

I have never, v. 14. Said the Duke of Wellington, "Don't tell me that habit is second nature. Habit is ten times nature."

In fact, many of the things we do so lightly that we do not notice that we are doing them, are habits. Walking is a habit. It does not come by nature. A child left to itself might possibly never learn to walk. And what a trial it would be, if we had to learn to walk every time we wanted to go anywhere. The value of habit is that it saves us trouble. Good habits are our protection against temptation. Good habits are like the money which we have saved and can draw upon at will. Bad habits are like the debts we owe; as soon as we earn anything, we must pay it for the debt incurred long ago. Good habits are allies in the fight. Bad habits are traitors always watching a chance to sell us out to the foe.

What God hath cleansed, v. 15. When John E. Clough went as a missionary to India, he soon succeeded in interesting some of the high caste Brahmans. They "No Respector of Persons" offered to send their children, if he would start a school. He was delighted. But just then a few low caste Telugus sought baptism. The Brahmans sent him a message, saying, "We will not mingle with these outcasts. You can have nothing to do with us if you receive these people." Here was a challenge. Should he allow all his fine hopes of success to vanish? He sought help in the Bible, and found there that God rejected artificial distinctions among men. He turned his attention to the Telugus, and preached to them with ceaseless energy. The reward soon came. Before a year had passed, ten thousand of them were united with the church.

TEACHING HINTS

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the School.

For Teachers of the Older Scholars and Bible Classes

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The Lessons for this Quarter continue the account of the expansion of the church. The first two are given to the ministry of Peter. These are followed by a study of the conversion and first missionary journey of Paul, embracing five Lessons. The four concluding Lessons deal with the teaching of the early church leaders. Time and Place will give the historical setting, and the Geography Lesson the geographical situation. The story of Peter's vision is repeated in ch. 11:4-12, and of Cornelius' vision in ch. 11:13, 14.

The importance of the events in this Lesson should be clearly grasped. It is the dawn of a new era in the life and work of the church. For about ten years the gospel had been preached with much success, and thousands had been converted, chiefly Jews. Samaritans and Gentiles had been welcomed individually, and recognized by the mother church at Jerusalem, but the relation of Jewish and Gentile Christians had not been clearly or formally defined. The next great step forward was to be the solution of this problem. Peter's vision is the beginning of the new

process. It was greatly furthered by Paul's work, and the Council at Jerusalem (ch. 15, Lesson VIII.) was the final act. The church was to be delivered from the bondage of Jewish rites and ceremonies, and a new era of missions to the Gentiles ushered in, when all would be invited to the kingdom of God, without any of the restrictions or observances of the Jewish ceremonial law.

1. Study Cornelius. Note: (a) He was a seeker after God. Study his religious life, in its sincerity, its influence in his home, its helpfulness to others and its prayerfulness. How this Roman had come to this conviction and experience is not stated. He had seen enough to long for fuller light, but he had not become a full Jewish proselyte (see ch. 11:2, 3), nor had he fully entered the kingdom, ch. 11:14. (b) The special guidance in his spiritual life. Note the form of the vision, the voice, the commendation, the direction. (c) The willing obedience, a testimony to his readiness to do anything to gain the knowledge of the truth he sought. He is a most interesting character in all those qualities which contribute to true greatness.

2. Study Peter. His vision must be viewed in the light of the observance of the law. As a loyal Jew, Peter regarded the law as God's voice. The command to "kill and eat", was