

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 bruised nor brought back that which had been driven away. 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). 11. The Lord God—Jehovah himself speaks and declares himself to be the Shepherd of Israel. Will both search my 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 under his care. 12. Scattered.—The figure here 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. 13. 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 sheepfold 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. 1. The true Shepherd's treatment of his flock is 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. I will feed them with judgment.—The true Shepherd would act consistently 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 what 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 goodness.

IV. Messiah's reign (vs. 23-31). 23. 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 Israel's rulers were David, and his name is employed to designate the coming King. Shall be their shepherd.—David was a shepherd in early life and cared for his father's sheep; later on he was the shepherd of Israel and cared for his father's flock, God's chosen people, and still later the Good Shepherd, who called David, would shepherd for his people the sheep of his pasture. 24.—The Lord has 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 guarantee 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. David safely.—While God protects us, nothing can do us harm. Will dwell.—Uninhabited regions. Woods wild.—Evil beasts would be removed from the land and their former haunts would be 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 Babylonian 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?

PRACTICAL SURVEY.

Topic.—A lost nation restored.

I. From its bitter oppressions.

II. By the Great Shepherd's power.

I. From its bitter oppressions.

In this chapter the shepherds of Israel are called to account as having been accessory to the ruin of Israel by their neglect of duty. After the complete destruction of Jerusalem it was very reasonable to inquire as to the causes of it. The rulers of Israel lacked the qualifications of shepherds. They took no care for the welfare of those committed to their charge. Their self-indulgence had led them to neglect to feed the flock. They had taken the lives of their subjects in order to appropriate to themselves their positions.

of the kings of Israel and Judah, amid the increasing distress and misery of the people, to exact more and more upon themselves. No care was taken for the instruction of the ignorant, no warning for the unruly, no comfort for the feeble-minded. The office of the shepherd was service and not lordship. Having denounced the wicked shepherds of Israel, the prophet was directed to intimate God's merciful intentions toward the scattered flock. Primarily, this referred to the restoration of the Jews from captivity, and their prosperous reestablishment in their own land. It was typical of the good Shepherd's tender care of the souls of his people and kindness to his church in every age to the end of the world. Those who directed public affairs as well as the people had their transgressions shown them. In a peculiar sense the Israelites were brethren, a people highly privileged, bound to the discharge of peculiar and very important duties. Notwithstanding all this, they had departed grievously from the Lord and brought great abominations. It had gone ill with the flock, Israel, when the shepherds scattered them by ruling them with force.

II. By the great Shepherd's power.

The symbolism of the Bible form one of its most interesting features. God calls his church his flock, a community which he has himself formed and over which he watches. He knows the inward nature of men as well as their outward conduct. The blessing which he gives includes protection from evil, enjoyment of good, peace and prosperity.

His "showers of blessing" are commensurate with the existing need. He directed the prophet to speak tenderly to the flock, to assure them of mercy in store and to give them the promise of the Messiah. The gospel's glorious history of the restoration of the wanderers, was included in the prophet's message. The Lord engaged effectually to defend his flock in the days of the promised Messiah so that his sheep might dwell safely and rest comfortably, even in the most perilous places. When the Jewish nation was under the chastisement of famine or scarcity, such judgment turned to their reproach among the heathen because the fruitfulness of Canaan was widely known. Prejudice, envy, malice, hate, unbelief, worldly authority and its allurements were brought forward to destroy the Messiah, whether he was on the sea, or on a mountain apart, whether at a marriage feast or a burial, whether surrounded by his beloved disciples only or by the inquisitive, eager multitude, whether at home with his parents or in the house of Martha and Mary or on the Mount of Olives or even when hanging as a sacrifice upon the cross. Jesus surpassed all others in his wonderful saying and teachings. He will judge between the church of God and its enemies, the genuine professors of religion and its opposers. He will distinguish between the hypocrites and sincere believers. The Bible, which throws the clearest light on man's weakness and sin, exalts him above the rest of creation as capable by grace of hearing God's voice and of loving and serving him. Man never appears so great and noble as when seen in the light of eternal love. God's blessing and presence are granted when the hearts of men are sighing for him. He breaks the bands of their yoke and teaches them that he himself is Lord. Thus those on whom the blessing falls are made a means of blessing to others.—T. R. A.

SCIENTIFIC JOTTINGS.

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

Mountings upon which any 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.

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 agricultural 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 furrowed 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 altogether, and makes it still more important that when done, plowing must be well 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 was in the days of the pioneer. 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 the 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 broad and 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 subsurface 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, an expensive one. Land handled in this manner should be plowed or ribbed up in the fall, especially if manure has been applied as when intended for roots. The primary object when this style of furrow is used, is to kill weeds, to decompose the sod, and to make conditions favorable for the retention of moisture.

Lap furrow plowing differs essentially from flat furrow plowing, in that the furrow slice is cut deep and comparatively narrow, and when turned, the furrow is set up on edge and overlaps the previous one. This is the commonest type of plowing on the farm and is necessary in the case of fall plowing where a single plowing is used. The object in this case is entirely different from where flat furrow plowing is practiced, for while the latter is used with a view to decomposing the sod and of killing weeds by further cultivation, the former is intended to do as much of the preparation as possible with one operation. There is little greater pulverizing action in the process of plowing, but the furrow slice is left in such a position as to expose the greatest amount of surface and to be thus most readily acted upon by the frost. Frost is a most efficient pulverizer, and in this respect plays a very important part in preparing the seed bed. This is particularly true on heavy clay soils that are not properly drained. No implement or method of tillage will do as much to prepare such soils for receiving the seed as will their thorough exposure to frost. The heavier and more poorly drained a soil is, the greater need is there for the pulverizing action of the frost and, consequently, under these conditions the more extreme should the lap be.

The fact that the furrows are set up in this type of plowing makes it possible for large air spaces to occur below the furrow slice, which cause the land to warm up and dry out earlier in the spring without incurring the danger of the soil running, baking and cracking. This danger often results in serious injury to the physical condition of the soil, especially in heavy clay types, when they are not properly managed. On account of these comparatively large air-spaces underneath

the furrow, considerable work is required in the spring to firm the soil and to provide suitable moisture conditions to prevent too free a circulation of air through the soil. Unless this is done the crop is apt to suffer later on in the season through lack of moisture. This is particularly true in a dry season, where a partial crop failure often results unless this factor has been given attention. With the more extreme types of lap furrow, even greater care must be taken that the soil is properly firmed.

The lap furrow is also used in the spring in case it has not been possible to do the plowing in the fall. Here again the aims sought are quite different from those of fall plowing. In this case an attempt should be made to do as much of the pulverizing as possible, instead of getting it up in such a way as to allow the frost to do that work. For this purpose a different type of plow is desirable. One that has a bolder and more abrupt curves with more overhang to the mouldboard, will accomplish the work more efficiently than will one having long easy lines. This plowing should be broader and more shallow (consequently with less lap) than is the case with the fall plowing, as the subsurface soil is colder and wetter than is the top soil. Moreover, 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 settling 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 deeply 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 furrow slice. This style should not be used in the fall except on light soils, for 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 for further treatment very efficiently 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 and August in preparation for a hoed crop the following year. Deep lap furrow plowing is most useful in fall plowing, so that the furrow slice may be exposed to the frost, while a less extreme lap, put up by a plow with bolder curves is best suited to spring plowing, and thirdly, the rolling furrow is suited best to plowing under long stubble, weeds or green manures.

—The Canadian Countryman.

MARKET REPORTS

TORONTO MARKETS.

MEATS, WHOLESALE.

Best, forequarters	11.00	12.00
Do, hindquarters	10.00	11.00
Carcasses, choice	15.00	16.00
Do, common	12.00	13.00
Veal, common	18.00	20.00
Do, medium	12.00	14.00
Heavy hogs	17.00	18.00
Shop hogs	22.00	24.00
Mutton, light	15.00	16.00
Do, heavy	12.00	13.00
Lamb's, yearlings	20.00	22.00
Spring lambs	22.00	25.00

TORONTO CATTLE MARKETS.

Cattle, choice	10.75	12.75
Butcher, cattle, choice	9.75	10.75
Butcher, cattle, medium	8.25	9.25
Butcher, cattle, common	7.00	7.75
Butcher, cows, choice	8.00	8.40
Butcher, cows, medium	7.25	7.75
Butcher, cattle, canners	5.00	5.75
Butcher, bulls	5.00	5.00
Feeder steers	7.75	9.00
Stockers, choice	7.00	8.25
Milkers, choice	6.50	7.00
Springers, choice	4.00	12.00
Sheep, ewes	9.00	10.00
Lambs and culs	12.00	8.00
Pigs	14.00	15.00
Hogs fed and watered	19.00	
Calves	7.00	15.00

OTHER MARKETS.

WINNIPEG GRAIN EXCHANGE.

Fluctuations on the Winnipeg Grain Exchange yesterday were the following:

Oct.	2 20	2 20	2 15	2 15
Oats—				
Oct.	0 62	0 62½	0 61½	0 62½
Dec.	0 58½	0 58½	0 58	0 58½
May	0 62½	0 62½	0 62½	0 62½