



LESSON VI.—FEB. 6.

OUR FATHER'S CARE.

Matt. vi., 24-34. Memory verses, 25, 26. Read vi., 19 to vii., 29.

Golden Text.

'He careth for you.'—I. Pet. v., 7.

Daily Readings.

- M. Matt. vi., 24-34.—Our Father's care.
- T. Luke xii., 22-32.—Our Father knows our needs.
- W. I. Pet. v., 1-14.—'Casting all your care upon him.'
- Th. Matt. vii., 1-14.—'Every one that asketh receiveth.'
- F. Matt. vii., 15-29.—End of the Sermon on the Mount.
- S. Acts xvii., 22-34.—'We are the offspring of God.'
- S. Ps. civ., 1-35.—The wonderful providence of our Father.

Lesson Story.

The treasure of the heart is that which is held as the greatest value in life. Whether it be wealth, fame, love, character, appearance, dress, or whatever it be, each heart has a deep longing for possessions of some kind. Mammon stands for the earthly longings and fleshly desires common to man. To love these is to despise God and his commandments. (Deut., x., 12-21.) To love God truly is to hate all evil. (Eph. iv., 21-24; Col. iii.) Mammon, the God of this world, can give us only those corruptible treasures which even if we manage to keep through a lifetime, we certainly cannot take with us into eternity. The very streets of the New Jerusalem are made of gold, therefore our gold and earthly treasures would be of no more value there than so much dust. Serving Mammon brings unsatisfying pleasure at best in this world, and an eternity of shame and remorse. (Dan. xii., 2.) Serving God brings contentment and everlasting peace. (Isa. xxvi., 3.) Those who serve God are laying up for themselves rich treasure in heaven, a reward to be enjoyed through all eternity. (II. Tim. iv., 8; I. Pet. i., 4; v., 4.)

Those who serve God with all their heart, with all their mind and with all their strength, need have no anxious care about their support. The Father who gave them life can surely provide the necessary sustenance of that life. (Psa. xxxvii., 25.) The Creator of that matchless piece of mechanism, the human body, will certainly not leave it unprotected. (Gen. iii., 21.) The Lord who provides food even for the little birds can not neglect his own children. Worrying is no help to us in any way, no amount of worrying over our size could make us grow even an inch after we had reached our full height. Worrying and anxiety cannot help us in our temporary affairs, much less in our spiritual life.

The God who makes the beauty of the lilies and the grass, no two blades of which are exactly alike, the God who orders all the incomparable beauty of the earth, the sky and the waters, the God who cares so minutely for his whole universe — is he not able to clothe his own children?

The heathen know nothing of the bountiful Father in heaven, therefore it is natural for them to worry over their daily needs. But children of the King should be about their Father's business, seeking in every way to promote the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and the loving heavenly Father will daily provide his trusting children with all needful things. (Phil. iv., 19.)

Lesson Hymn.

Peace! perfect peace! in this dark world of sin?  
The blood of Jesus whispers peace within.  
Peace! perfect peace! by thronging duties pressed?  
To do the will of Jesus, this is rest.  
—Bishop of Exeter.

Lesson Hints.

'No man can serve two masters' — serve here means to serve wholly and constantly. The word in the original means to be a slave, the same word is found in Paul's

writings.—(Rom. vi., 6: xii., 11: xiv., 18.) 'Mammon'—everything that the world calls gain. Mammon commonly stands for the love of money and greed of gain. (I. Tim., vi., 9, 10.) But any ambitions or desires which constantly fill our hearts to the exclusion of God must be counted evil. If we love evil we hate the holiness and purity of God, because they condemn us, therefore each cherished idol makes us hate God though we may not acknowledge it even to our own hearts.

'Take no thought'—the word means in the original 'to be over-anxious' or full of care. It might fairly be translated 'do not worry.' Worry drives away the peace of God, if we allow it in our hearts.

'Fowls of the air'—the birds take the food God provides for them daily, they do not worry over the future nor lay up store for the days which may never come to them.

'Your heavenly Father'—a Father so careful of even the smallest of his creatures can not forget his own child.

'Taking thought'—anxious care, worry. 'Cubit'—about eighteen inches.

'Consider'—in the original this means 'to learn thoroughly' to meditate upon and to understand. 'The lilies'—the wild lilies of Palestine were famous for their abundance and gorgeous coloring. 'How they grow'—they are doing their whole duty. God put them there to grow in beauty and to draw men's thoughts to the beauty of holiness. God puts us here to grow in his likeness and thus draw all men's thoughts to the glorious beauty of Christ.

'Even Solomon' — King Solomon was the Jewish ideal of gorgeous grandeur. The finest and most perfect cloth manufactured looks coarse and rough under a microscope. But the texture of a petal of the commonest flower is so perfect that a microscope only brings to view fresh beauties, and shows the perfection of the handiwork of God.

'Grass'—herbs. The wild flowers grew thick in the fields, and were cut with the grass, for fuel. Dried grass was frequently used for heating the clay ovens, in which cakes were baked.

'Gentiles'—the heathen who did not know God as the Jews did.

'Seek ye first the kingdom of God'—God will supply all our needs if we give our lives to his service.

Primary Lesson.

Little children can easily understand the loving care of our heavenly Father. Most of you have kind parents who provide for you a nice comfortable home, plenty of food, and proper clothing. You would never think of sitting down to cry and fret for fear you should not get any thing to eat the next day. If you are loving and obedient you trust your parents to take care of you, you would never think of doubting them.

Perhaps sometime when you were naughtily you were sent to bed without any supper, that was not because mother did not love you, but because she had to punish you so that you would not be 'naughty again.' Sometimes God has to punish people by making them very poor so that they cannot buy enough food or warm clothes. It is because they have disobeyed God in some way. But sometimes very good people are poor, Jesus was very poor on earth. Yes, Jesus chose poverty, but he always obeyed and trusted his Father, and his Father always provided his daily bread.

God loves us more tenderly than the kindest earthly parent could. If we obey and love him best of all he will never let us lack any good thing that we need.

Suggested Hymns.

'God, who hath made the daisies,' 'Praise the Saviour,' 'There is no love like the love of Jesus,' 'Jesus knows thy sorrow,' 'Day by day the manna fell,' 'O worship the Lord.'

Practical Points.

A. H. CAMERON.

Feb. 6.—Matt. vi., 24-34.

The double-minded servant actually serves one master and that is not Christ. Verse 34. Worrying about temporal things shows lack of faith. How encouraging the lesson from the birds. Verses 25, 26. Fine feathers do not always make fine birds. Those whom the Lord clothes wear garments that will never become faded or ragged or old. Verses 27-30. Food and clothing are the Lord's gifts to his people. Why should we worry, as in verse 31, since it is written in Romans viii., 32. Our perplexity about our needs should be dissolved by the sweet as-

urance that our Father knoweth all. Verse 32. God's estimate of values is always correct. Therefore should we give his kingdom the uppermost seat in our heart. Verse 33. Worrying about the future is sinful, because the Lord forbids it. One day's burden is enough to carry, and our Father will either lighten the load or increase our strength. Verse 34.

The Lesson Illustrated.

The lesson Jesus had to teach in his life and so often over again to-day is that God, our Father loves us and cares for us, and wants to fill our lives with his fullness. That the hindrances are all on our side, none on his. That our shutting him out is his greatest grief and our greatest loss.

So we have the sun, representing God's love, shining on all, desiring to warm and help all, and in our lesson, the lilies of the



grass, not garden flowers; but so little cared for as to be used for fuel, yet he cares for them. The fowls of the air, valueless to us; but he provides for them, while only we cannot trust him; and we, in the midst of his sunshine, keep our hearts in perpetual shadow with our great big man-made and woman-made umbrellas, big black and ugly, of worry and fret. He won't forget. He will provide. Let us do his will, cast worry to the winds, and live in the sunshine.

Prizes.

The prizes offered in this competition were teachers' bibles, complete with maps, concordance, etc. As there are a few who have faithfully sent in answers each month, not always sufficiently correct to count for the prize, we have decided to give to each of these Recognition Prizes. This prize consists of a year's subscription to the 'Northern Messenger.'

The first prize is awarded to Miss Emma Moore, whose papers have always been a pleasure to examine on account of their neat writing and clear expression. Louis G. Hamilton, and J. E. Gray, receive equal prizes. Two little girls, Violet Haley Goodwin and Leila Duffin deserve special mention for their good papers, but they have not sent in their answers sufficiently regularly to count for the prize.

FIRST PRIZE.

Miss Emma Moore, 27 Richmond street, St. John, N.B.

SECOND PRIZE.

James E. Gray, Uxbridge, Ont.  
Louis Gayton Hamilton, Carleton, Nova Scotia.

RECOGNITION PRIZES.

Etta M. Rogers, Cora May Sider, Mary Lydia Crisp, Kate H. Moorehead, Helen Bentham, Helen de Witt Laurence, Annie Sharpe, Jennie Ross, Elizabeth Ann Craig, Ella C. Anderson.

Will these competitors kindly write at once to say whether they wish their prize addressed to their own subscription or sent to the address of a friend. Write the name and address very plainly.

SEARCH QUESTIONS HONOR ROLL.

Emma Moore, Louis G. Hamilton, Grace D. Allan, Jennie Ross, Lizzie Brown, Kate H. Moorehead, Etta M. Rogers, J. E. Gray, Maude Peach.

HONORABLE MENTION.

Mary Lydia Crisp, Helen Bentham, Helen de Witt Laurence, Cora May Sider, E. Elizabeth Ann Craig, Annie Sharpe.

Christian Endeavor Topic.

Feb. 6.—The Christian's confidence. — II. Sam. xxii., 1-4, 29-37; I. Pet. i., 3-9.