

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

Lesson X. September 2, 1917.

The Shepherd of Captive Israel.—Ezekiel 34: 1-31.

Commentary.—I. Evil shepherds of Israel (vs. 1-10). Ezekiel speaks of God's people under the figure of a flock, and sharply reproves the rulers, or shepherds. A woe is pronounced upon them because they have fed themselves on the flock, instead of feeding the sheep and caring for them. They were both positively injurious to the flock under their care and were neglectful of it. Verse 4 names five particulars in which they had failed of doing their duty. They had not strengthened the diseased nor healed the sick nor bound up the prey of the flock nor sought to bring it back to the fold. The rulers had oppressed the people, had failed to protect them and they had been scattered, and there was no one to search them out and gather them again. "The allegory is simple enough. Owing to the evil and selfish government of the rulers the people became the prey of all the nations round about them. The figure of the flock indicates, however, the affection of Jehovah for his people and his compassion over their sufferings.—Davidson

II. The true Shepherd (vs. 11-16). The Lord God—Jehovah himself speaks and declares himself to be the Shepherd of Israel. He will search out his sheep, and seek them out.—He promises to make a thorough and successful search for his sheep. Although the people of Judah had been scattered, some being in captivity, others in their own land, the Lord would find them and gather them unto his care. Scattered as the flock is of a flock of sheep that has been broken up by some attack or sudden fear, and the shepherd comes to the sheep, giving confidence and gathering them together. "In the cloudy and dark day—it was a dark day for the nation when, through the wickedness of the rulers, enemies were providentially permitted to attack and overcome it and take the people into captivity. I will bring them out from the people.—The Lord gives a definite promise of deliverance from captivity. Will bring them to their own land.—Although a heathen nation then had possession of the land of Judah, it was the heritage of God's people, and they would yet occupy it. They would be at home on its mountains and by its rivers, for which they were longing in their captivity. 14. A good picture.—The language here is strikingly like that of Ps. 23. "A good pasture" signifies plenty. High mountains of Israel—To Jewish exiles in Babylon these words of the prophet were like sweetest music. They were words of home. Their fold—The shepherd is a place of security and rest. 15. Cause them to lie down—Sheep lie down when they have, for the time being, satisfied their hunger and when they feel secure. 16. I will seek that which was lost—Compare this verse with v. 4. The true Shepherd's work is to seek the lost. The reverse of that given by the evil shepherds. Will destroy the fat and the strong—Those of Israel who would become rich and powerful through oppressing others of their people would be destroyed. Jehovah would carefully safeguard the rights of all his people, and would not permit to attack and overcome them. The true Shepherd would act constantly in accordance with equity and justice in contrast to the course pursued by the unfaithful shepherds.

III. Oppressors rebuked (vs. 17-22). Not only shall the cruel shepherds be removed and the flock delivered out of their hands and fed by God himself, but the injuries inflicted by members of the flock on one another shall no more prevail. The strong shall no more push the weak or drive them from the good pasture.—Davidson. The Lord would judge between the weak and the strong. Pursuing the figure of the flock, the prophet charges the strong with selfishness and cruelty. They have fed in good pastures and trodden down that which they could not eat and left it for the weak. They have drunk what they wished from the waters and have stirred up the mud in it with their feet, and left it for the weak ones to drink. This is indeed a striking picture of greediness.

IV. Messiah's reign (vs. 23-31). One shepherd over them—Instead of being a succession of rulers, there shall be one Shepherd whose leadership shall be forever. The prophet breaks away from the thought of the return to Judah of the captives in Babylon, and declares the glories of Messiah's sway over the world. Shall feed them. The important task of the shepherd is to see that his sheep are well supplied with food. My servant David—Messiah is frequently spoken of under this name. The king of greatest prominence in all the list of Israel's rulers was David, and his name is employed to designate the eternal King. Shall be their shepherd.—David was a shepherd in early life and cared for his father's sheep. Later he was the shepherd of Israel and cared for his Father's flock. God's chosen people; and still later the Good Shepherd, here called David, would shepherd for his Father the sheep of his pasture. 24. I the Lord have spoken it.—The word is fixed and true. 25. A covenant of peace.—The blessings to be enjoyed under the reign of Christ are strikingly expressed in this verse. The covenant of peace would be a guaranty of protection from all evil. Jesus said to his followers that he would give to them his peace. To those who love God, all things work together for good. Dwell safely.—While God protects us, nothing can do us harm. We are not to be afraid of man, nor of wild beasts. Evil beasts would be removed from the land and their former haunts would be some safe places for sleeping. Under Christ's reign there would be safety, restfulness, and plenty. 26. Them—God's people. Places round about my hill—God's people and Zion, God's hill, were to bring great blessings, not only to themselves, but also to all nations. There shall be showers of blessing.—The people of

Palestine appreciate a plentiful supply of water, since from April to October no rain falls there. No stronger figure could be used to express the blessedness of Christ's kingdom. 27. Earth shall yield her increase.—This refers primarily to the condition of the Jews and their land when they should return from the Babylonish captivity but spiritually to the condition of those who own Messiah's sway. There is still a glorious future for Palestine and the Jewish people. Those that served themselves of them—"Those that made bondmen of them."—R. V. 28-31. Jehovah would be their God and they would be his people. Questions.—Who was Ezekiel? When was he taken to Babylon as a captive? Where did he live in Babylon? When did he write his prophecy? What is the style and character of his writings? Of what wrongs does he accuse the shepherds of Israel? Who did he say would be Israel's shepherd? How would his work differ from that of the other shepherds? What blessings would attend his coming and reign?

SCIENTIFIC JOTTINGS.

Movie actors are said to do better work when stimulated by the sounds of music while they are playing.

Mountings on which buttons can be fastened to form hat pins or brooches have been patented in Great Britain.

A new portable electric drill has a pistol grip and is controlled by a pistol trigger.

Michigan stands firm among the States for the production of salt, ranks second for iron and third for copper.

Cattle may pass from one side of the track to the other without danger of encountering a train by means of large concrete sewer pipes and through the embankment.

The Master—You look worried. What's the matter? The Housekeeper—The nurse has just left and there is nobody to wash the baby. The Master—Have the chauffeur do it. There isn't as much mechanism about a baby as there is about a car, anyway.—Wit and Humor.

POINTERS ABOUT PLOWING—HOW AND WHEN TO DO IT

Some Principles of Soil Tillage—Types of Furrows—The Importance of Plowing

To those who have watched the trend of agricultural progress during the past few decades, many changes will have been noticed in the methods and ideas with regard to farm practices. The ever increasing scarcity of labor has resulted in the advent of much machinery which has decreased the amount of hand labor necessary on the farm, and it is now possible to perform many operations with the aid of horse power and machinery that were originally done by man power.

In no other phase of agriculture, practice have there been greater changes than in the tillage of the soil. Apart from any newly acquired knowledge that has resulted in different methods being followed, many new implements have been devised that will accomplish the objects sought more efficiently and at a smaller cost than was originally possible; larger machines making use of a greater number of horses per man have been introduced, and in some cases whole operations are entirely omitted that were at one time considered necessary.

Similarly radical changes have taken place in the ideas and practices with regard to that all important tillage operation, "plowing." The narrow, highly turned, comby furrow of twenty-five years ago has given place to a broader, heavier, more squarely turned furrow. Gang plows have replaced single furrow ones, and the old iron plow that put on a toppy finish with a high polish is rarely seen except at occasional plowing matches. In some cases it has been possible to dispense with plowing altogether, it being replaced with deep surface tillage with heavy cultivators and disc harrows. These changes have been necessary, and desirable on account of the new conditions in which we find ourselves placed, but, in spite of this, plowing is still the basic operation of all cultivation. Thorough and deep surface tillage may occasionally replace plowing, but cannot displace it, and when it does, plowing must be done.

Plowing is slow and expensive, and this, together with the scarcity of labor, has brought about a far too prevalent idea that time spent on good plowing is not profitably employed. This has resulted in a great deal of land being merely surface scratched instead of properly plowed. Good plowing is as essential to-day as it ever was. We may get along with fewer plowings on certain soils and under some conditions, perhaps yet to be found out. We may be able to accomplish it more quickly by turning a different type of furrow and by use of greater power, and it may be that when we understand more fully the cultural requirements of different soils our ideas as to what constitutes good plowing may change further, but as long as the eradication of weeds and the economical preparation of a good seed bed are prime considerations, good plowing will hold first place in the operations of tillage.

The fundamental object of tillage is to furnish a suitable home for the seed to germinate, for the plant to grow and produce a crop. This object is accomplished by the plow through the pulverization of the soil, the killing of weeds, the aeration of the soil, and by the improvement of its physical condition generally.

Three distinct types of furrow can be used on the farm to good advantage, depending on the objects sought and upon the conditions desired. These are: the flat furrow, lap furrow and

the rolling furrow. Each is suited to a particular purpose.

In flat plowing the furrow slice is cut, but comparatively shallow, and when turned, it lies practically inverted on the sole furrow of the preceding one. This results in an absence of open spaces below and between the furrows, and on that account this type of furrow is particularly adapted to the rapid decomposition of the soil. It is therefore employed when meadows are broken up immediately after haying, with a view to ridding the land of grass and weeds preparatory to seeding it to hoed crop the following year. When this style of furrow is used, the land requires to be firmed, either with a roller or soil packer. This ensures that the furrow slice is brought into still closer contact with the sub-surface soil and makes conditions favorable for the rise of moisture, which, together with the heat, results in a rapidly decomposing soil. This rolling or packing also firms the soil so that there is less danger of the sod being torn up in the subsequent cultivation.

These cultivations should be light at first, followed by deeper ones and should be made lengthwise of the lands. Cross cultivation at this time may look to be effective, but it tears up the sod, thus preventing it from decomposing and furthermore makes the thorough eradication of grass and weeds a very difficult task and, therefore, deep plowing in the fall allows of more moisture being held and absorbed than would be the case if shallow plowing were practised, a factor which does not apply in spring plowing.

Soil that is plowed in the spring requires that even more attention be given towards firming it than is the case with the fall plowing. On account of the type of furrow used, the top soil is apt to be loose and open, and moreover it has not had the same opportunity of setting as is the case when the work has been done in the fall. At least two rollings or an equivalent amount of packing, followed by other tillage operations to fine the surface soil, are as a rule necessary before the land is in proper condition for seeding.

When long stubble, weeds or a green manure crop is to be turned under, the rolling furrow will prove the most effective. In this style of plowing the furrow is turned over in such a way as to cover the material as near completely as possible. It is accomplished by holding the plow at an angle, setting it to cut rather than to pull, and by putting some pressure on the handles. Such plowing results in the soil being so completely pulverized that no crust is left on the surface in the fall except on light soils, or on heavy land the pulverized soil would run together and bake. Followed by the packer and harrows it results in the optimum conditions for the decomposition of the material turned under and makes the land fit and in the shortest time possible.

Three distinct types of plowing can thus be used to advantage, depending on the time the work is done and the objects sought. Each is suited to its particular purpose. Shallow flat plowing is best suited to being used where sod land is broken up in July or August in preparation for a hoed crop the following year. Deep lap plowing, so that the furrow slice may be exposed to the frost, with a less extreme lap, put up by a plow with a holder curve is best suited to spring plowing, and thirdly, the rolling furrow is best suited to plowing under stubble, weeds or green manures.

—The Canadian Countryman.

MARKET REPORTS

TORONTO MARKETS.

MEATS, WHOLESALE.	
Beef, franks	11.00
Butcher, choice	11.00
Caracas, choice	11.00
Do, common	10.00
Veal, common	10.00
Do, medium	12.00
Heavy hogs	12.50
Shop hogs	12.00
Mutton, light	15.00
Do, heavy	12.00
Lamb, yearlings	20.00
Spring lambs	22.00

TORONTO CATTLE MARKETS.

Cattle, choice	10.75
Butcher, cattle	12.25
Butcher, medium	8.25
Butcher, common	7.00
Butcher, cows	7.75
Butcher, cows, medium	7.75
Butcher, cattle, canners	5.00
Butcher, bulls	6.00
Feeding steers	7.75
Stockers, choice	7.00
Stockers, light	6.00
Milkers, choice	4.00
Springers, choice	4.00
Sheep, wethers	12.00
Bucks and culs	8.00
Lambs	14.00
Hogs, fat	12.00
Calves	7.00

OTHER MARKETS.

WINNIPEG GRAIN EXCHANGE.

Flour, on the Winnipeg Grain Exchange yesterday were the following:	
Wheat—	Open, High, Low, Close.
Oct.	2.29 2.29 2.12 2.15
Nov.	0.62 0.62 0.61 0.62
Dec.	0.62 0.62 0.61 0.62
Jan.	0.62 0.62 0.61 0.62
Feb.	0.62 0.62 0.61 0.62
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