

# WAR IS BREAKING DOWN PREJUDICES

### Sunday School Lesson Upon Tolerance and Brotherhood

The International Sunday School Lesson for April 16 is "Peter and Cornelius."—Acts 10:1-23.

By WILLIAM T. ELLIS

A proud Roman and a prouder Jew one day lost their historic prejudices and became not only tolerant of what was on the other side of the high wall which divided them from their other people, but actually crossed the wall themselves. This lesson tells the story. Crowded with incident, it reveals an angel talking to a heathen; a pork-abhorring Jew who learned that all meats are clean; and a strict follower of the law of Moses visiting in the home of a Gentile Roman, and telling him a story that brought a second Pentecost.

Such a great experience is well worth studying, especially when the blasts of war are breaking down old aversions and divisions and prejudices and at the same time creating new ones. Never was a lesson upon tolerance and brotherhood timelier than now. The Christian Church has not always been tolerant of tolerance. It is only of recent years that we have understood the Christian virtue of bearing with one another's beliefs which are different from ours. Now our horizons have been pushed out, and we know that we "are all members one of another" and we sing:

"For the love of God is broader Than the measure of man's mind; And the heart of the Eternal Is most wonderfully kind."

If we want another "Pentecost like unto the Gentiles" as the old church fathers called the experience in the house of Cornelius, it will come only after a fresh awakening to the truth that God has present-day messages for us; and after a new vision of the inclusiveness of the Gospel.

The present popularity of the preaching of the Gospel for all the world may have consequences that will extend far beyond our conventional understanding of a foreign mission revival. Our petty regulations and codes and insularities and prejudices will have to give way to a broader understanding of the world of God.

#### A Seeking Soldier

Travel, observation, reading and maturity of thought all play havoc with petty prejudices. There is no class or calling or race or nation that a wise man is willing to condemn. It will go hard with some students of this lesson, so strong is a certain antipathy to militarism, to realize that God sent his angel to a soldier. Captain Cornelius was a military man, stationed at Caesarea, a town on the Mediterranean coast some thirty miles above Joppa. His duties were altogether those of a soldier, and outwardly his life was controlled by the profession of arms. Withal, beneath his breastplate he concealed a heart hungry for God. Spirituality belongs to no class or group or condition of mankind. Our contact with Cornelius should teach us that Godliness is a universal aspiration.

This seeking soldier did more than aspire. He prayed and he served. Both his charities and his prayers came up before God; for to such a soul God would not deny himself. He followed the light he had—and it is to be recalled that although reared among Roman polytheism, Cornelius believed in one God, and so was given more light.

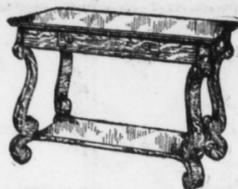
To him an angel appeared and bade him go to Joppa for Peter. Little as it may accord with our notions of a Roman centurion, this soldier was of the sort to whom angels appear, and he could look unabashed into the face of a heavenly visitant.

Nobody discards ancient prejudices or convictions in a twinkling. Peter had been slowly prepared for what was coming to him. Pentecost had broadened his horizon, so that at Joppa he sojourned with a tolerant and well-calling was prescribed to the Jew. The naturalness of the vision that came to Peter is apparent. He was hungry. He went to the common oriental lounging place, the house-top, to wait until dinner should be ready. There he fell into a trance and had a vision of food—a great sheet let down from heaven containing all manner of beasts and reptiles and birds. A voice bade him "Rise Peter, kill and eat." As man is prone to do, Peter remonstrated with God; for "I have never yet eaten anything unholy or impure." Foolish bragging, hurdling his Pharisaical righteousness into the teeth of God. The voice answered again, "What God has purified you must not regard as unclean." Three times this was said, and then the vision was withdrawn.

A twentieth century fault was that of Peter's. He was over-fastidious. We are in danger of being refined into inefficiency. The church is so interested nowadays in her grammar and in her manners that she is alienated from the telling, dusty, sweaty crowd. That, if anything, is her need. It is less important that the Church be correct in her outward forms than that she be close to people.

Clearly, though, our day is learning the lesson that the program of God is broader than the prescriptions of our creeds, and books of church government. We are non-Episcopalian in Episcopal pulpits; unimmersed Christians at Baptist communion tables, and women in Presbyterian pulpits, and Unitarian hymns in orthodox hymnals. On the whole, our time is learning with Peter the lesson of tolerance.

**Coincidences That Are Providences**  
A certain man was accustomed to pray, "O Lord, prepare me for what thou art preparing for me." God works both upon the field and the force. It exalts our thinking to recall the universality and the immanence



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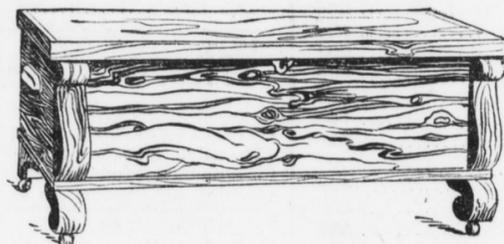


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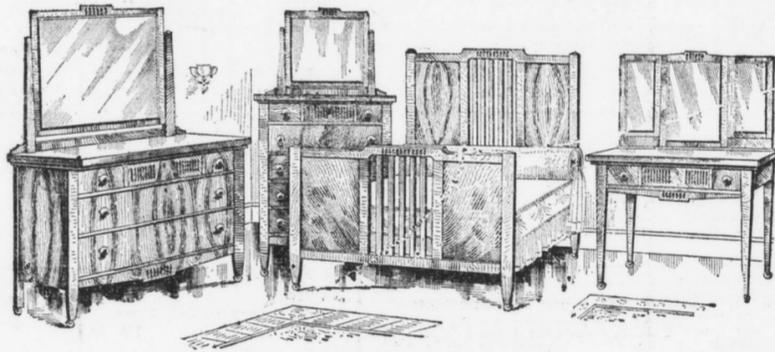


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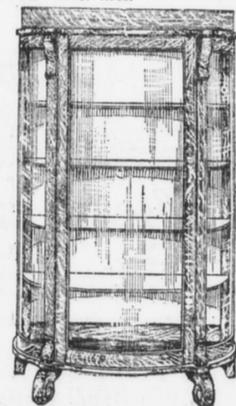
This attractive bedroom suit is in the Adam design. It is finished with a heavy coat of ivory enamel, which will easily lend itself to cleaning. The pieces are all large size, and are a complete match. We consider this value an excellent proof that prices have not advanced here.

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of an all-knowing God, who makes ready the man for the work and the work for the man. He speaks at one and the same time to Cornelius and to Peter.

Cornelius' messengers were welcomed by Peter. He went with them to the house of the heathen, and being unconventional, he dared to be different. To him it had been taught that the open-minded teacher was perhaps being prepared for an open-minded seeker. God had been busy both in Caesarea and Joppa that day.

Most coincidences are providences. Usually we do not see the meaning of events until afterwards. We are confident that history will reveal why America has been set apart in a unique place during this world turmoil. It is in no particular allusion to ourselves but to all the peoples of earth that we say with the poet:

"Still behind the dim unknown,  
Standeth God within the shadow,  
Keeping watch above his own."

#### A Task Too Big For Angels

Someone asks "Why didn't the angels tell Cornelius what he needed of God?" Ah, that task is too big for an angel. The story has never been told by them. The Good News must be man borne. Only redeemed men and women can carry the tidings. The gospel travels only on human feet and by human lips. The world will never be saved by angels. That highest of all honors is reserved in tribute to human personality.

Peter could do more for Cornelius than the angel could. As the late Dr. Arthur T. Pierson once said, "However poor a preacher, I can preach the gospel better than Gabriel can, because Gabriel cannot say what I can say, 'I am a sinner saved by grace.'"

After little more than a day's bond or free.

Journey Peter reached Caesarea. A long journey, you say? No. At this very day men are traveling far to serve their fellowmen's spiritual needs or to seek an answer to their perplexities. They will cross continents to hear certain preachers and teachers in hope of spiritual rest. There is no consolation impelling to travel like that of spiritual unrest. Suppose we give right of way to spiritual concerns, remembering the tragedy of the men who are "too busy" to cultivate their own souls; "too busy" to fellowship with their own families; "too busy" to serve the kingdom of God. Peter was busy; but he had time to make this long journey for the sake of an inquiring woman.

What barriers religion levels! Proud Cornelius threw himself at Peter's feet. He was quickly raised again, with the remark, "I am but a man. God has taught me to call no one unholy or unclean." Gone was the ancient Jewish sense of superiority.

Within the house of the soldier Peter found a large company, comprising the relatives and friends of the host. So to them he preached the old, old story—and lo, the Holy Spirit fell on all who were listening to the message to the amazement of Peter's Jewish companions.

Once more the great Apostle showed his greatness and his grace; for he did not balk at the final step of baptism. No "proselyte of the Gate" or outer-court converts for the new church. Those upon whom the Spirit had come were baptized and made members of the Christian community. Criticisms followed, but Peter had followed the Light. The Spirit had borne witness and there was no gainsaying that testimony. So was passed a crisis in Christian history, and the church learned for all time that in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Gentile.

## Bartenders Pour Liquor in Armless Man's Throat

Elizabeth, N. J., April 14.—"What are you here for?" Judge Owen Mahon asked William Parker, an armless man who said his home was in Pittsburgh, Pa., in police court to-day.

"They say I tipped my elbow too much last night," replied Parker, and he added, "I guess they are right about it."

"The complaint states you were in a state of intoxication," continued Judge Mahon. "Explain to me how an armless stranger in Elizabeth can get in that condition."

"Easiest place I have struck since I left Pittsburgh, Judge," declared Parker. "Every place I visited the barkeep served me by pouring the drink down my throat."

"Altogether too much service," said the Judge. "After you give me the names of your willing assistants that I may prosecute them I will order your release. I serve notice that anyone I get evidence against as pouring booze down a customer's throat will get sixty days—all the statutes allow this court to impose."

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## JEWELRY BUSINESS SOLD

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Lykens, Pa., April 14.—Charles Wiggins, a jeweler of Lykens, has sold out his business to a jeweler from Virginia. Mr. Wiggins expects to go into business in the South.

## TAKES A NEW WIFE AT 81

First Dead Three Weeks, Would Not Spend Passover Unwed  
Special to the Telegraph  
St. Louis, April 14.—Yuddle Schwartz, 84 years old, and Mrs. Sarah Genfont, 58, obtained a marriage license to-day. When they applied at the license office Schwartz said it cost

him \$50 to find his bride. His first wife died three weeks ago. According to his religious beliefs, he said, he must not spend Passover as a single man. So he put in a hurryup call with a "schutzen" or marrying agent. The couple were married this afternoon by a rabbi at the bridegroom's home.



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