

# The Sabbath School.

## LESSONS FOR SEPTEMBER.

### FIRST SABBATH.

SUBJECT—*The Light of the World*, John ix. 1-11. Golden Text—Psalm cxix. 13. Par. passages—Ps. cxix. 130; Eph. v. 14; 1. Pet. ii. 9.

The first verse brings before us the man whom Jesus miraculously cured. He had been blind from his birth, and this fact indicates a radical defect in his eyes, rather than an imperfection caused by disease, which might be cured by medical skill. It is said that blindness which dates from birth is never cured.

In V. 2nd we have the enquiry of the Apostles as to the reason why he had been thus afflicted. It involved three opinions, two of which were erroneous: first, that all suffering is sent as punishment for sin—a principle which is contradicted by the teaching of Scripture (see the history of Job, and Luke xiii. 1-5), and also by the events of ordinary life, in which we see great sinners often very prosperous. Secondly, that a man might sin before he was born, a position which implies the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, which is not countenanced by Scripture. Thirdly, that the sins of parents sometimes entail sufferings on their offspring, a belief which we know to accord with statements of the Bible and the dealings of Providence, though not applicable to this case.

Vs 3-6 gives the answer of Jesus. It assures them, first, that this man's blindness was not a retribution for the sins which he or his parents had committed, though like all others of our race they were sinners, but that it was to show the glory of God as displayed in his works—of his sovereignty in inflicting it, and his mercy and power in curing it. Secondly, that this work of mercy was committed to Christ as the representative of the Father; that the day of life was drawing to a close, and that he must be diligent in completing the work given him to do before the night came when no man could work. Thirdly, He calls Himself the Light of the World. In Mat. iv. 2 He is called the Sun of Righteousness, and in Luke i. 78, the Dayspring from on High. As the sun, while above the horizon, is the only source of light, so He, while in the world, was the only source of all of which light is the emblem. Light and darkness have always been regarded as the most striking symbols of knowledge and ignorance. Christ, by his word and spirit, is the only source of that knowledge which makes wise unto salvation. As light adorns the world with beauty, and fills every sentient being with joy, so Christ is the dispenser of the beauties of holiness and of joy unspeakable to all his people. And as light promotes growth, health, and fruitfulness

in the vegetable kingdom, so they that are planted in the house of the Lord are nourished and made fruitful by the beams of the Sun of Righteousness.

Vs. 6 and 7 relate the particulars of the miracle. Why our Saviour adopted the method described we cannot positively say. He may have varied his modes of procedure to show that no uniform method was necessary.

The remainder of the lesson shows that all who had known the man were greatly astonished, and could scarcely be brought to admit that so great a miracle could have been performed.

### SECOND SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—*The Good Shepherd*, John x. 1-11. Golden Text—Isaiah xl. 11.

Here we have a parable, and the explanation of it by Christ. The parable is introduced by the solemn formula *Verily, Verily*, an intimation of the importance and certainty of what was about to be said.

A sheepfold was an uncovered space surrounded by a low wall, affording protection to the flock by night. In this wall there was a door for entrance and departure. The sheep entered by the door; so did the Shepherd. But thieves and robbers climbed over the wall. They could not enter by the door, because a porter guarded it and allowed none such to pass. But when the true shepherd came with his flock the porter opened to him, and allowed him to go in and out, the sheep following him.

Shepherds in the East lead their flocks. The sheep know the shepherd's voice and follow when and where he calls; but they will not answer to a stranger's voice, indeed they flee from it terrified. For a full understanding of this parable teachers would well to consult Thompson's "Land and Book," page 202, English edition.

V. 6.—Christ's audience did not understand his parable. Nor did they wish to understand it, for it was spoken against many of them; at least, it was spoken against the teachers and rulers who were present, and from the connection it would seem that a good many of them were sent. Hence Christ has to explain.

V. 7.—"I am the door," &c. Christ opened the door of entrance for His sheep-people—into the true fold—the Church.

V. 8.—This verse would be better understood if for the word 'before,' we read 'stead of.' "All that ever came into the world before me." The prophets came before Christ but not instead of Him. They did not pretend to possess Messianic authority; false teachers did. They endeavored to lord it over men's consciences. The people of God, however, did not know or obey such false teachers.

V. 9.—If the sheep go in by the door they are safe and will be fed. Christ's people have in Him both protection and provision.

V. 10.—Here we have the object and sign of the true and false shepherds.