



LESSON IX.—AUGUST 26.

**Jesus the Good Shepherd.**

John x., 1-16. Memory verses, 9-11. Read Ps. xxiii., and John x., 1-21.

**Daily Readings.**

M. the Fold. Jn x., 1-10.  
 T. Shepherd, Jn. x., 11-18.  
 W. Division. Jn. x., 19-33.  
 T. Shepherds. Ezk. xxxiv., 1-31.  
 F. His Flock. Isa. xl., 1-11.  
 S. The Lord. Ps. xxiii., 1-6.

**Golden Text.**

'The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep.'—John x., 11.

**Lesson Text.**

(1) Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. (2) But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. (3) To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. (4) And when he putteth forth his own sheep he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. (5) And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him for they know not the voice of strangers. (6) This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. (7) Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. (8) All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. (9) I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. (10) The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy; I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. (11) I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. (12) But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. (13) The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. (14) I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. (15) As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. (16) And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

**Suggestions.**

The Lord is my Shepherd. Jesus contrasted the conduct of the good shepherd and the false shepherds or hirelings, those who cared for the sheep only for the pay they might receive. Such shepherds were the Pharisees who instead of protecting the sheep were ready to cast them out of the fold on the slightest provocation. But Jesus receives the cast out ones and protects them with his own life.

The good shepherd enters the fold by the door of obedience to God and authority from him. Those who try to become shepherds from false motives are thieves and robbers, despoiling the flock instead of feeding them. The true shepherd speaks to the heart of his sheep, to each one separately with a tender individual love. The true shepherd leads his flock, he does not drive them. He does not ask them to go anywhere that he has not first been himself. When we follow the Lord Jesus we may have to go through places of danger and great difficulty and trouble, but he leads the way, and he is with us. He suffered for us greater agony than we can ever suffer, he was tempted in every way as we are, he has gone before us into every experience through which we may pass.

The Lord Jesus is the door for the sheep to enter the sheepfold. Only through him can any one enter the kingdom of heaven and find God. The door is wide—wide enough for every seeking soul to enter, but narrow—so narrow that not one sin can

be carried in. Beyond the door are green pastures of safety and peace and sweet waters of joy and satisfaction. The door is open to all who seek it sincerely and with their whole hearts, those who have entered the door and found salvation may go in and out, under the shepherd's care and seek for the straying sheep and bring the little lambs to the open door of the shepherd's love. The saved soul has great responsibilities, he must go with the Saviour to seek for the lost and straying ones, he must be ready to say, The Lord has saved me, he will certainly save you.

The Lord Jesus came to give life, abundant, overflowing, everlasting life, to all who would accept it. The life which he gives is not a bare existence, it is abounding vitality, more than enough. Jesus came to give his own life for his sheep, he died that we might live with him through eternity, he lives that we may live by his strength day by day.

The lamb is in the fold,

Secure and safely penned:

The lion once had hold

And thought to make an end;

But One came by with wounded side,

And for the sheep the Shepherd died.

A hireling is one who takes the shepherd's place merely for the sake of the reward, but the true shepherds must be supported by the offerings of their flock. That is, a minister should not work for a salary, but he should work for God and his people should support him so that he may give his time and strength to the care of their souls. A man who cares more for money or pleasure than he does for the souls around him is not fit to be entrusted with God's work, he cannot be a true shepherd, if danger came he would save himself instead of his flock. A true shepherd is ready at any time to lay down his life for his sheep, and constantly gives his life's best powers to caring for them. The wolves that come to devour the flock are persecutions, heresies, strifes, worldliness.

**Lesson Hymn.**

The King of love my Shepherd is,  
 His goodness faileth never:  
 I nothing lack since I am His,  
 And He is mine forever.

Where streams of living waters flow,  
 Thy ransomed soul He leadeth:  
 And where the verdant pastures grow,  
 With food celestial feedeth.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill,  
 With Thee dear Lord beside me:  
 Thy rod and staff my comfort still,  
 Thy cross before to guide me.

And so through all the length of days,  
 Thy goodness faileth never:  
 Kind Shepherd may I sing Thy praise  
 Within Thy courts forever!

**C. E. Topic.**

Aug. 26.—Ministering to Christ. Matt. xxv., 31-46.

**Junior C. E. Topic.**

MINISTERING IN CHRIST'S BEHALF.

Mon., Aug. 20.—To children. Mark ix., 41.

Tues., Aug. 21.—To strangers. Lev. x., 18, 19.

Wed., Aug. 22.—To the hungry. Isa. lviii., 10.

Thu., Aug. 23.—To the troubled. II. Cor. i., 4.

Fri., Aug. 24.—Learn to do good. Titus iii., 14.

Sat., Aug. 25.—Spread His truth. I. Kings xxii., 14.

Sun., Aug. 26.—Topic—How can we minister to Christ? Matt. xxv., 31-46.

**A Praying Sunday School.**

(Amos R. Wells, in S.S. 'Times'.)

I wonder that this exercise is so seldom fixed upon the children's attention and interest by their own vocal participation in it. Indeed, it is not always that the school is able to repeat the Lord's Prayer together with the freedom and force born of long custom. The school may easily be taught to chant the Lord's Prayer, and that may be made most genuine praying. There

are many suitable short Bible prayers that children might learn to say together, such as 'Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.' Indeed, there are many prayer-psalms that could be learned entire, the concert repetition of which would greatly enrich the Sunday-school hour.

Then there is the hymn-book. If it is a good one it contains many beautiful prayer-hymns. Let the scholars all bow their heads and sing softly. Miss Havergal's tender consecration hymn, or 'Nearer, my God, to Thee,' and you will find all hearts indeed drawn nearer heaven. Occasionally let the school read together one of these same hymns, also with their heads bowed.

And, by the way,—though it deserves more than a 'by the way'—insist on the bowing of the head,—not that the attitude is important in itself, but the reverence that the attitude arouses is of the highest importance. Wait till all heads are bowed before you begin the prayer, or permit another to begin it. The half-minute of quiet or semi-quiet needed to gain this end, is not ill-bestowed. Moreover, I should strongly advise you to go one step farther, and, once in a while, have the entire school go down on their knees. This, the normal attitude of prayer, the children should be taught to assume in public, at least so often that it will not seem to them forced or unnatural.

Have you tried silent prayer? A blessed exercise it is, and one the children will love. Ask them to bend their heads or kneel and then in perfect silence to pray for their teachers, pastor, or their dear ones at home, or some sick scholar. After a minute, the superintendent will tenderly add a few closing sentences of vocal prayer.

And have you tried a chain prayer—a prayer started by a leader who will also close it, to which ten or twenty of the scholars contribute sentences of praise or petition? You will be astonished to see how many of the scholars will join in these prayers,—you will be astonished, that is, unless you are familiar with the training along this line so nobly accomplished in our modern young people's religious societies.

Still another way to obtain the scholars' careful heed to the prayer is to establish a form with which the superintendent will always begin his opening prayer, and which the entire school will repeat with him. The opening sentences of the Lord's Prayer may be used for such a purpose. Then, at the close of the prayer, after 'for Jesus sake,' let all the scholars say 'Amen.'

An occasional Sunday-school prayer-meeting, held for ten minutes at the close of the lesson-hour, will do much to inspire in the school a deeper spirit of worship; that is, if the scholars themselves take part, and not the teachers only. And these Sunday-school prayer-meetings are magnificent opportunities for drawing the net. Hold them in a small room, that nearness may warm the coals of devotion to a glow. Do not hold them too frequently to be burdensome. Keep them brief and earnest. Let the teachers work for them in their classes, and use them as tests for their teaching. Above all, expect conversions in them, and, if you are faithful and faith-filled, you will get them.

This use of the scholar in the devotions of the school should be extended to the home. The superintendent may ask the scholars to pray every day during the coming week for the school, or for their teacher, or for their next lesson, that it may bring someone nearer Christ. For several weeks there may stand in bold letters on the blackboard a list of things that should be prayed for at home. The teacher, of course, must enforce these recommendations. If he will courageously hold, once in a while, a little prayer-meeting with his scholars, in the class-room, about the class-table, or, best of all, at his own home or at one of theirs, he will thereby teach them as much Christianity as otherwise he might in a year.

Indeed, the teacher has much to do in making yours a praying school. The teacher's conduct during the prayer in the school is in itself half the scholars' attention, the