

The Sunday School.

BIBLE LESSON.

Adapted from Hurlbut's Notes.

Second Quarter.

Lesson II.—April 11. Acts 10: 30-44. CONVERSION OF CORNELIUS.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Whoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.—Acts 10, 43.

I. THE CENTURION. VERSES 30-33.

30. CORNELIUS—A devout Roman Centurion. Like many intelligent people of his time, he had ceased to believe in the pagan mythology. He was a humble and reverent inquirer after the true religion; probably had heard of Jesus and the Gospel (verses 36, 37), and was perplexed with many questions. FOUR DAYS AGO I WAS FASTING UNTIL THIS HOUR.—The words 'I was fasting' are properly omitted from the Revised Version. They are not a part of the original text. But the sentence as it stands in the Revision, though very literal, is not very clear. The meaning is, 'Just four days ago,' 'It was four days ago, counting from this very hour.' AT THE NINTH HOUR, that is, about three o'clock in the afternoon, Cornelius refers to his vision as having occurred precisely four days before. IN MY HOUSE—God rewards secret and family prayers as well as public worship. A MAN—Here described according to his appearance, but in verse 3 according to the reality, as an angel.

31. THY PRAYER IS HEARD.—In the description of Cornelius, given in verse 2, he is represented as praying to God always; but the word there rendered 'prayed' really means 'supplanted,' and implies that he was constantly asking for some particular blessing; doubtless his prayer was for more light on the path of duty. It is a comfort to remember that sincere prayer on earth is always heard in heaven. THINE ALMS ARE HAD IN REMEMBRANCE IN THE SIGHT OF GOD. True 'alms' are never offered in ostentation, but from love. God sees our works while he hears our prayers; he never fails to notice any germs or sprigs of goodness in us, and if he does not reward them at once it is simply because the best time for the reward has not yet come.

32. SEND, THEREFORE.—The angel came to answer the centurion's prayer, but sent him to a saved man to learn the way to salvation. So Jesus spoke to Paul from the sky, but sent him to Ananias for religious guidance. Always God makes saved men the chief means of other men's salvation. THE HOUSE OF ONE SIMON A TANNER.—The house is still shown, perhaps on the true location, near the edge of Joppa. It has a spring of water in its courtyard. Tanneries in the East are always built near springs and 'outside the town.'

33. IMMEDIATELY.—The earnest man never delays. THEREFORE.—To obey God's angel was to Cornelius a matter of course. THOU HAST WELL DONE.—Courteously done, Christianly done. The phrase implies both approval and gratitude. See Phil. 4, 14. THOU ART COME.—By a tiresome journey. THEREFORE ARE WE ALL HERE PRESENT BEFORE GOD.—'We all' were reverent, sincere, inquiring Gentiles, profoundly persuaded that Peter was God's ambassador. The promise of Acts 11, 14 is evidently in Cornelius's mind. TO HEAR ALL THINGS.—Men often listened to the apostles with critical curiosity, but these hearts listened with willing acceptance. Modern preachers and teachers would be more than human did they not grow weary of the alternations between idle curiosity and listless inattention which characterize so much of church and Sunday school life; but he who is faithful will find some eager souls, who, like Cornelius, listens not to the man, but to the messenger of God.

II. THE APOSTLE. VERSES 34-43.

34. PETER OPENED HIS MOUTH, AND SAID.—Peter's sermon, as reported here, can be read alone in the original in less than two minutes. Its extreme brevity makes it probable that we have only the outline of his discourse. OF A TRUTH I PERCEIVE.—He had always thought he believed this, but the fullness and grandeur of the truth he now for the first time realized. GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS.—See Rom. 2, 11; Eph. 6, 9; Col. 3, 25; James 2, 1, 9. 'God will not save a man because he is a Jew, or because he is rich, or learned, or of elevated rank, or on account of external privileges; nor will he exclude a man because he is destitute of these privileges.' 'It was,' says Dr. Gloag, 'no easy lesson for Peter and the Jewish Christians to learn that the distinction between Jews and Gentiles was now abolished.'

35. IN EVERY NATION.—Jew or Gentile. HE THAT FEARETH HIM, AND WORKETH RIGHTEOUS.—Two universal requirements;

a reverence for God as he is known, and a life which is the outgrowth of that reverence. Among those who have heard of Jesus this will be shown by faith in him; among those ignorant of Christ, by righteousness as a principle of life. ACCEPTED WITH HIM.—Revised Version, 'acceptable to him.' Cornelius had this character. He was a just man (verse 22), worshipped and feared God, gave alms (verse 2), fasted and prayed (verse 30). He served God according to the best light he had, and was anxiously seeking more light.

36, 37, 38. THE WORD.—The message, referring to the life of Jesus and the teachings of his followers—the entire Gospel. PREACHING PEACE.—Notice particularly the Revised Version: 'Preaching good tidings of peace,' the good news of salvation. HE IS LORD OF ALL.—Peter wished to guard against the impression that Jesus was no more than a religious teacher or a prophet. He rules all hearts by divine right. There is no reason to suppose that Cornelius and his companions, reverential in heart and dwelling in Judea, were ignorant of the outlines of the history of Jesus. WHICH WAS PUBLISHED.—Better, 'which happened,' as if Peter would say, 'These things were not done in a corner.' Our Lord's life touched every part of Palestine. But in truth the Gospel had already been widely 'published.' Philip was perhaps at this moment preaching in Caesarea. Everywhere in the synagogues the doctrines and life of Jesus were being hotly discussed. It is a beautiful legend, though not trustworthy, that Cornelius was the centurion who saw Jesus crucified. GOD WAS WITH HIM.—This is the explanation of all personal power in this world. Stier well remarks, 'How entirely all personal address to the hearers and all doctrinal announcements are thrown into the background in this speech, and the person and word and office of Christ put forward as the sole subject of apostolic preaching.'

39. WE ARE WITNESSES.—You are familiar with the report: we are witnesses of its truth. 'Peter was not ashamed to own that his 'Messiah' suffered an ignominious death, since the shame of the cross was done away by the glory of the resurrection.' BOTH IN THE LAND OF THE JEWS, AND IN JERUSALEM.—Jerusalem was treated by the Romans as in many regards a district separate from Judea; a fact that is emphasized by Dr. Ederseheim.

42. HE COMMANDED US.—'Charged us.' TO PREACH UNTO THE PEOPLE, AND TO TESTIFY.—True preaching is witness-bearing, and Sunday school teachers should have the same characteristic. The faithful preacher fails not to proclaim Christ's judgment as well as his mercy. By 'the people' the apostles up to this hour had understood the Jews, and them only. JUDGE OF QUICK AND DEAD.—'Quick' means living. Christ is our judge now; he will announce our doom at last.

43. ALL THE PROPHETS.—The prophets as an entirety. The primary mission of the prophets was to protest against the sins of their times. Their secondary and perhaps more important mission was to point to the coming Messiah. We now can see that Jesus is the center of all prophecy, whether ritualistic and contained in the forms and ceremonies instituted by Moses or spoken in the hot words of rapt seers. THROUGH HIS NAME.—In ancient times names were nearly all truly descriptive, and 'name' as here used stands for power, mission, character, life. WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH.—Faith is the one requirement. REMISSION OF SINS.—The great need of every human heart.

Cape Breton fishermen have sent in a monster petition to Ottawa praying for a new lobster law for Cape Breton.

The expectation of riding through that portion of the subway now completed by next June is stirring Boston imaginations in great style. Persons who are ever on the qui vive for novelty rejoice at this prospect, while the more conservative part of the community begin to put on their thinking caps since the event is so near at hand. One question is of paramount interest in regard to this subway travel, and is, what is to happen to passengers on those hot days when the mercury is up in the eighties, when they enter a tunnel that is 20 or 30 degrees cooler than the surface of the streets? Will the 'sudden change' be grateful to their heated bodies? Will they like to linger in this refrigerating process, or will this extreme of temperature give them pneumonia, colds and things? How can this difference from summer heat to untempered draughts be rendered innocuous? It is proposed that each open car carry a supply of blanket wraps for the emergency, while the box cars should have the heat turned on as soon as the beautiful subway is reached. As to motemen and conductors, they must simply accustom themselves to these changes as quickly as possible. I fancy, however, the crop here of sore throats and twinges of rheumatism will be very large. But the worst of it is nobody will realize what is happening to him or her until the mischief is done. There is one good way to escape this anticipated evil; only one—walk. Oh, yes, there is one alternative. The subway could be heated with steam pipes.—Boston Herald.

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To sugar cranberries put them in a flat dish closely covered and set in boiling water till the berries snap, then remove and cover with sugar, returning the pan to the fire till the sugar melts. These are nice to serve with bananas, oranges, or pineapples sliced. Candied cranberries, which are an excellent substitute for candied cherries both in taste and effect, are prepared by heating them to the snapping point, then dipping them in the pink crystals formed by the sugaring process just described. This sugar must be finely powdered before the hot whole cranberries are dipped in it. Candied cranberries mix prettily with dates and figs. The pink sugar is itself a useful color-effect. Canned peaches, pears, or white cherries served without juice on a flat dish sprinkled and surrounded by the sugar present a specially attractive appearance.

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