multitudes, Ch. 9 : 35-38.

V. 35. In ch. 4 : 23-25, Matthew, before giving illustrations of the Messiah's teaching and healing, gave us a summary of the work as a whole. In v. 35 of the lesson, he gives a similar summary, looking backward over the work accomplished and repeating the language of ch. 4 : 23. *Went about* ; "was making a circuit of." *Every disease* ; Rev. Ver., "all manner of disease."

V. 36. *Saw the multitudes* ; multitudes whom it was impossible for him to reach single-handed ; he must have helpers in the great work. *Moved with compassion*. Until there is real compassion for human need, there will not be any serious attempt to remedy it. *Fainted* ; literally, "wearied with travel," "hard driven." Rev. Ver. has "were distressed." The people had vague cravings, but did not know whither to go to have them satisfied ; they were thus like sheep seeking vainly for pasture. The word is a strong one, used in classical Greek in the sense of to "flag" and to "mangle." *Scattered abroad*. The multitudes are described as like men cast down and prostrate on the ground from mortal wounds. *Sheep . . . no shepherd*. "Their shepherds were neglectful, and the Good Shepherd was grieved" (Smith).

V. 37, 38. *The harvest*. Jesus saw in the people a readiness to receive the gospel message due to their great need. They were ready, "not as saints for heaven, but as hungry souls." *Labourers . . . few*. The number of reapers is out of proportion to the number of souls waiting to be reaped. *Pray ye therefore*. The few who wish to see the harvest reaped, must seek the help of him who made the harvest, and whose purpose it must be to have it reaped. *Send forth*.