

Sabbath School Lesson #2 – The Family – 3-9 October 2020

Christ would have each member of the family clothed with ornaments of grace. He says, “My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: For they *shall be* an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck” (Proverbs 1:8-9). Here are beauty and clothing and ornaments that you need not be ashamed to wear among your friends on earth, or among the great company of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues that shall stand before the throne of the great God.

Sunday: The First Family – Our first parents, Adam and Eve, in the Garden of Eden, were educated of God through the book of nature. When Paul stood on Mars Hill, and told the heathen people of Athens of the true God that made the heavens and the earth, He said, “For we are also His offspring” (Acts 17:28). Our Father wants all His children to know and love Him, and so for His human family He made a wonderful book, in which they might see Him clearly, and hear Him speaking to them all the time. When men put their thoughts into words, and make books, they have to use ink paper, because they can only think and speak and write *about* things, but God thinks and speaks and writes *the things themselves*. His Word is “living and active” (Hebrews 4:12), – it lives and works. So when, in the beginning, God put His thoughts into words, the Word took just the form that was in His mind when He spoke it, – sun, moon, stars, plants, birds, fishes, animals, insects, – and this is how God’s Book was made. We call it ‘the book of nature,’ but nature is God’s showing us Himself in “the things that are made” – for we read that “the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by *the things that are made*, even His eternal power and Divinity” (Romans 1:20). In each thing that He made, the “living and active” Word speaks to us some thought of God, showing us something of God Himself that will teach us to know Him better and love Him more. Adam and Eve were the first of God’s children to read in this book of God. They understood just what God was saying to them in each of His wondrous works. “They held converse with leaf and flower and tree, gathering from each the secret of its life. With every living creature, from the mighty Leviathan that playeth among the waters, to the insect mote that floats in the sunbeam, Adam was familiar. He had given to each its name, and he was acquainted with the nature and habits of all On every leaf of the forest or stone of the mountains, in every shining star, in earth and air and sky, God’s name was written. They were ever discovering some attraction that filled their hearts with a deeper love, and called for fresh expressions of gratitude” {PP 50.3}. God’s older children, the angels, also delighted to read this beautiful Book of God. They watched with the deepest interest during the six days that it was being made, and when it was finished, “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy” (Job 38:7) – even they saw God more clearly, and understand Him better, through “the things that are made” on earth.

Monday: The Childhood of Jesus – Luke 2:40 tells us that “the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him.” Jesus was in no respect different from other children, except in submission to authority, to those immediately over Him, and to the Word of God. He was not born with all the wisdom which He afterwards exhibited, any more than He was born with a man’s stature and strength. The Scripture tells us that “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature” (Luke 2:52). No one would think of such a thing as a child born into the world six feet tall; but that would not be nearly so marvellous as a child born into the world with a man’s wisdom. The latter would be a monstrosity indeed.

Tuesday: Communication – Communication is learning, but many do not hold fast to the truth they have learnt. “But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them” (2 Timothy 3:14). Thus wrote the apostle Paul to his son Timothy. There are thousands of honest souls who would be well off if they would but heed that injunction. It would seem to be the most natural thing in the world to do, and yet there are few who do it. If a man has learned a thing, and is assured of it, it would seem as though he would cling to that under all circumstances; the more the clouds and mists gathered about him, the more that darkness covered his way, making it almost impossible to discern anything, the more closely should he cling to those things that he has been assured of. Usually, however, the contrary is just the case. A person is as well

assured of some things as he can possibly be of his own existence, but suddenly he is confronted by something which he does not know how to 'harmonise' with what he already has. The new thing may be only a spectre, but it has proved sufficient to frighten him from all that is substantial. There are a great many who can never become reconciled to the idea that they are not omniscient. They rest content for a while in the things that they are assured of, simply because those things bound their horizon. But when they become conscious that there are things that they do not know, and things that they with their finite minds cannot understand, they give up everything. They will know everything or nothing. Unfortunately, when they have thrown away those things that they know, and are the nearest to knowing nothing, they imagine that they are the nearest to knowing everything. Many professed Christians go along very smoothly so long as there is no breath of opposition; but as soon as they meet with a sharp contradiction, they do not know what to do. They act as though they thought that nothing can be true unless everybody believes it. It is not, however, because the things that they are assured of are attacked, that they give up the truth, but because something else is declared or insinuated to be the truth, and they cannot harmonise the two. Doubts and fanciful theories are presented to them, and they straightway leave the solid ground of truth, to chase the will-o'-the-wisp into the swamps of error. How much better off people would be if they would only heed the apostle's injunction to continue in the things that they are assured of. Is not that the only common sense way of doing? It is only those who patiently continue in well-doing that God will reward with eternal life. Eternity in the kingdom of God will be continual progression in the truths which have been learned on earth. No man who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is worthy of the heavenly kingdom; because if he cannot continue for a few years in things that he has been assured of, how then can he continue in the same things throughout eternity? Happy is the man who continues instant in prayer, "watching thereunto with all perseverance," and is thus "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." Have you been assured of one thing? Then cling to it and continue in it, even though it be the only thing you know. Better be assured of one thing, than to be in doubt of everything. Does somebody say, 'Well, I do not know about that'? Then do you reply, 'Well, I do know about it'? Does somebody taunt you with your ignorance of many things? Tell them that your ignorance of many things shall not overthrow your knowledge of the one thing. Whatever is said and done, "continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of." Only by so doing can you hope to know anything more. Above all things, continue in the knowledge of God. "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men" (Titus 3:8). May all who profess faith in Christ so know Him whom they have believed that they would "be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love may grow up into him in all things which is the head, even Christ."

Wednesday: The Role of Parents – Parents need not think that fairy tales are better adapted to the children, and that more valuable instruction can be left till afterwards. The child will receive as truth whatever is told it, and if falsehood and exaggeration be temporarily sown, it is impossible to say how much will be torn up with these when the child discovers that it has been played with, and that it must reconstruct its system of truth for itself, with lessened confidence in the word of others. How much better to start right from the beginning and watch that no seed be sown except such as will bear the desired harvest.

Thursday: Lest Ye Forget – "Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which He made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of anything, which the LORD Thy God hath forbidden thee." "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkedest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deuteronomy 4:23; 5:6-7). This is family instruction in morals. The highest recommendation that God could give to Abraham was this: "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment" (Genesis 18:19).