

CORNELIUS . . . - the soldier who was baptized twice  
CORNELIUS . . . - the soldier who was baptized twice  
(ACTS 10:44-48)

Dear Cornelius,

You are among the select band of ancient saints with whom so many of us would like to speak. The story of your sending to Simon Peter has been carefully preserved in the Scriptures, and today millions of people are acquainted with the details of your remarkable conversion. We like you! Yes, there can never be any question about that fact, for you have completely won our admiration. We are particularly thrilled to know that in God's estimation you were "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway" (Acts 10: 2). That is a noble record, and places you among the aristocracy of the ancient world.

#### The Gentile Believer

We have noted with great interest that you were a centurion of the Italian band. That means, of course, that you were a Gentile soldier who had been posted to the Palestinian garrison. Naturally, we would expect to discover that in common with your race, you would worship idols. It was rather startling to find you were already a believer in the true God. And that is where our questioning would begin. When and where did you renounce your former faith? -for we assume that you were once an idolater. Were there Jews in Italy, and had their teaching influenced you in the supreme matters of religion and life? What happened among your friends when you renounced idols? Did your decision lead to unpleasant repercussions in your military career? Obviously the beauty of the law of Moses gripped your heart, and perhaps even your critics were influenced by your high standard of morality. We have not forgotten that it is also said, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God" (v. 4).

#### The Greater Blessedness

Sir, perhaps we are mistaken in our conjecture, but it seems to us that in spite of your great achievements and unquestioned virtue, you were equally conscious of a growing need in your soul. Were you not seeking from God an indefinable something which would lead to inward satisfaction? Anyhow, that is how it appears to us, for when God answered your prayer, you were instructed to send for a Gospel preacher. You remind us of the rich young ruler who once conversed with the Saviour. He also had kept the law, but had suddenly realized he still needed to inherit eternal life. Yes, we have carefully noted how God sent His messages both to you and the leader of the Church; we have observed how Peter's vision was timed perfectly to coincide with the arrival of your messengers. Cornelius, doesn't God plan things well! And then Simon arrived at your home to discover an audience waiting to hear whatsoever would be said. We are not told that you made any decision for Christ, for while the sermon was still being preached, "the Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard the word." Could you explain that to Us, Cornelius? Had you secretly believed in Christ before that moment, or did the revelation suddenly come to your soul?

CORNELIUS . . . - the soldier who was baptized twice

#### The Glorious Baptism

Do you still remember how your illustrious preacher said, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?" What were your feelings, dear brother, when Simon Peter commanded you to be baptized'? Probably this was the second occasion for you to be immersed. The Jewish leaders baptized you when you renounced idols. It was your confession that you had finished with idolatry, and that you intended to live a new life. So you really understood what Peter meant when he gave his command. Where did that Christian baptism take place, Cornelius? Did you go to the seaside, or to the river, and did many people gather around to witness your public confession of the Lord Jesus Christ? Ah well, sometime we may have a chance to speak together of these wonderful experiences, and then you will undoubtedly tell us many things we wish to know. And in return, dear brother, we will tell you how God found us. Cornelius, in that glad day we shall forget all about visions, for our faith will give place to sight. We shall see the King in His beauty.

This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.daneprairie.com>.  
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.