

Gentiles were supposed by the ancient disciples of Christ unfit vessels for the reception of that holy influence; but the house of Israel had proved themselves unworthy of the words of life, and the time had come that they should be offered to the Gentiles. It appears that Cornelius was a devout man, one that feared God, gave much alms, and prayed to God always. He saw a vision—an angel of God coming to him—who told him that his prayers were heard, and his alms, were come up before God for a memorial. Then the angel told Cornelius to send men to Joppa to call for one Simon, whose surname was Peter, telling Cornelius where he lodged in a house by the seaside, and saying “he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.” In the meantime the prejudices of Peter had to be overcome, so, when he went up to the housetop to pray, he became very hungry, and fell into a trance while they were making food ready for him. While in the trance he saw as it were, a great sheet, knit at the four corners, let down from heaven to the earth, filled with all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him saying Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter refused, saying, I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean. And the voice said, what God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. “While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.” Peter went to the house of Cornelius, and while he spake to those who were assembled, “the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.” “And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.”

“Then answered Peter, Can any man

forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?” Now it may be asked, “What more did Cornelius want?” He needed to be baptized.

Again it is asked—“Is the Holy Ghost given in this age of the world?” Yes, but they could not send men to Joppa for Peter, for behold there was no Peter, or men possessing the Holy Priesthood, to send for, neither has there been since the Church lost the Holy Priesthood, until it was restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith. Cornelius did not belong to the house of Israel, yet he received the Holy Ghost. Continue this history, and what does it give to us? It gives to us the key of knowledge with regard to receiving the Holy Ghost through the ordinances of the Gospel, that it is free to all, Jew and Gentile, as Peter exclaimed when Cornelius had related to him how he was instructed to send men to Joppa. “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him.”

Our friends of the Christian world have labored from the pulpit and through the press, for ages, to make it appear that baptism by immersion is nonessential, and that the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost is done away and no longer needed. Suppose Cornelius had refused to be baptized, on the grounds that he had received the Holy Ghost as well as the Apostles, the result would have been that the Holy Ghost would have left him, and the light that was in him would have become darkness, and then it could have been exclaimed, how great is that darkness! Those who work righteousness, do as they are commanded by the Holy Priesthood; and those who do not according to the commands and requirements of the Holy Priesthood