

And all this is no mere pious hope but an assured confidence. For Jesus, the Good Shepherd, has done all this for us and is all this to us. In him God became one of us, living in our homes, walking our earth, speaking to us in language we could understand, and touching our lives at every point. He went about doing good. He spent his life seeking the lost. His ministry was one of healing and comforting. And Jesus in

glory is not different. All that the shepherd is to the straying, wounded, bewildered, helpless sheep, that David's royal Son is to us, and more. "What was the popular religion of the first Christians? It was, in one word, the religion of the Good Shepherd. They looked on that figure, and it conveyed to them all they wanted." And as we look on that same figure to-day, that's all we want.

THE LESSON GRADED

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the School.

For Teachers of Bible Classes

By Rev. Professor W. E. Taylor, Ph.D., Toronto

The Jewish Exile, in a narrow sense, extended over a period between B.C. 586-537. During these years, prophets arose, namely, Obadiah, Ezekiel, and the writer of Isaiah, chs. 40-56. Briefly narrate the life of Ezekiel. One of his tenderest appeals to his fellow captives is found in this lesson. Why was the figure of the shepherd appropriate?

1. *The new age.* Each prophet, who speaks of the future happiness of God's people, emphasizes those features of the golden age (read Isa., chs. 9, 11; Ezek., ch. 47; Zech., ch. 8; Mal., ch. 4) which his contemporaries needed most to hear. Why do the prophets omit all mention of a heaven? In this lesson, the new age is described in contrast to that of the evil rulers or shepherds (read vs. 1-10). It will be marked by three features: (1) The divine shepherd will reclaim his people,—the lost, those who have been driven away by violence, the weak and the sick who are unable to come back, if they would; in short, the careless, the unfortunate, and the suffering. (2) The great shepherd will remove evil conditions in the land, vs. 17-22. (3) The new age will be maintained by the rule of God through his prince, vs. 23, 24.

2. *Temporal and spiritual.* Can we not discover two elements in the prophet's words—that which was merely relative to Jewish conditions at the time, and that which is timeless? What do you understand by the fulfilment of prophecy—the perfecting of its spiritual content, or the fulfilment of its

3. *Three principles.* The prophet indicates that the rule of God will have the following characteristics:

(a) *A ministry to individuals*—the lost, the oppressed, the weak. Did the prophet understand this only in national relations? (Read Luke 7:20-22; ch. 15.) The prophet sees in the character of the shepherd a proof of God's care for his weaklings. We accept the sneer of a modern philosopher that our religion is one for weaklings. How does God render help to such?

(b) *A ministry to society.* Read vs. 18-21. What is the modern counterpart of this evil? (Read v. 23.) Is the struggle for better economic conditions within the scope of religion?

(c) *The presence of God.* The prophet knew that this involved an ethical quality in the people. "The kingdom of God is within you." What has religion to do with social reconstruction? "The state is more than a physical organism. It is a community of moral aims and ideals." And religion is the final sanction of these.

For Teachers of the Senior Scholars

By Rev. A. Wylie Mahon, B.D., Toronto

Refer to the tender relationship often subsisting between man and some of the lower animals, some of his four-footed brothers. In a land like ours we sometimes find a man and his horse, or a man and his dog warmly attached to each other. In Eastern lands we find this illustrated even more strikingly in the relationship of a shepherd to his sheep. They live together and learn to know and like each other in a very human way. We cannot letter? (See Matt. 5:17, 18; Rom. 13:8.)