

The Christian Messenger.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1876.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, November 26th, 1876.—Peter's Vision.—Acts x. 1-20.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vs. 9-13.

GOLD TEXT.—"God is no respecter of persons." Acts x. 34.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, Isaiah xi. 1-10. Tuesday, Luke vii. 1-9. Wednesday, Daniel vi. 10-23. Thursday, Matthew xvi. 13-20. Friday, Leviticus xi. Saturday, Colossians ii. 8-17. Sunday, Ephesians ii. 10-22.

ANALYSIS.—I. The vision of Cornelius. Vs. 1-8. II. The vision of Peter. Vs. 9-16. III. Arrival of messengers.—Vs. 17-20.

EXPOSITION.—The Vision of Cornelius.

Verse 1.—Caesarea. A noted city of Palestine, on the coast of the Mediterranean, on the great road from Tyre to Egypt, about half way between Joppa and Dora. Its distance from Jerusalem was sixty-eight miles. Afterward the city was built by Herod the Great, in ten years, with a most lavish outlay. Josephus calls it a most magnificent city, and describes a break-water built of great blocks of stone, and sunk to a depth of twenty fathoms in the sea. "Broad landing wharves surrounded the harbor, and conspicuous from the sea was a temple dedicated to Caesar and Rome, and containing colossal statues of the Emperor and the Imperial City. Cornelius. "An officer in the Roman army, of the honorable Cornelian house." A centurion of the band called the Italian band. "The Roman army was divided into legions, the number of which varied considerably. The legion was divided into ten cohorts, the cohort into three maniples, and the maniples into two centuries, containing originally one hundred men. There were thus sixty centuries in a legion, each under the command of a centurion."

Verse 2.—This verse describes his character. For the characters of other centurions mentioned in the New Testament, see xxvii. 3; Matt. viii. 5; Luke vii. 2. This Roman was not a proselyte, as appears from vs. 28, 34; xi. 1-8; i. e., he had not formally adopted the Jewish religion, with its rites. He had, however, without doubt read the Jewish Scriptures—our Old Testament—and caught its spirit. He was a godly man, outside the church. With all his house. His influence at home had been positive. He had instructed his household, and they too had caught his spirit. Gave much alms to the people. The Jews. Comp. xxvi. 17, 23. One form of such beneficence is noted in Luke vii. 5. The exact contrary of that which often, if not usually, was endured. The nearer we get to God, the nearer we get to man. Prayed to God always. This word "always" here designates his habit of daily, stated, vocal prayer, which of course implies a continually prayerful state. The soldier can be a Christian, and a faithful, earnest Christian.

Verse 3.—Saw in a vision evidently. With clearness, distinctness, as though looking in clear daylight upon a human form, though the vision does not imply natural, or sense-perception. It was truly Jesus Christ whom Saul truly saw, as it was truly an angel whom Cornelius truly saw. The ninth hour of the day. Three o'clock, p. m., one of the Jewish hours of prayer. i. i. This seems to intimate that he observed, in some measure, the established Jewish customs in his worship, though not a proselyte. An angel of God. As the patriarchs and prophets of old, of whom he had read, and whose spirit he had caught.

Verse 4.—When he looked on him he was afraid, and said. The word translated "looked" designates an intense, searching gaze. Became afraid is more literal and exact than "was afraid," and marks the fact that the view of an angel brought this terror upon him. What is it, Lord? "Lord" is here a word of respect, not of worship. Thy prayers and thine alms are come up. More exactly, came up, i. e., before the angel was sent. Memorial before God. Because remembered of God, he was and would be honored of God. Better erect our monuments in heaven, in God's view, than on earth, to be seen of men. Verses 5, 6.—See ix. 43. Note the business-like particularity. No solemn-

sounding roundaboutness of pious phraseology, but speech right to the point. Note also how God takes care that in this affair, which is the hinge on which opens the door for the Gospel's free passage to the Gentiles, to universal humanity—everything is to be of God's direction.

Verses 7, 8.—Ready and glad obedience again. A devout soldier. Most likely such through Cornelius's influence, and because such selected as a suitable messenger.

II. The Vision of Peter. Verse 9.—On the next day, as they went, etc. They started on the night of the vision. Vs. 7. "Joppa was about thirty miles south of Caesarea." Instead of "they went," read, "they were going"; thus showing, as the Greek does, that this clause is thrown in to note that while these messengers were drawing near to Peter's lodging-place, Peter was receiving his preparation for their message. Upon the house-top to pray. "The roof which, according to the Oriental manner, was flat, or but slightly inclined. It was a place often chosen for the performance of religious duties. The situation does not expose one necessarily to public view. A wall or balustrade, three or four feet high, surrounds many of the roofs in the East, where a person may sit or kneel without being observed by others." See Deut. xxii. 8. Sixth hour. Noon. See Ps. iv. 17; Dan. vi. 10, 13.

Verse 10.—Would have eaten. "Desired to eat." "Their principal meal was about six or seven in the afternoon." Trance. An unnatural or supernatural state, in which the usual functions of the senses were suspended.

Verse 11.—Heaven opened. Significant, as indicating that God was conveying the lesson. The vessel. The Greek word thus rendered is the most general term for instrument or implement. The kind of article is described in what follows. Knit at the four corners. Literally, "bound by four corners"; i. e., a cord fastened to each corner, by which it was lowered and raised. Such was the appearance.

Verse 12.—On the Jewish law as to such creatures, see Lev. xi and Deut. xiv.

Verse 13.—A voice. Doubtless from heaven, and recognized by Peter as from God, and hence authoritative.

Verse 14.—Not so. Not to be understood as a refusal to obey—a deliberate rejection of God's authority—but the expression of astonishment, and the feeling that there must be some mistake; that it could not really be God's will that Peter should do this, because so square against what he supposed was God's revealed will, as already known. Compare the answer of Ananias, in ix. 13. For I have never, etc. This statement of the reason of his refusal comes to the same thing. He could not do it because it was against his whole life, as controlled by the Mosaic law, which was Divine.

Verse 15.—What God hath cleansed, etc. So put to show that if the word of God could put a difference between animals, it could also remove the difference. If God's election and word could make a difference between the sons of Abraham and the rest of mankind, that same word could remove that difference.

Verse 16.—Thrice. For emphasis. Gen. xi. 32. There may be a reference to the Trinity.

III. Arrival of Messengers. Verse 17.—While Peter doubted [was doubting]. After his recovery from the trance. Inspiration did not confer omniscience. Made inquiry. Inquired out, with some difficulty, because of the tanner's humble station, and his location somewhat apart from the city, as required by his business.

Verses 19, 20.—The Spirit said, etc. Perhaps Peter from his favorable position heard the inquiry. To the Spirit's inward voice and direction Peter was accustomed. He knew its meaning and signs. Go with them, doubting nothing. He went, and so the door was opened. It was plainly God that opened it.

QUESTIONS.—Vs. 1. Where was Caesarea? Who built it? In honor of whom? How far was it from Jerusalem? Who was Cornelius? To what honorable Roman house did he belong?

Vs. 2. How is it known that he was not an idolater? To what people did he give alms? What is meant by his "praying" always? See Rom. xii. 13; Luke xviii. 1; Psalm cxxix. 2. Vs. 3. What hour with the Jew was the ninth? Was the vision of Cornelius outward, probably, or inward? For

what purposes are angels employed? Heb. i. 14.

Vs. 4. Is God willing to accept the sincere worship of all? 1 Sam. xv. 22; Hos. vi. 6; Ps. xxxiv. 18; cxxxviii. 6; Isa. lvii. 15; lxxvi. 2. Did Cornelius receive the Gospel when it was offered to him? Why do any reject it now? 2 Cor. iv. 4.

Vs. 5. What was Cornelius told to do? Why did not the angel tell him how he could be saved? 2 Cor. iv. 20.

Vs. 10. What is the meaning of "trance"? Ans. A state in which the soul seems to have passed out of the body into another state of being, independent of the bodily senses. See Num. xxiv. 4, 16; Acts xxii. 17, 18; 2 Cor. xii. 2-4.

Vs. 11-16. What did Peter see? What is meant by "knit at the four corners"? What does it intimate respecting the spread of the Gospel? Why did the Lord utter his command three times? Did the Gentile come to the Jew, or the Jew to the Gentile? Ans. The latter. Will both ever be one? 1 Cor. xii. 13.

—Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, December 3rd, 1876.—The Gentiles Received.—Acts x. 34-48.

YOUTHS' DEPARTMENT.

The Model City, Hygeia.

A project of erecting a city, having all the essentials demanded to secure the perfect health of its inhabitants, is about to be carried into effect. The site has been purchased near Lewis in the south of England by the projector Dr. B. W. Richardson, and it is likely eventually to be a profitable enterprise.

The population of the model city is placed at 100,000, living in 20,000 houses, built on 4,000 acres of land, an average of 25 persons to the acre. The safety of the population is provided against density by the character of the houses, which ensures an equal distribution of inhabitants. No tall, overshadowing houses are permitted, and the height of edifices is limited to 60 feet or four stories of 15 feet each.

The substratum of the city is of two kinds. At the northern and highest part there is clay; at the southern and southeastern, gravel. Whatever disadvantages might spring in other places, from a retention of water on a clay soil, is here met by the plan of building every house on arches of solid brickwork, through which there is a free circulation of air, and down the incline of which all currents of water are carried away.

Three wide boulevards running east and west constitute the main thoroughfares; beneath each is an underground railway for heavy traffic. The other streets at right angles to the large avenues are all wide, and are planted at the sides with trees. Between the backs of the houses are gardens and other gardens around churches and similar large buildings which stand alone. No horse cars can be allowed, the roads are paved with wood set in asphalt, and the pavements, ten feet in width, are of light gray or white stone. The accumulated dirt is daily washed into the subways and thence conveyed away from the city. There are no gutters; and in lieu of the foul sight and smell of unwholesome garbage there are flowers and greenward. Nor are there underground rooms or cellars of any kind, the living part of every house beginning at the street level. The dwellings in all cases are of brick, glazed so as to be impermeable to water. The bricks are perforated transversely, and at the end of this there is a wedge opening, so that the walls in this way become honey-combed, and admit a constant body of air, which can be heated by the fire grates in the house. The bricks inside the house are decorated so that no other finish is needed, and the layers of poisonous paper and mouldy paste are thus avoided.

The chimneys are all connected with central shafts, into which the smoke is drawn after being passed through a furnace to destroy the free carbon, so that it is discharged colorless into the open air, and its nuisance thus obviated. The roofs of the houses are to be gardens, tastefully laid out. The kitchens, instead of being on the ground floor, are located in the garrets, so that no smell of cooking is ever disseminated through the houses and the transportation of food is rendered easier, since the heavy dishes are taken down and the light, empty ones only carried up. No carpets are permitted, the floors being of hard wood, and kept clean by beeswax and turpen-

tine, by which process the air is ozonized and rendered fresh. Twelve hundred cubic feet of air is allowed to each sleeper in bed rooms, and from the sleeping apartments old clothes etc. are rigorously excluded. Lifts are provided for transporting material from floor to floor, and the heating apparatus consists in an air box in every room, which, distinct from the chimney, communicates by an opening into the outer air, and by another opening into the room. When the fire in the grate in the room heats the iron receptacle, fresh air is brought in from without, and is diffused into the upper portion of the apartment.

All pipes enter the houses from beneath; and as they pass through the arched subways, access to them is always convenient. The brick sewers run along the floors of the subways and empty into three cross main sewers. They are trapped in each house, kept well flushed and ventilated into tall shafts by pneumatic engines.

As regards the personal habits of the population drinking and smoking will be unknown, for saloons and tobacconists' shops will be excluded. Working men and women will not be permitted to carry work home, but must hire work-rooms in buildings set apart for that purpose. There is a great deal of good sense in this provision. Dr. Richardson says that work carried into squalid tenements is often a cause of the spread of disease. "I, myself," he adds, "have seen the half-made riding habit, that was ultimately to clothe some wealthy dame, act as the corset of a poor child stricken with malignant scarlet fever."

In order to avoid dissemination of disease by soiled linen, public laundries are established under municipal direction, and to these alone must be sent such clothing as is not washed at home. Public hospitals are established in various parts of the city. We have not space to enter into the details of these, and it will be sufficient to say that their planning is the result of Dr. Richardson's long experience in the great city of London hospitals. There are no insane asylums, and no poor houses; the few who would occupy such institutions are to be placed in houses licensed as asylums, but in no wise different from other buildings in the city. No persons are to be "badged and badgered as paupers," the author significantly remarks.

Of course the model city contains baths, gymnasia, public libraries, art museums, in brief all requisite for mental and physical culture. There is a municipal medical staff, under whose supervision every assumable disease and probable cause of disease is subjected to investigation. The sewage is conveyed to a farm and utilized; the water supply is uncontaminated and led always through iron pipes. An immense ozone generator makes ozone, which is "laid on" in private houses for disinfecting purposes. All animals for food and the modes of slaughtering them are under rigid inspection, and the killing is preceded by rendering the brutes insensible by passing them through a narcotic chamber. Finally, there are no marked graves, no reserved spaces in cemeteries. The dead are buried in wickerwork coffins, which, with their contents, decompose and mingle with the earth. The only memorial monuments are tablets in a spacious covered hall or temple.

Dr. Richardson stops here, for he reaches the confines of his legitimate territory as a sanitarian. His plan, he says, will reduce the rate of mortality to 8 per 1,000 of the inhabitants for the first generation, and to 5 per 1,000 eventually. That this is a vast decrease is obvious when we compare this ratio with that of New York city, where, according to the latest statistics, the weekly mortality averages 82 per 1,000. But need we stop here? Certainly the inventor can step in where the hygeist ends; and may not this model city of health be the model city where are congregated the newest triumphs of inventive genius? There, perhaps, will be located the telegraph which, already in existence, enables us to transmit sounds, and so hold converse over long distances, or to lead music into our houses as easily as water or gas; there will be congregated all those wonderful automatic appliances which reduce the manual drudgery of housework to little more than mere supervision; in these underground railways, we may hope to see speed attained beyond all precedent, yet at no sacrifice of safety; there arms of metal con-

trolled by electricity, by steam, by compressed air, by hot vapor, will relieve arms and muscles of flesh and blood; and then, physical labor being reduced to its minimum, may we not look for that cultivation of the intellectual man which shall lead to still greater attainments? Will not means be devised for developing our dual brain? May we not hope to use our left hand as easily as our right, our feet as advantageously as our hands, in all species of that which is now called handiwork? And then what higher race of men will be evolved by heredity, surrounded by such environment? Is not Dr. Richardson's Hygeia, after all, but the first step toward the rapid development of the future perfect man?

Starved to Death.

The boy was starved—yes, starved to death; "Where?—who?" you earnestly ask.

Listen. Do you see that little brown, low-roofed cottage close under the hill? It is all alone. How sad everything around it looks! The once beautiful garden now full of noxious weeds; the gate hangs by one hinge; the blinds shake this way and that in the wind; the windows are stuffed with rags and old torn hats; while the wind is moaning drearily through the pine trees, sobbing weird and ghostly.

We approach the door—then enter.

Ah! you shrink back from that beauly, besotted wretch, but half covered with filthy rags, cowering and shivering in a mass of straw; for there is no fire. There is no warm bed—no comfortable chairs; there is nothing but that horrid object on the floor. No wonder that you shrink back.

Youth, with fair, soft hair, bright eyes, ruddy cheeks red lips, elastic, buoyant step, and free, pure hearts, are hardly fit companions to yonder scowling wretch. And yet he was once like you!

"He?" Yes. He was as fair, as well fed and clothed, as free-hearted as you are now. "How came he so then?" you ask with a shuddering glance.

I will tell you. When a child, he lived in a large pleasant house in the country. His parents were as kind and loving as yours.

As he grew up every one said what a noble man he will make!

At the age of twenty he went from home to learn a trade in town. He got among vile companions. But he knew it not. He thought them good and pure as they at first seemed. They drank wine; he drank with them. His appetite for drink grew upon him. His course was downward.

But he became acquainted with a pure noble young woman. He signed the pledge, and they were married. For a while he was happy. But the appetite was not dead, it only slept. In a moment of temptation he broke his pledge. From that time hope died out of him. The earnest appeal of his wife—the pale, supplicating face of his babe—the entreaties of friends were no avail. Down—Down—Down! Oh! how fast did the demon bury him! The demon that destroys soul and body—Intemperance.

His wife died broken-hearted. But he paused not.

Long ago friends had ceased to trust him, and to satisfy his burning thirst he had sold everything—even his wife's Bible!

The worst of all earthly fiends, the RUMSELLER, took his all greedily, forgetting the reckoning time.

And yesterday he had told his boy to steal for him, that he might gratify his insatiable thirst!

The pale-faced, wan boy of nine years remembered his mother's teaching and the lesson from the sacrificed Bible, and refused.

Cruelly did his father beat him; and then thrust him into the cold, dark, damp cellar, with a fendish laugh.

Many days had passed since the neighbors had seen poor "drunken Jake" or his little "Willie." And so one day they entered the dismal abode.

There lay the wretch with his throat—coat! Dead. Hurried from this world by his own hand.

"Dreadful!" you exclaim. Ay, terrible! But who of the two shall fare the worst on that Great Day when the book shall be opened—the wretch that died by his own hand, or the man who sold him the poison?

And in the cellar, cold and lifeless, they took up the form of little Willie, and laid it by the side of its mother in the green churchyard; while his spirit, free from pain, was with the angel mother resting in heaven.

Dear children, many foes have ye to meet; many battles for the Right to fight. Many victories shall crown your endeavors. But, remember, the bitterest DEMON IS INTemperance, whose allies are strong and mighty. The Rum-sellers are their officers.

In the fear of the Lord go forth to meet them, remembering that the "rice" is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong.—Little Corporal.