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The Sabbath School

INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Second Quarter Lesson April 29 1902

PETER AND CORNELIUS.

—Acts 10: 34-44

Study Verses 34-48. Read Acts 10: 34-44.

GOLDEN TEXT.—God is no respecter of persons.—Acts 10: 34.

LEARN BY HEART.

Va. 34 35; Eph. 2: 19 22.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time.—A. D. 38-40. Not long after our last lesson. During the "many days" while Peter was preaching at Joppa, after the raising of Dorcas.

Place.—Peter was at Joppa, in the house of Simon the tanner. Cornelius was at Caesarea, the Roman capital of Judea, about thirty-three miles to the north. CORNELIUS. Cornelius was a member of a distinguished Italian family.

He was a Roman centurion, captain of the Italian band, probably volunteers from Italy. Cornelius, with his troops, were the guardians of Caesarea, the Roman capital and one of the sports of Judea. It was a large and flourishing city.

We know nothing of his early life, except that he must have been brought up in heathenism.

Cornelius had abundant opportunities of becoming acquainted with the Jewish religion, their one true God, and the loftiness of their code of morals. He received the truth. He was (1) a devoutly religious man; (2) worshipping the one true God, and in the best way he knew. (3) He was openly religious. (4) He expressed his piety in almsgiving, helping his fellowmen. (5) He was honest and upright in his dealings. (6) He wanted to be closer to God, with a consciousness of his love and presence. (7) He wanted to know more about the life to come. Cornelius gained these only by overcoming many and great obstacles.

The Vision. In answer to his prayer, and acts of kindness and love, there stood by him in a vision, one day at the three o'clock hour of prayer, an angel in the form of a man in shining raiment, who bade him send to Joppa and ask Peter to come to him. This was the way to the light, and a test of Cornelius' faith.

PETER. Peter, of all the twelve apostles, was the one best prepared by his natural character to receive the vision and act upon it. He had "the impulsive and uncalculative spirit," to which such a request as that of Cornelius would appeal, and he was just the man who would accept unquestioningly the divine evidence of his conversion, and be quickest to receive the new convert as a Christian brother. He would do what he knew to be right without regard to consequences.

Peter was one of the most influential of the apostles, and what he did would have more weight with the church than the same act done by most of the others.

PETER TAUGHT BY A VISION.—Cornelius sent two men of his household, with a soldier. As they drew near the city, Peter, unconscious of their mission, went as usual for his midday season of prayer.

During this season of devotion Peter fell into a trance and had a vision. He saw the heavens opened to reveal to him spiritual things, and from it came down "an extended sheet" and this sheet was filled with all kinds of animals and creeping things.

Peter was hungry, and he was invited to kill and eat. But he refused to satisfy his hunger by breaking the law of God. But the voice replied, "What God hath cleansed call not thou common." It was confirmed by the coming of the messenger, and the voice of the Spirit bidding him "Go with them, nothing doubting; for I have sent them."

THE MEETING AT CORNELIUS' HOUSE IN CAESAREA. Peter was still in perplexity, when the three men from Cornelius reached the house of Simon the tanner, and inquired for him. The Spirit bade him go with them. The next day Peter, with six leading disciples of Joppa (Acts 11: 12), accompanied the three messengers to Caesarea. They reached Cornelius' house on the fourth day, at three o'clock, and found the Roman centurion with his relatives and friends assembled and waiting. The centurion welcomed Peter, and Peter inquired why he had been sent for. Cornelius tells why he sent for Peter, and asks him to speak.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PETER.—Va. 34-43. Of a truth I perceive. He had a clearer view and firmer grasp of the truth because of what had just taken place. God is no respecter of persons. There is one and the same condi-

tion of salvation for all. But in every nation, Jew or Gentile. He that feareth him and worketh righteousness. These two particulars include the observation of both tables of the law. Is accepted with him. God's only test is what a person really is in moral character. Thy word (the message)..... unto the children of Israel, who first received it. Preaching the good tidings of peace, i. e., salvation. (1) Peace with God; (2) peace from the condemnation of conscience; (3) peace among men who now become brothers; (4) peace in the soul. By Jesus Christ The Divine Saviour, He is Lord of all. Jew and Gentile. Not a mere prophet, but the Lord himself That word is know. This implies that they had already some knowledge of the life and works of Christ. God anointed. Set him apart for this special purpose. Jesus was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power. These were proofs that he was sent from God. There was no self-seeking, but only service of others, doing good, the most good, and good only. Oppressed of the devil. Demoniac. His triumph over this form of Satanic agency is singled out as the highest exhibition of his wonder-working power. We are witnesses Peter had been with Jesus and seen all these things. Him God raised up. God bore witness by raising Jesus from the dead. Not to all the people. That would have hindered the training of the disciples into a full conception of his continued life in heaven. He commanded us. Peter shows Cornelius his commission from Christ, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." And to testify. Bear witness to what they had seen and heard and experienced. The best part of all true preaching of Christ is simply bearing witness. Judge of quick (living) and dead. Christ is now the judge; his life and character are the standard by which every man is to judge himself. To him give all the prophets witness. From the beginning prophets foretold the Messiah, and ceremonials have set forth his mission. And Jesus is the one pictured in every particular. His coming was the consummation of a plan unfolding through the ages. Remission of sins. The release as from debt, or penalty. This is man's first need. The debt is too great for him to pay, the burden too heavy to carry. His sins, unforgiven, keep him from his Father. This is God's first message to man,—Forgiveness free and ample; sure and immediate.

THE WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.—Va. 44-46. The Holy Ghost fell on all them. Jews and Gentiles. This was the testimony of the Holy Spirit that God treated Jews and Gentiles alike, and that, therefore, the Christians should so treat them. They all spoke with tongues, and it is probable that there was the same visible manifestation.

ROMAN CITIZENS CONFESS CHRIST IN BAPTISM.—Va. 47, 48. Can any man forbid water for the outward ceremony of baptism, since God had baptized them with the Holy Spirit? Commanded them to be baptized, as the public profession of their faith in Jesus. Baptism was the method by which this purifying change was confessed.

Practical Suggestions. 1. Let us mark again the movement of divine providence, which are as perfect and fitting in our lives as in those of Peter and Cornelius.

2. Visions often have afar-reaching and powerful influence, especially visions like Peter's.

3. Like Peter we must come down from our visions to daily duties.

4. Peter and Cornelius were prepared for the new light that flashed upon them, as the plant is long preparing for the blossoms of spring.

5. A man can be good under any circumstances. The position of Cornelius was not favorable for the development of religious life. His early training, his surroundings, his business were all against him. And yet he rose superior to all his difficulties.

6. The change wrought by Jesus in Cornelius was very great. He had new revelations of God's will, he had assurance where before he had longings and hope. He had new life, new love, a new master, a new power.

No Use For a Watch.

Few of the many persons who carry watches are aware of the fact that they are always provided with a compass, with which, when the sun is shining, they can determine a north-and-south line. All one has to do is to point the hour-hand to the sun, and south is exactly halfway between the hour and the figure 12 on the watch. Suppose it is nine o'clock in the morning. Follow the rule given above, and we find the south is in indicated below. Prolong this line along the face of the watch, and you have a north-and-south line, and from

this any point of the compass may be determined.

This may seem strange, but the reason is plain. While the sun is passing over one hundred and eighty degrees (from east to west) the hour-hand of the watch passes over three hundred and sixty degrees (from six o'clock to six o'clock). Consequently, the angular movement of the sun in one hour corresponds to the angular movement of the hour-hand in half an hour; hence, if holding the watch horizontal we point the hour-hand toward the sun, the line from the pivot of the hands to the point midway between the hour-hand and twelve o'clock will point to the south.

This is one of the ways of determining the points of the compass if one is not provided with a compass. Many other means of orientation are taught to soldiers, so that in case they become separated from their commands they may know which way to travel to reach their camps. Orientation by means of the moon is a little more difficult, and not so reliable as that by means of the watch and sun. It depends upon the quarter in which the moon happens to be. The full moon is in the east at six o'clock in the evening, in the south at mid-night, and in the west in the morning. The moon in the first quarter is in the south at six o'clock in the evening, and in the west at mid-night. In the last quarter the moon is in the east at mid-night, and in the south at six o'clock in the morning. These indications except the first, may vary an hour or so earlier or later. In the first quarter the moon has the concavity to the left. In the last toward the right.

Imagination in Childhood.

A child's imagination is a wonderful thing. It is easily aroused, and when so called into action it carries the child along with it with wonderful power. To his imagination, a row of chairs is a railway train. A sheet thrown over two chairs is a tent, and a stick of wood is a gun. A hassock is a bear, and with his gun he shoots the bear and then eats him up with great glee. Is not this so? Now, if the teacher appeals to his imagination, he can do much with a pencil and piece of paper. A few marks on it stand for the apostles, a cross indicates the Master, a pear shaped oval will stand for the Sea of Galilee, and a crescent in it will be the boat in which the Master and his disciples crossed the waves.

You say this is childlike? Well, we have to do with children. But by and by I have used the same thing with adults, and have found them helpful, as did the class also. Try them, and you will be quite surprised how they will assist you in making teaching more attractive than it has thus far been.—The Teacher, the Child, and the Book.

Covetousness is always looking over neighboring fences, and wishing both fence and neighbor were gone. Covetousness is selfishness full grown into greediness. It is the swinish trait in fallen human nature. Its peculiar perils is the premium put upon the power of accumulation, both by the world and by the Church.—Christian Intelligencer.

Let not the word yoke frighten you; we must bear the weight, but God helps us to bear it. It is a burden that two must carry, and God shares it with us.—Fenelon.

Obedience, the organ of spiritual knowledge.—F. W. Robertson.

Milburn's Sterling Headache Powders give women prompt relief from monthly pains and leave no bad after effects whatever. Be sure you get Milburn's. Price 10 and 25 cents. All dealers.

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"I have used Ripans Tablets for a number of years and would not be without them. I was troubled with indigestion and constipation, and have noticed since I have been using them that I am getting rid of these terrible bilious spells which used to be so distressing to me. Of late I have not had any. I had just got over a bad spell of bilious fever and was sitting on the sofa, when a neighbor came to me and remarked how well I looked. I had just got over the fever and that I was able to get up and about. He advised me to take Ripans Tablets, from which I had suffered since I was quite young. He advised me to take Ripans Tablets, providing I could get a bottle from him. I am very glad to say that I have no more headaches and can sleep well. In fact, I feel so light as to be able to go on a long journey. I am sure that I shall be able to keep my health in good shape by using the Tablets a year ago, for they would have saved me a great deal of pain and suffering."

GASTRIC TROUBLES.

"I had suffered three years at least from gastric troubles. I could not sleep at night. My head ached and my feet would be cold as ice. My bowels were not regular and I would have such cramps from gases forming on my stomach that I would faint away. I was in such a state that I would have sooner died than live. About three months ago I was suffering and my body was all up and down. My brother recommended Ripans Tablets to me. My brother obtained some for me from the nearest drug store and I would not dare to refuse. I took one of all the feel gases that formed in my stomach and they were all gone. I was relieved for which I had been taking physics all the time. I have no more gases, my bowels are regular, I have no more headaches and can sleep well. In fact, I feel so light as to be able to go on a long journey. I am sure that I shall be able to keep my health in good shape by using the Tablets a year ago, for they would have saved me a great deal of pain and suffering."

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