

Sunday School Lesson

December 11. Lesson XI—Isaiah Counsels Hezekiah. Isaiah 37: 35-39, 44-45. Golden Text—Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee.—Isaiah 28: 3.

ANALYSIS.

I. AHAU AND THE SYRO-ISRAELITE INVASION, ch. 7.

II. HEZEKIAH AND THE EGYPTIAN ALLIANCE, ch. 31.

III. THE ASSYRIAN CRISIS, chs. 36 and 37.

INTRODUCTION—Isaiah was a keen observer of the events of his time. It was with deep insight into God's ways that he looked upon the tragic events of his age, the fall of Damascus in 732, the fall of Samaria in 721, and the siege of Jerusalem in B.C. 701.

I. AHAU AND THE SYRO-ISRAELITE INVASION, ch. 7.

In 735 the king of Damascus (or rather of Syria), had pressed by the growing power of Assyria on the east, formed an alliance with the king of Israel against Assyria, and these two endeavored first to persuade and then to force Judah to join with them. Aha, king of Judah in Jerusalem, preferred to ally his little kingdom with Assyria, and thus made himself and his people vassals of and tributary to that proud and powerful empire. Chapter 7 tells us how these two petty kings, to strengthen their defensive league against Assyria, invaded Judah intending to take Jerusalem, depose King Aha, and put upon the throne of Judah a man of their own choosing, and how in Jerusalem, king and people were stricken with terror (vs. 1-2, c. v. 6, and 2 Kings 16:5-8). Isaiah, then comparatively a young man, brought to the king a message of comfort and cheer. He counseled watchfulness and calm confidence in the protecting care of Jehovah, and predicted the speedy overthrow of the invading kings. He seems to have opposed the dependence upon Assyria's help (2 Kings 16:7), but Aha rejected his advice. It was at this juncture that he foretold to Aha the coming of another and greater king, soon to be born, whose significant name would be Immanuel, "God with us," who would grow up during the period of trouble and distress which was speedily coming. His very name in itself gave assurance of ultimate deliverance, and he, succeeding to the throne of David, would establish a kingdom which should endure forever, see also 9:1-7. Aha seems to have profited not at all by Isaiah's message, but went his own foolish way of fatal alliance with and hence subjection to Assyria. The prediction of Isaiah was not fulfilled in his time, as he apparently expected, but it was the first declaration of Israel's hope of a coming King and Saviour, and was taken up by other prophets after him and handed down through the following centuries until its fulfillment in the birth and ministry and spiritual kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Compare 11:1-10 and Acts 13:22-23.

II. HEZEKIAH AND THE EGYPTIAN ALLIANCE, ch. 31.

The kingdom of Israel came to an end with the fall of Samaria in B.C. 721, and the carrying off of many of its people into captivity. Assyrian armies do not appear to have entered Judah until B.C. 701. It was four years before that date that Sargon, one of the greatest of the Assyrian warrior kings, died. At his death there was rebellion in many parts of his vast empire, from Persia to the borders of Egypt, against the oppressive burdens which his rule had imposed. Babylon revolted and was subjected to terrible punishment by his successor, Sennacherib. Hezekiah, son of Aha, king of Judah, with the Philistines and other neighboring states, also threw off the Assyrian yoke induced by promises of help from Egypt. Isaiah, now old in years and in experience, had no confidence in Egyptian promises and denounced this Egyptian alliance. He would have king and people put their dependence first and before all on God, who holds his people fast even as a lion holds his prey against the shepherds (v. 4), or as birds flying over guard the nests which hold their young, v. 5. Compare 30:1-5.

III. THE ASSYRIAN CRISIS, chs. 36 and 37.

The Assyrian armies entered Palestine in B.C. 701. See the story of their coming as told in 2 Kings, chs. 18 and 19, and in our lesson. There is also an Assyrian record of this invasion which has high historical value. Many of the cities and strongholds of Judah were taken and Jerusalem was

besieged by a detachment from the main army at Lachish, under the command of one of the king's chief officers. The story of this officer's meeting with Hezekiah's two ministers and his insolent speech in which he demanded the surrender of the city is fully told in ch. 36. In the negotiations for the Egyptian alliance, Isaiah's counsel had been neglected, but in this crisis he was consulted and he sent to Hezekiah in reply an assuring and comforting message, ch. 37:5-7. Either at this time or earlier Hezekiah had endeavored to buy off the invaders by payment of a very large sum in money and treasure, 2 Kings 18:14-16. For this or some other reason, the siege was lifted, but later the Assyrians returned with a second demand for the city, ch. 37:36-37. The mention of Tirhakah here (v. 9) is puzzling, as Egyptian records show that he did not reign until ten years later. The prayer of Hezekiah in his deep distress, and the message of Isaiah, breathing defiance to the foes and confidence in the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, are too well known to need further comment. In some mysterious and awful way, by plague or other cause (v. 36), the Assyrian army on the borders of Egypt was destroyed, the siege of Jerusalem was consequently abandoned, and the kingdom of Judah was saved from extinction for another hundred years.



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Daughter (watching Father having difficulty in finding his sea legs)—"Look, Mummy—Daddy's walking funny, like he did last Christmas!"

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Farm Notes

Weed Seeds in Seed Grain

Every farmer is aware of the trouble and loss caused by weeds yet many farmers use poorly cleaned seed grain which is responsible for the introduction of new weeds and the increase of those already in the land. The Dominion Seed Branch has conducted an inquiry into this source of the spread of weeds and the results are summed up in a bulletin on Weeds and Weed Seeds. The inquiry elicited the fact that about 75 per cent. of Canadian farmers grow their own seed grain. Most of the grain purchased for seed is secured from neighboring farmers, but considerable quantities are obtained from grain dealers and seed merchants. Analysis of samples collected shows that most of the grain sold for seed contains large numbers of different kinds of weed seeds. Weed seeds are also prevalent in home grown seed. It is therefore obvious that great care should be exercised in selection and cleaning. Some weed seeds are difficult to separate but most of them may be removed by a properly equipped and well operated fanning mill. When the fanning mill is poorly equipped or badly operated little good is done by its use. The inquiry even showed that a considerable percentage of grain is sown direct from the threshing, with no cleaning whatever. The bulletin, which contains descriptions and methods of control of a large number of weeds, may be obtained from the Publications Branch, Department of Agriculture, Ottawa.

The Superiority of Certified Seed Potatoes

It has been clearly shown during recent years that the seed potatoes certified by the inspectors of the Dominion Department of Agriculture are much superior to the general run of common stock. The rules and regulations governing the production and inspection of this certified seed are given in a new pamphlet on Canadian Certified Seed Potatoes, distributed by the Publications Branch, Department of Agriculture, Ottawa. This standards set for certification are high and the results from the use of certified seed have been correspondingly favorable. Whether potatoes are grown for seed purposes or table stock, it is essential that the very best seed be used, since good foundation stock is the basis of good crops and profitable markets. Commercial potato-growers whose stock is badly infested with diseases or contains mixed varieties will find it decidedly advantageous to secure certified seed. The use of such seed would double the yields now being obtained on many farms.

Age of Steers to Feed

In selecting steers for feeding work, the age of the animals is an important consideration. All things considered the average feeder would be well advised to feed two-year-olds, in the opinion of the authors of an Experimental Farms bulletin on the Winter Feeding of Beef Cattle in Ontario. The bulletin gives an account of experiments in feeding steers of different ages. Over a six years period the two-year-olds made the greatest gains, but the yearlings were a close second and the three-year-olds were not far behind. The younger steers had the advantage in the cost per pound gain, as the cost increases with age. The lower feeding cost of the younger steers is due to the fact that he is growing and putting on fat at the

same time while the three-year-old makes his gain by putting on fat alone. The younger steers, however, needs a somewhat more nutritious ration than the older one, the latter making the best use of coarse roughage.

Storage of Seed Potatoes

Good seed potatoes are essential for the production of good crops, and it has been clearly proven that the seed potatoes certified under the rules and regulations of the Dominion Department of Agriculture can be depended upon to give high yields of excellent quality. But securing certified seed is not enough. According to a new pamphlet on Certified Seed Potatoes, distributed by the Publications Branch, Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, the care of the potatoes in storage before seeding time is highly important. Potatoes, no matter how perfect, cannot stand rough handling, high temperatures, or wet conditions.

After having gone to the trouble of producing a crop of certified seed potatoes or of obtaining them from a dealer, it would be foolish to allow them to deteriorate on account of improper storage. The proper temperature at which potatoes should be stored is 37 degrees F. It is absolutely essential that the potatoes be kept as dry as possible, and the best means to obtain this result would be to store them in crates, providing means for the free circulation of air among the crates throughout the entire storage period. Bag storage is a safe method only if the potatoes can be kept dry. If bin storage is resorted to, care should be taken to avoid piling the tubers against the wall or directly on the floor, as this practice does not permit of sufficient ventilation, especially when the quantity is large. A false wall of slats, close enough together to retain the potatoes and about 6 inches from the main wall should be constructed. A temporary floor should be laid down about 6 inches above the permanent floor, with circulation space between the boards to allow free circulation of air under and around the pile. In the case of large piles, ventilators made of wooden slats should be placed at regular intervals, both vertically and horizontally, throughout the pile.

Roughage Ground or Fed Whole

The results of an investigation into the advantages and economy of grinding roughages for dairy cows, conducted at the Central Experimental Farm, show that the grinding of the rough feed did not add materially, if at all, to its feeding value. The details of the investigation are given in the latest report of the Dominion Animal Husbandman. Among other things it was demonstrated that cut corn fodder is not of as high value for milk production as corn silage. When corn fodder and mixed hay were both cut and ground and fed in comparison with silage and the same mixed hay, not cut or ground, the latter action proved to be slightly the more efficient for milk production. These results indicate that grinding roughage does not improve it. On the other hand, the extra labor of cutting and grinding adds materially to the cost. It can safely be said, therefore, that under normal conditions, it would not be economical to grind rough feed, at least for dairy cows, particularly since there is no class of stock better adapted to grinding their own feed. (Issued by the Director of Publicity, Dominion Department of Agriculture, Ottawa.)

Making Over Furs at Home

There are many women to-day who have handsome coats and ensembles trimmed with fur which are still attractive and in style, but the fur collars of which look shabby. Perhaps other fur trimming on the same garments is in good condition, not having received as hard wear as the collars and cuffs. What is to be done then? The writer has had some successful experiences in being her own furrier. From remodeling collars and cuffs, she has learned several tricks of the trade, which she is glad to pass on to those who are skillful with the needle, and have more patience and perseverance, perhaps, than dollars to pay for costly new fur or expert remodeling.

Laying in Reserves

The first step is to decide what material is available for repairing or for making entirely new cuffs or collars. A little good fur goes a long way and therefore it is better to have one nice collar on a special coat than to have a number of partly-worn collars and cuffs or elaborate trimming of fur that is not in the best condition. For this reason when this amateur buys a garment, she nearly always removes from it unnecessary panels of fur or extra pockets of fur and keeps them for the next season's use. For instance, a coat that was purchased had handsome collars and cuffs of fur and large panels running up the side seams from the hemline. These extra pieces were removed and this season they made a handsome new collar and repaired worn places on the cuffs. Again, a suit that was trimmed with beaver had superfluous pockets of beaver and these were ripped off and this season they do duty as a lovely collar on a light-weight sports coat. So much for a reserve supply from such sources.

Another source of fur is from discarded garments, and the clever woman will salvage any good fur before disposing of garments no longer of use. Often fur that looks worn or faded on one garment, used with discretion, will dress up another garment. For example, a light green wool coat worn during one season was edged with imitation gray squirrel, and at the end of the summer this trimming looked decidedly passé. All the narrow strips were ripped off, therefore, and it was found that certain sections of the banding were fresh. Immediately the experimenter thought of one of those new seamed fur collars that have been so much in vogue this year. Piecing one strip after another, she soon had a smart collar for another gray coat that did not, because of its matching color, draw as much attention to the fur but blended prettily with it.

Find the Direction of the Fur

Whatever the material on hand, the next consideration is the size of collar or cuffs that are to be made. If a collar is quite badly worn and there is new material, it is better to make an entire new collar and use the old collar for mending the cuffs wherever they are most worn. Laying out the fur, one will notice that it "goes" a certain way and this must be carefully borne in mind when planning new collars or trimmings. Noticing how the old collar was arranged will help one, and in planning the new collar the old one can often be used for the right dimensions. The fur collar on any garment is nearly always deeper in the back than the wool or silk that lines it, so the collar will roll easily and prettily when turned up about the neck. And if one uses the under collar or lining for a pattern, an extra inch or two must be allowed when cutting the fur. Most collars also have the fur going away from the neck, that is with the brush or pile turning down. Sometimes the collar is seamed at the back, however, to have the fur go from the back toward the front, one each side, as well as to tend in a downward direction. Most fur really has a very definite "way" which is easily recognized by stroking; a smooth and a rough way.

Look Before Cutting

Certain that the fur will all "go" the right way, the next step is cutting. For this purpose a tiny sharp pen-knife blade is ideal. The fur should be laid fur downward, and with pencil or chalk one can mark on the pelt where one wishes to cut. Then draw the knife with a down stroke across

the pelt and gently pull the fur apart. Very few hairs are cut by this method, and a nice clean edge is left for sewing. Not more than one-eighth of an inch needs to be allowed for seams and if one makes jagged or crooked edges these can be evened off again with a stroke of the knife. Never use scissors to trim the pelt for it is likely to cut off the hairs of the fur and make it almost impossible to connect seams or patches.

After cutting one piece of fur, it is well to stop and try it on the garment with other pieces, to be sure that the fur is going the right way as well as to match the color of the pelt. Color matching is indeed important, for a fur of one color will vary greatly in shades in various areas and most unhappy results are obtained unless this is studied. For example, beaver, while evenly seamed, often shades from light tan to deep brown and it would be most startling to seam a collar at the back, having light tan on one side of the seam and deep brown on the other.

Yet there are exceptions to these rules and it is not as difficult as it may sound, sometimes, to achieve some very pretty effects with odd and ends of fur. For instance, a collar can really be patched in all kinds of ways, with fur going north, south, east and west, and with light and dark mixed hither and thither. The writer had a caracul neckpiece, which was a lovely quality of fur and a beautiful color but extremely out of style in design. She literally cut it to pieces to shape it into a modern collar for she patched together 57 small pieces at various angles and in various ways. Yet when finished, it was remarked upon by several friends who did not know of its "seamy side!"

Patching and Seaming

In patching a small piece of fur into a larger one, as, for example, along a lower cuff line, where the edge has become worn, it has been found much easier and better to patch in triangles of fur rather than squares. These triangles may even be inserted in a middle area where fur is worn, and by their shape they will hide successfully among the fur that brushes over the seams.

Seaming and Sewing is of great importance. Seams must all be tight, but not drawn or puckered. A strong, sturdy sewing needle, of medium size, must be used, with No. 50 black thread for dark fur; and the stitch required is a fine over-the-over one, made while holding the edges of fur together tightly, with the fur brushed away from the seam as much as possible. Buttonhole stitch is excellent, too, resembling the machine stitch used by furriers. If stitches are taken loosely the fur will have parts which are most unbecoming to collars and cuffs, but this can be remedied by re-sewing the seams, going in the opposite direction. Deep stitches are not as important as ones close together with tightly drawn thread.

The outside edges of fur are usually bound with tape or strips of black muslin, and this is simply done by sewing on tape or cloth, in an over-and-over stitch, then basting the tape in toward the pelt, then basting to sew on the garment.

Padding

Padding is another item that helps to make collars and cuffs attractive when finished. The padding removed from old pieces can be used again on new collars, or sheet padding can be laid against the pelt and tacked under the outer taping and here and there on the pelt, if necessary, or to the lining of the garment when the fur is sewed in place. Short stitches should be used to whip the fur to the garment, and these are easily taken because one can sew to tape instead of to the pelt, hiding the stitches under the fur that always sits on the edges of cuffs or collars. Whenever fur is caught under the thread, it is well to pull it out carefully with the needle as one goes along, so the fur will not look irregular in edge when done or have a "sewed tight" look that is sometimes the result of an amateur's work.

A few light quick shakes of the fur will fluff it up when one has finished the piece, and airing it for a few hours, in the fresh bright sunshine, will improve its appearance, whether it is new fur or old fur or a combination of both. — Christian Science Monitor.

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