

BOAT TOWING IN CHINA.

LESSON NOTES.

THIRD QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF ACTS.

A.D. 40.] LESSON IV. [Oct. 23.

PETER AT CAESAREA.

Acts 10. 30-43. Memory verses, 39-43.

GOLDEN TEXT

Through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. Acts 10. 43.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

God is no respecter of persons

CIRCUMSTANCES.

As in our last lesson, the messengers of Cornelius reached Peter in the house of Simon the tanner about noon, just as Peter had been taught by a vision. They remained that day with him, while he found six Christians of Joppa to go with him (ver 23; 11-12) for witnesses and advisers. The next day they all started for Caesarea, and reached Cornelius' house about three o'clock in the afternoon (Compare ver. 30 with ver. 3.) In the meantime Cornelius had assembled his family and friends, seekers like him, and were waiting for Peter to come (ver 24).

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.

Until this hour—The ninth, or three o'clock (ver. 3). *God is no respecter of persons*—He treats men according to their character, and makes no difference on account of rank or wealth or nationality. All are welcome. *That word*—Telling. Not the same word as "word" in verse 36. *Ye know*—You have heard of Jesus and his works. You are somewhat acquainted with the facts. *Quick*—The living. *Whosoever believeth*—Jews or Gentiles. *The Holy Ghost fell on all*—As on the day of Pentecost, so that they spoke with other tongues. Probably there was also the same appearance of tongues as on Pentecost (ver 46; 11. 15). Thus God testified that he received the Gentiles without their becoming Jews, and gave to them the best gifts as freely as to the Jews. *Can any man forbid water?*—Who can go contrary to God's expressed plan, and exclude the Gentiles from the church? Baptism was the ordinance by which disciples were admitted to the Church.

Find in this lesson—

- That those who seek shall find.
- That God is no respecter of persons.
- Who are accepted by God.
- What all Christians may receive.
- What all Christians should do.

REVIEW EXERCISE.

1. How did Cornelius prepare for the coming of Peter? "By gathering his kinsmen and friends at his house." 2. When Peter came what did he say? "That he had learned that God is no respecter of persons." 3. What did he do? "He preached the gospel to these Gentiles." 4. How did God show that he welcomed the Gentiles? "By giving them the Holy Ghost, as to apostles, in Pentecost." 5. What was then done? "The Gentile believers were baptized and received into the Church."

CATECHISM QUESTIONS

What is the law of God?
The law of God is his declared will respecting what men are to do, and what they are not to do.
Where is the law to be found?
In the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

A TWO THOUSAND MILE JOURNEY IN CHINA.

BY THE REV. V. C. HART, D.D.,

Superintendent of our Chinese Mission.

HERE we are in front of Chikentang, each boat tied with bamboo ropes to piles of cobble stones thrown together by the boatmen. A long plank extends from our boat to the shore. This is our fifty-third day from Ichang, and some of us are getting just a bit tired, and possibly a little impatient to see the city of "Perfect Delights," twelve miles above us.

Some of the boys will say "Fifty-three days in Chinese boats!" "What were you doing for so many days?" We were travelling of course, and have gone nearly one thousand miles in the time, sailing, rowing and tracking, mostly tracking. Each boat has about twenty men, and they hitch themselves to a long bamboo rope, which is attached to the mast, and they pull like horses from daylight until dark. "A strange way to travel in this age of railroads and steamers, and in the world's oldest empire!" Yes, indeed it is, because steamers could run anywhere on the river to this place, and much higher, and not occupy more than eight days in the trip.

As the river runs we are quite one thousand miles from Ichang, where we took these clumsy junks, and more than two thousand miles from Shanghai, where we commenced our journey. Since leaving Ichang we haven't seen anything to remind us of modern times except the telegraph line which stretches from cliff to cliff up the river bank to Chungking, and the few missionaries and foreign gentlemen residing at Chungking and Suchen-foo. Some one says, "What a dismal journey." By no means, we have had a real pleasure trip, reading, writing, walking along the banks and talking to the people and occasionally making the rocks resound with Christian hymns sung from the Canadian Hymnal. "But what about the rapids and sharp rocks, and the holes punched in the bottom of the boats, and the napping of ropes, and the boats making a few concentric circles like tops?" I had almost forgotten, there are a few fierce rapids, such as Tam and Yieh, where we add a hundred men and boys to our team and are pulled over the foaming, seething falls. I must say they look bad, I mean to get up, but when you are up you feel very happy, and like singing a song of deliverance. We sheer most of the bad rocks, and those we struck didn't inflict very serious wounds upon the old lumber boats, and were easily doctored with boards and bamboo shavings.

SALT WELLS.

The town where we are anchored is a real large one, and exports coal to the salt wells, which are just above us, upon the opposite bank of the river. Hundreds of large buildings, with lofty frame-work like church steeples, are seen scattered over the hills for miles. Many hundreds of junks are anchored there, waiting for the caked salt, which is boiled from the brine, drawn from the deep wells with oxen.

The salt is caked like maple sugar, and is the colour of granite, and looks like dark gray sand when pounded in the mortar. It is perfectly clean, and considered much better than white salt.

While taking a little exercise upon the bank above our boats, I was attracted by twenty or more cormorants sitting upon small skiffs which the men row about after the birds, while they dive into the river and bring up fish. Two or three men were going the rounds of the birds, with dishes filled with water, and gave each one a dash or two of the water. The tired birds seemed to take intense enjoyment out of the bath. They would stretch out their long necks to the full and flap their great wings and then give themselves a glorious shake. I had never seen this process of cleansing the fishing birds before, and I judge it was a bit of petting as a hunter would pat his dog after a day's hunting.

QUEER FISHING.

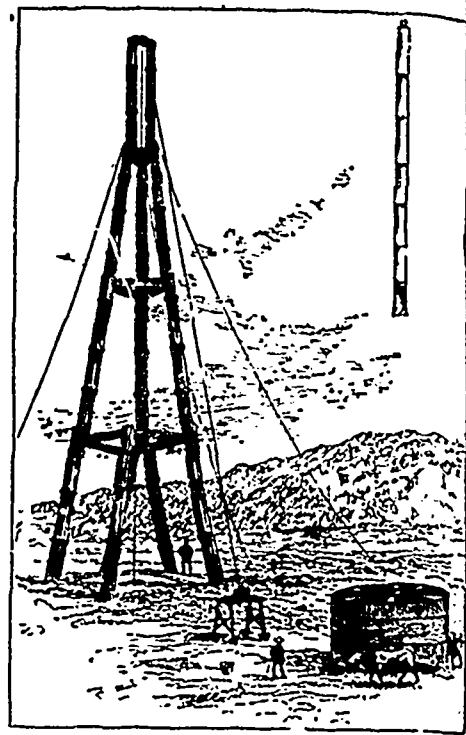
It is no uncommon thing to see fishermen carrying their skills upon their backs from point to point and the birds sitting upon the tops of the upturned boats. The cormorant is a clumsy, unattractive bird, and seems stupid enough when on land, but is an expert swimmer, and will bring up fish weighing two pounds. While I stood looking at the process quite a crowd of men and boys gathered about me and looked in amazement at my face, hat, and clothes, without saying a word until I addressed them in their own language. Then came volleys of the queerest questions you ever heard. What do you suppose a middle-aged man asked me? I am almost ashamed to tell you, but it is too good to keep a secret. He inspected me pretty thoroughly except my teeth, and said, "Are you a hundred years old?" Just imagine my emotions at such an absurd question. I am straight and fat, and can walk thirty miles a day, jump and hop with any of the young missionaries, and to be taken for a centenarian was a little too much, and from the smartest man in the crowd, what would the rank and file think? He quite wilted when I gave my age, and he found himself five years my senior. Well, he said, "your beard is white."

At Kin-Ting-Fuo, I was discoursing to a crowd upon the mystic subject of geography, when half a dozen made a guess as to my age, 80, 60, 50, 40, were the figures. When I said 52, and I have given you my age, one fellow looked at the other with scorn and said, "you might have known he was not 30, he has teeth." The people take me for a genuine patriarch, and would not be very much surprised if I were to tell them that I am two hundred years old. Buddha is said to have received into the priesthood one man two hundred years old.

The fellows were greatly emboldened by their success and plied me afresh with every conceivable question, such as, what is your boots made of? what material is your collar? and when I said of leather and linen it was pretty hard for them to believe, especially as to the collar. "So white and fine." "Our linen," and an old waist flap is lifted for my inspection, "is black and coarse as a fish net."

"Do you have the same sun as we, and is it much nearer and larger?"

One fellow with a black skin, and big mouth, and small tail tied about his head, with barely a pair of loose pants on, came closer than the others—if possible—and asked, "How far is it to your country and how do you go?" When I told them the distance to Shanghai, and that to the mass of the Se-Chuenese is a foreign city he began to look a little sceptical, but when I said, from there to my great country is three myriads of (Chinese) miles, his throat seemed to be choking, and chest distending, and when I said the great steamer goes twelve hundred (Chinese) miles a day he struggled with himself for a moment and then gave vent to his pent-up feelings. It was like lifting a safety valve clear off. Poor fellow! an idea had penetrated his inmost being. Such an enthusiast should have the opportunity of satisfying his scientific aspirations.



SALT WELL.

COUNTER ATTRACTION.

It would please you to see how quickly a foreign dressed lady will take a crowd away from even me. Mrs. Kilborn, with five minutes' walk of our boat, had nearly a hundred admiring boys, women, and mostly boys, following her. I came upon the crowd and tried to draw it after me, but not a solitary being was left for me, but a huge Waterbuffalo, and a small ugly calf, and the mother cow looked wonderfully suspiciously at me. If you want a good following out here, you must have a lady with you.

The ignorance of the masses is appalling, and the indifference in most places is more so. Just think, here is a vast empire and only one or two newspapers published by the Chinese, and these are seldom seen away from the Eastern open ports. A land without colleges or high schools, and without railroads. What is done in Eastern or North China will be known to but the few here. No political questions trouble them, no questions except the chop sticks and rice bowl, and how to fill it, are considered important to the masses. The little boys are better behaved in this province than in other parts of China. They know how to throw stones and scream "foreign devil" in the East. We never get any stones or hear "foreign devil" in this province, if so, very rarely.

Just think, there are about twelve millions of boys and young men in this province where the Canadian Methodist mission is to be established.

What are you going to do for these boys all of them your brothers? I am sure you want them to know more than they know. You desire to remove their ignorance and give them as good a chance for knowledge and success in the world as the boys of Canada have, and above all a knowledge of the living God.

The men and women in our party can reach but a few out of the millions. You must come to our help and send out many earnest self-sacrificing young men. Young men who are willing to dare to do.

CHILDREN CAN SERVE CHRIST.

A little boy once said to his mother, "I should like to have lived in the time of our Saviour that I might have done something for him."

His mother smiled and said: "What could a child of your years have done for him to prove your goodwill?"

The little boy thought a moment and then said:

"I would run everywhere doing errands."

Now this boy could still serve Christ by giving his little savings to translate, print, and circulate Bibles and Testaments. The Lord Jesus could see him do it, and still remember all he did for heathen children.