

37 of good works and almsdeeds which she did. And in those days she was sick, and died: whom having washed, they laid
 38 in an upper chamber. And Lydda being near Joppa, the disciples hearing Peter was there sent to him two men,
 39 desiring that he would not delay to come to them. Then Peter arose, and went with them: whom being come, they brought into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which
 40 Dorcas had made, while she was with them. But Peter having put them all out kneeled down and prayed; and
 41 turning to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and seeing Peter sat up. And giving her his hand he lifted her up, and having called the saints and
 42 widows he presented her alive. And it was known through
 43 all Joppa; and many believed on the Lord. And he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

CHAP. X. 1 And there was a certain man in Cesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of that called the Italian

Verse 38. *The disciples sent to him*—Probably none of those at Joppa had the gift of miracles. Nor is it certain that they expected a miracle from him.

Verse 39. *While she was with them*—That is, before she died.

Verse 40. *Peter having put them all out*—That he might have the better opportunity of wrestling with God in prayer. *Said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter sat up*—Who can imagine the surprise of Dorcas when called back to life? or of her friends when they saw her alive? For the sake of themselves and of the poor, there was cause of rejoicing; and much more for such a confirmation of the gospel. Yet to herself it was matter of resignation, not joy, to be called back to these scenes of vanity. But doubtless her remaining days were still more zealously spent in the service of her Saviour and her God. Thus was a richer treasure laid up for her in heaven, and she afterward returned to a more exceeding weight of glory than that from which so astonishing a providence had recalled her for a season.

Verse 1. *And there was a certain man*—The first fruits of the gentiles. *In Cesarea*—Where Philip had been before, Acts viii. 40. So that the doctrine of salvation by faith in Jesus was not unknown there. Cesarea was the seat of the civil government, as Jerusalem was of the ecclesiastical. It is observable, that the gospel made its way first through the metropolitan cities. So it first seized Jerusalem and Cesarea; afterwards, Philippi, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Rome itself. *A centurion*—Or captain. *Of that called the Italian band*—That is, troop or company.

2 band, A devout *man*, and fearing God with all his house,
 who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God
 3 alway. He saw plainly in a vision about the ninth hour
 of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying to
 4 him, Cornelius. And looking steadfastly on him, and being
 affrighted, he said, What is it, Sir? And he said to him,
 Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial
 5 before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call hither
 6 Simon, who is surnamed Peter : He lodgeth with one Simon
 7 a tanner, whose house is by the sea. And when the angel
 who spake to him was departed, he called two of his house-
 hold servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on
 8 him continually ; And having declared all things to them,
 9 he sent them to Joppa. On the morrow, as they journeyed,
 and drew nigh to the city, Peter went up on the housetop
 10 to pray about the sixth hour : And he became very hungry,
 and would have eaten : but while they made ready, he fell
 11 into a trance, And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel,
 like a great sheet tied at the four corners, descending, and
 12 let down on the earth : Wherein were all four-footed crea-
 tures, and creeping things of the earth, and fowls of the air.
 13 And a voice came to him, Rise, Peter ; kill, and eat. But

Verse 2. *Who gave much alms to the people*—That is, to the Jews, many of whom were at that time extremely poor.

Verse 3. *He saw in a vision*—Not in a trance, like Peter. *Plainly*—So as to leave one not accustomed to things of this kind no room to suspect any imposition.

Verse 4. *Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God*—Dare any man say, these were only splendid sins ; or that they were an abomination before God? And yet it is certain, in the Christian sense, Cornelius was then an unbeliever. He had not then faith in Christ. So certain it is, that every one who seeks faith in Christ should seek it in prayer, and doing good to all men ; though, in strictness, what is not exactly according to the divine rule must stand in need of divine favour and indulgence.

Verse 8. *A devout soldier*—How many such attendants have our modern officers? A devout soldier would now be looked upon as little better than a deserter from his colours.

Verse 10. *And he became very hungry*—At the usual meal-time. The symbols in visions and trances, it is easy to observe, are generally suited to the state of the natural faculties.

Verse 11. *Tied at the corners*—Not all in one knot ; but each fastened, as it were, up to heaven.

14 Peter said, In nowise, Lord ; for I have never eaten any
 15 thing common or unclean. And the voice *came* to him
 again the second time, What God hath purified, call not
 16 thou common. This was done thrice : and the vessel was
 17 taken up again to heaven. Now while Peter doubted in
 himself what the vision he had seen should mean, behold,
 the men sent by Cornelius, having inquired out Simon's
 18 house, stood at the gate, And calling asked whether Simon,
 19 surnamed Peter, lodged there. While Peter was musing
 on the vision, the Spirit said to him, Behold, men seek thee.
 20 Arise therefore, and go down, and go with them, doubting
 21 nothing : for I have sent them. Then Peter going down
 to the men said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek : for what
 22 cause are ye come ? And they said, Cornelius a centurion,
 a just man, and fearing God, and of good report among all
 the nation of the Jews, was warned of God by an holy angel
 to send for thee to his house, and to hear words from thee.
 23 And he invited them in, and lodged *them*. And the next
 day rising up he went away with them, and certain brethren
 24 from Joppa went with him. And the day following they
 entered into Cesarea. And Cornelius was waiting for them,

Verse 14. *But Peter said, In nowise, Lord*—When God commands a strange, or seemingly improper, thing, the first objection frequently finds pardon. But it ought not to be repeated. This doubt and delay of St. Peter had several good effects. Hereby the will of God in this important point was made more evident and incontestable ; and Peter also, having been so slow of belief himself, could the more easily bear the doubting of his brethren, Acts xi. 2, &c.

Verse 15. *What God hath purified*—Hath made and declared clean. Nothing but what is clean can come down from heaven. St. Peter well remembered this saying, in the council at Jerusalem, Acts xv. 9.

Verse 16. *This was done thrice*—To make the deeper impression.

Verse 17. *While Peter doubted in himself, behold, the men*—Frequently the things which befall us within and from without, at the same time, are a key to each other. The things which thus concur and agree together ought to be diligently attended to.

Verse 19. *Behold, men seek thee. Arise therefore, and go down, and go with them, doubting nothing*—How gradually was St. Peter prepared to receive this new admonition of the Spirit ! Thus God is wont to lead on his children by degrees, always giving them light for the present hour.

Verse 24. *Cornelius was waiting for them*—Not engaging himself in any secular business during that solemn time, but being altogether intent on this one thing.

25 having called together his kinsmen and near friends. And
 as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and falling
 26 down at his feet worshipped *him*. But Peter raised him
 27 up, saying, Arise; I myself also am a man. And as he
 talked with him, he went in, and found many come together.
 28 And he said to them, Ye know it is unlawful for a Jew to
 join with, or come to, one of another nation; but God hath
 29 showed me to call no man common or unclean. Therefore
 being sent for, I came without gainsaying: I ask therefore
 30 for what intent ye have sent for me? And Cornelius said,
 Four days ago I was fasting till this hour; and at the ninth
 hour I was praying in my house, and, behold, a man stood
 31 before me in bright clothing, And said, Cornelius, thy prayer
 32 is heard, and thine alms are remembered before God. Send
 therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, who is surnamed
 Peter; he lodgeth in the house of Simon a tanner by the
 33 sea: who, being come, shall speak to thee. Immediately
 therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast done well in coming.
 Now therefore we are all present before God, to hear all
 things that are commanded thee by God.
 34 Then Peter opening *his* mouth said, I perceive of a truth
 35 that God is not a respecter of persons: But in every nation

Verse 26. *I myself am a man*—And not God, who alone ought to be worshipped, Matt. iv. 10.

Verse 28. *But God hath showed me*—He speaks sparingly to them of his former doubt, and his late vision.

Verse 29. *I ask for what intent ye have sent for me*—St. Peter knew this already. But he puts Cornelius on telling the story, both that the rest might be informed, and Cornelius himself more impressed by the narration; the repetition of which, even as we read it, gives a new dignity and spirit to Peter's succeeding discourse.

Verse 30. *Four days ago I was fasting*—The first of these days he had the vision; the second, his messengers came to Joppa; on the third, St. Peter set out; and on the fourth, came to Cesarea.

Verse 31. *Thy prayer is heard*—Doubtless he had been praying for instruction how to worship God in the most acceptable manner.

Verse 33. *Now therefore we are all present before God*—The language of every truly Christian congregation.

Verse 34. *I perceive of a truth*—More clearly than ever, from such a concurrence of circumstances. *That God is not a respecter of persons*—Is not partial in his love. The words mean, in a particular sense, that he does not confine his love to one nation; in a general, that he is loving to every man, and willeth all men should be saved.

Verse 35. *But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righte-*

he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted
 36 by him. *This is the word which he sent to the children*
 of Israel, preaching the glad tidings of peace through Jesus
 37 Christ: (he is Lord of all :) Ye know the word which was
 published through all Judea, beginning from Galilee, after
 38 the baptism which John preached; How God anointed
 Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power:
 who went about doing good, and healing all that were
 39 oppressed by the devil; for God was with him. And we
 are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land
 of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom yet they slew, having
 40 hanged *him* on a tree: Him God raised up the third day,
 41 and showed him openly: Not to all the people, but to wit-
 nesses chosen before of God, *even to us*, who did eat and

ousness—He that first reverences God, as great, wise, good; the Cause, End, and Governor of all things; and, secondly, from this awful regard to him, not only avoids all known evil, but endeavours, according to the best light he has, to do all things well. *Is accepted of him*—Through Christ, though he knows him not. The assertion is express, and admits of no exception. He is in the favour of God, whether enjoying his written word and ordinances or not. Nevertheless, the addition of these is an unspeakable blessing to those who were before, in some measure, accepted: otherwise, God would never have sent an angel from heaven to direct Cornelius to St. Peter.

Verse 36. *This is the word which God sent*—When he sent his Son into the world. *Preaching*—Proclaiming by him. *Peace*—between God and man, whether Jew or gentile, by the God-Man. He is Lord of both; yea, Lord of and over all.

Verse 37. *Ye know the word which was published*—You know the facts in general, the meaning of which I shall now more particularly explain and confirm to you. *The baptism which John preached*—To which he invited them by his preaching, in token of their repentance. This began in Galilee, which was near Cesarea.

Verse 38. *How God anointed Jesus*—Particularly at his baptism, thereby inaugurating him to his office. *With the Holy Ghost and with power*—It is worthy our remark, that frequently when the Holy Ghost is mentioned, there is added a word particularly adapted to the present circumstance. So the deacons were to be “full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom,” Acts vi. 3; Barnabas was “full of the Holy Ghost and faith,” xi. 24; the disciples were “filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost,” xiii. 52; and here, where his mighty works are mentioned, Christ himself is said to be *anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power*. *For God was with him*—He speaks sparingly here of the majesty of Christ, as considering the state of his hearers.

Verse 41. *Not now to all the people*—As before his death. *To us who*

- 42 drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to proclaim to the people, and to testify that it is he who is ordained by God the Judge of the living and the
 43 dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that every one who believeth in him receiveth forgiveness of sins through his name.
- 44 While Peter was yet speaking these words, the Holy
 45 Ghost fell on all that were hearing the word. And the believers of the circumcision, as many as came with Peter, were amazed, that the gift of the Holy Ghost was poured
 46 out on the gentiles also. For they heard them speaking
 47 with tongues, and magnifying God. Then Peter answered, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost, even as we?
 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they prayed him to tarry certain days.

did eat and drink with him—That is, conversed familiarly and continually with him in the time of his ministry.

Verse 42. *It is he who is ordained by God the Judge of the living and the dead*—Of all men, whether they are alive at his coming, or had died before it. This was declaring to them, in the strongest terms, how entirely their happiness depended on a timely and humble subjection to Him who was to be their final Judge.

Verse 43. *To him give all the prophets witness*—Speaking to heathens, he does not quote any in particular. *That every one who believeth in him*—Whether he be Jew or gentile. *Receiveth remission of sins*—Though he had not before either feared God, or worked righteousness.

Verse 44. *The Holy Ghost fell on all that were hearing the word*—Thus were they consecrated to God, as the first fruits of the gentiles. And thus did God give a clear and satisfactory evidence, that he had accepted them as well as the Jews.

Verse 45. *The believers of the circumcision*—The believing Jews.

Verse 47. *Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost*—He does not say, They have the baptism of the Spirit; therefore they do not need baptism with water: but just the contrary; If they have received the Spirit, then baptize them with water.

How easily is this question decided, if we will take the word of God for our judge! Either men have received the Holy Ghost, or not. If they have not, “Repent,” saith God, “and be baptized, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” If they have, if they are already baptized with the Holy Ghost, then, *who can forbid water?*

Verse 48. *In the name of the Lord*—Which implies the Father who anointed him, and the Spirit with which he was anointed, to his office.

CHAP. XI. 1 Now the apostles and brethren who were
 2 of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they
 3 of the circumcision debated with him, Saying, Thou wentest
 4 in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. Then
 Peter beginning laid *all things* before them in order, saying,
 5 I was praying in the city of Joppa, and *being* in a trance I
 saw a vision, a certain vessel descending, as it were a great
 sheet let down from heaven by the four corners; and it came
 6 even to me: On which, looking steadfastly, I observed, and
 saw fourfooted creatures of the earth, and creeping things, and
 7 fowls of the air. And I heard a voice saying to me, Rise,
 8 Peter, kill and eat. But I said, In no wise, Lord: for
 nothing common or unclean hath ever entered into my
 9 mouth. And the voice from heaven answered me again,
 10 What God hath purified, call not thou common. This was
 done thrice: and all were drawn up again into heaven.
 11 And, behold, immediately three men stood at the house
 12 where I was, sent from Cesarea to me. And the Spirit bade
 me go with them, doubting nothing. These six brethren
 also went with me, and we entered into the man's house.
 13 And he told us how he had seen an angel standing in his
 house, and saying to him, Send men to Joppa, and call
 14 hither Simon, surnamed Peter; Who shall tell thee words,
 15 whereby thou and all thy family may be saved. And as I
 began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, even as on us
 16 at the beginning. Then I remembered the word of the

But as these gentiles had before believed in God the Father, and could not but now believe in the Holy Ghost, under whose powerful influence they were at this very time, there was the less need of taking notice that they were baptized into the belief and profession of the sacred Three; though doubtless the apostle administered the ordinance in that very form which Christ himself had prescribed.

Verse 4. *Peter laid all things before them*—So he did not take it ill to be questioned, nor desire to be treated as infallible. And he answers the more mildly, because it related to a point which he had not readily believed himself.

Verse 5. *Being in a trance*—Which suspends the use of the outward senses.

Verse 14. *Saved*—With the full Christian salvation, in this world and the world to come.