

FOR THE SABBATH SCHOOL

International S. S. Lesson.

LESSON VI.—OUR FATHER'S CARE. FEB. 6.

(Matt. vi. 24-34.)

GOLDEN TEXT.—“He careth for you.”—1 Peter v. 7.

TIME AND PLACE.—A D. 28. Mount of Beatitudes.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. God's care for the Birds, v. 25-26. II. God's care for the Flowers, v. 27-30. III. God's care for His Children, v. 31-34.

INTRODUCTION.—In the verses between our last lesson and this Jesus defined the true spirit of fasting, and also portrayed the superior value of heavenly treasures above any earthly gain. Our lesson begins with showing how impossible it is to render acceptable service to God when the affections are divided, and continues the proof by showing that anxious care or worldliness are contrary to a life of trust. A most practical lesson is here set forth.

VERSE BY VERSE.—“No man can serve two masters.”—To serve both he must give both a full service, which is impossible. A half service will please no master. “Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.”—Mammon means money, riches, wealth. If a man makes money his god he cannot serve the true God.

25. “Therefore.”—Because if we trust God we should not be distracted by any care. “Take no thought.”—“Be not anxious.” Let not your need give you any fear or worry. (See Phil. iv. 6; 1 Pet. v. 7.) “What ye shall eat.”—For the things necessary for the support of the body. “Is not the life more than meat?”—“The food.” God has made the greater—life itself: He can certainly care for the lesser—the things that the life needs for its subsistence.

26. “Behold the fowls of the air.”—“The birds of the heaven.” Look at them as an example of providential care. “Your heavenly Father feedeth them.”—He is not the birds' Father, yet He feeds them; He is your Father, and will much more care for His children than for His birds.

27. “Can add one cubit.”—The words may mean to add to the length of one's life—to prolong one's days. No worrying will make a person live longer.

28. “Consider the lilies.”—We should not worry about dress—see how beautifully the lilies are clothed without any effort or care of their own. God clothes them, and He will much more clothe us. This does not teach that we need neither toil nor spin—if we did not we should soon starve. It is anxiety that Jesus is exhorting against, and not earnest work. The Bible has no patience with idleness or laziness.

29. “Was not arrayed like one of these.”—Even the finest skill of earth cannot equal the beauty of the flowers; yet God clothes them.

30. “Into the oven.”—A vessel made of baked clay. The cakes were laid within, and the oven was heated by fire under it and around it. Grass and straw were commonly used for fuel. “Shall He not much more clothe you?”—Because God's children are so much better and so much dearer to Him than the fading grass.

32. “All these things.”—These things that the body needs—food and raiment. “The Gentiles seek.”—They do not know the truth about the divine love and care and they think only of the things of this life.

33. “But seek ye first.”—The heathen seek first the things of this world, but the followers of Christ are to put the things of God's kingdom first. That is, they are to make the aim of their life to do good, to obey God's will, to extend Christ's kingdom, and to get people to accept Him as their Lord. “Righteousness.”—We are to do right ourselves, and try to get others to do the same. “All these things.”—Things we need for the support of our body. “Shall be added.”—God will provide those things if we seek first to do His will, and then trust Him.

35. “Take therefore no thought.”—“Be not anxious.”—Because all things needful are assured. “The morrow.”—Not even for the wants of the next day should we worry. One day at a time is enough to live for. “For the things of it.”—“For itself.” Will have cares and burdens of its own and will bring also its own provision. “Sufficient unto the day.”—Every day has its own troubles, which are enough for it.

THOUGHTS. “Security.” The Christian has an unfailing source of supply. God the Father has promised that his bread shall be given him, and his water sure. Riches may take to themselves wings and fly away; worldly honor may be lost; sickness may sap the life, and death end all earthly prospects; but he who puts his trust in God is secure in any hour. Seas of trouble, waves of affliction, cannot shut off the supplies for the soul while the heart confidently trusts. It can triumphantly sing: “Trust and rest, God is working for the best.”

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.

DAILY READINGS.

First Day—Our Father's Care.—Matt. vi. 24-34.

Second Day—Our Father Knows our Needs.—Luke xii. 22-32.

Third Day—“Casting all your care upon Him.”—1 Pet. v. 1-14.

Fourth Day—“Every one that asketh receiveth.”—Matt. vii. 1-14.

Fifth Day—End of the Sermon on the Mount.—Matt. vii. 15-29.

Sixth Day—“We are the Offspring of God.”—Acts xvii. 22-31.

PRAYER MEETING TOPIC, Feb. 6.—THE CHRISTIAN'S CONFIDENCE. —2 Sam. xxii. 1-4, 29-37; 1 Pet. i. 3-9.

TOPIC THOUGHTS.

Ours should be strong confidence because it is in the omnipotent and immovable God.

God is all things needful to them that confide in Him.

A Christian's life, if true and faithful, cannot miss the mark, for God directs it.

All our needs are comprehended in our need of Christ.

Our confidence is strong because it is placed in the sympathizing and understanding Saviour by whom God has manifested Himself to men.—*Christian Endeavor Manual*.

It is no presumption for a Christian to be confident, but a challenge of God for him to be afraid.

When a Christian fears to exercise any power, that is proof that the power has not been given unreservedly into the hands of God.

God is so much greater than all His enemies that the Christian feels he himself can have no enemies.

One great reward of confidence is more confidence.—*Endeavorers Daily Companion*.

It is a firm foundation on which the Christian has built his faith. There is naught in heaven or on earth so stable as the Rock on which rests the hope of the believer. For our trust is in God, the great and supreme Lord, whose word cannot fail and whose goodness is from everlasting to everlasting.

Deep down in every Christian life, at its bed-rock foundation, there should be an unflinching faith in the greatness and goodness of God. Unless we assure ourselves forever of this we cannot know any of the sweets of peace, joy and communion. If it should so be that this faith is weak or wavering, we may strengthen it by the remembrance of God's past dealings with us, by the knowledge of His dealings with others, by the careful study of His own word, and by earnest and unceasing prayer and communion.

Our confidence in God's wisdom emboldens us to plan great things for Him, since He has promised to be wisdom to us. Well may the ungodly man tremble for the success of his projects, for they are only the creatures of his own puny brain. But he who works with God and for God need not worry about even his greatest plans, for the wisdom of Omniscience is pledged to direct them.

The Christian's welfare is sure because his confidence is placed in One whose heart is all love, and in whose sight the lives of His children are precious. Our Master loves us. Whatever affects us concerns Him. He is interested in our highest well-being even more than we are ourselves. Is it any wonder, therefore, that we have great faith in our God?—*F. Ward*.

CONFIDENCE IN CHRIST.

When David Gray, the young poet of Kirkintilloch, lay dying in his cottage home by the banks of Luggie, about which he had sung so sweetly, his last words, whispered in the ear of his mother, were, “God has love, and I have faith.” With this sweet utterance upon his lips, and this blessed confidence in his heart, he fell asleep.

CONFIDENCE IN FATHER.

Some botanists were one day hunting for specimens of mountain plants in the Highlands of Scotland, and described several scarce and beautiful plants growing some distance down the face of a steep precipice. They saw a boy near, and offered him a handsome percent of money if he would allow himself to be lowered down by a rope and fill a small basket with the flowers. The boy shrank back at first, but remembered that his parents were poor, and that the money would be of great use to them, and at last he bravely said, “I will go if my father holds the rope.” And then, with unshrinking nerve, and his heart strong and bold, he suffered his father, when he came, to put the rope round his waist, lower him down the side of the precipice, and hold him there while he filled his basket with the flowers. It was a daring deed, and it was only the boy's confidence in the strength of his father's arm, and in the loving care of his father's heart that enabled him to perform it.