

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

LESSON XII.—DEC. 17, 1911.

Erza Teaches the Law.—Neh. 8: 1-18.

Commentary.—I. God's word asked for and read (vs. 1-9). The people gathered—The completion of the walls marked an epoch in the life of the nation. The work had engaged the attention of all, and the people had realized the unifying effect of this common purpose. They also were constrained to acknowledge that God had been graciously favoring them. Before the water-gate—the place of meeting was south-east of the temple before the water-gate, through which water was carried for use in the temple. Erza the scribe—Erza had returned to Jerusalem from the land of captivity thirteen years before the time, but in the record of the event of twelve years his name was not mentioned. The general opinion is that he returned to Babylon, where he remained for several years, possibly engaged in copying the law. Being the book of the law—it seems probable that Erza's return prompted the people's request to have the law read to them. Which the Lord had commanded.—It was the word of Jehovah.

2. Erza the priest—Erza was of the priestly tribe, being a direct descendant of Aaron (Erza 7: 1-5). Brought the law before the congregation—The assembly included men, women and children, who could hear the law intelligently. The later rabbinical teaching was to the effect that women should be excluded from hearing the law, but that teaching was opposed to the word of God. First day of the seventh month—The month Tisri was the seventh month of the ecclesiastical year and the first day of the civil year, and the first day was a great day among the Jews. The month Tisri corresponds to the latter part of our September and the former part of our October. 3. From the morning until midday—The reading continued from early in the morning until noon. It is probable that the others read in turn, thus relieving Erza. Were attentive unto the book—Though there is no word in the Hebrew for "attentive," yet the meaning is quite correctly given: "The ears of all the people were to the book"—fixed on that, and on nothing else.—Pulpit Com. The people were eager to know that the Lord had said. The religious life of the nation was being revived.

4. Pulpit of wood—This was a platform raised sufficiently high to afford all in the congregation an opportunity to see the reader standing thereon. It was broad enough to accommodate Erza and the persons mentioned in this verse. And beside him stood Mattithiah, etc.—Nothing is known of most of these persons except their names. They were probably prominent priests, perhaps chiefs of the courses of priests who ministered in the temple service. They gave dignity to the service, and probably aided Erza in the reading of the law.—Petoulet.

5. Opened the book—Books in those days were long strips of parchment rolled at either end upon sticks, and to open a book meant to unroll the scroll. All the people stood up—They had evidently been sitting while waiting for the reading to begin, and rose to their feet out of respect for the word of God. It is likely that they sat down after the exercises mentioned in the next verse, and remained sitting while Erza read the book of the law. 6. Blessed the Lord. Gave thanks. Amen.—The old people's response to praise. The word means "So let it be." Lifting up their hands. By this act they showed that they accepted the words read as the law of God and would be obedient to it. Lifting up the hands in worship is referred to in the scriptures (Psa. 63: 4; 1 Tim. 2: 8). Bowed their heads.—With their faces to the ground. They assumed an attitude of reverent humility. They were impressed with the goodness and mercy of God and the sacredness of his word. 7. Joshua, etc. The names here recorded are those of Levites, who assisted in explaining the words of the law to the people. 8. Read distinctly. Those who read were careful to speak clearly so that the great assembly could catch every word. The people were eager to hear and it was important they should. Gave the sense. The Jews had been long in captivity and were unfamiliar with the law, hence explanations were needed that they might grasp the meaning of the words read. Some think that they had to a considerable extent lost the knowledge of the pure Hebrew language through their contact with their captors

in Babylon. And caused them to understand. "So that they understood."—R. V. II. The effects of hearing God's word (vs. 9-12). 9. Tirmathas. This was a title given to Nehemiah representing his office as provincial governor. This day is holy unto the Lord. It was the new moon, and as such was considered sacred, and it was also a notable day, because of the reading of the law. Mourning not. The people wept upon hearing the law because it showed them how they had been sinning against God and his commandments. Their weeping was an indication of genuine repentance. It seems clear that they were ignorant as to the demands of the law. "This is a holy day to God; a day appointed for general rejoicing in him who has turned our captivity, restored us to his law, and again established among us his ordinances."—Clarke. 10. Eat the fat, and drink the sweet. A proverbial expression, meaning that the occasion was not one of fasting and grief.—Ryle. Send portions. In the midst of their rejoicing they were to remember the poor by supplying them with that which would nourish and cheer them, thus adding to their own joy. The joy of the Lord is your strength. Religious joy, properly tempered by continual dependence on the help of God, meekness of mind and self-diffidence, is a powerful means of strengthening the soul. In such a frame of mind no man ever fell.—Clarke. 11. Stilled all the people. Restrained from mourning. Neither we were grieved.—Sorrowful. 12. Because they had understood. The people sorrowed because they had not kept the law; they now rejoiced because they were able to understand it.—Cab. Bible. It is a calamity to be deprived of the word of God. See Hos. 4: 6.

III. The feast of Tabernacles observed (vs. 13-18). On the second day the reading and explaining the law was continued with "the chief of the fathers of all the people, the priests, and the Levites" as hearers. When it was read and understood that the feast of Tabernacles should be observed on the fifteenth of the month, preparations were at once commenced for its observance. This feast was to commemorate the journey of the children of Israel from Egypt to Canaan, hence they were to dwell in booths constructed of branches of trees during the eight days, from the fifteenth to the twenty-second of the month. The study of the law continued daily during the feast. Questions.—For what purpose did the people assemble before the water-gate at Jerusalem? What is meant by the law of God? Who was the reader and how many assistants did he have? What classes of people listened to the reading of the law? What effect did the reading of the law have upon the hearers? How long did the study of God's word continue? What feast was observed? What event did the feast commemorate? What was the religious condition of the people at this time?

IV. PRACTICAL SURVEY. I. Revived by God's law. II. Promoted by the practice of charities. I. Revived by the study of God's law. God has ever blessed his own word as the chosen instrument of all revival and progress in his church. The ancient covenant of God had almost dropped out of memory among the returned Jews. Upon hearing it their aims and faithfulness of the past bowed the people in grief. There were no listless or indifferent ones among them. It was a full, earnest, attentive, devout assembly. God gave Erza ability and authority and the people gave him opportunity and invitation. Erza and Nehemiah differed much from each other in age, office, rank and character, but they were one heart and joined in complete harmony of action for the revival of their beloved Zion. Erza had faithfully insisted upon reforms. Nehemiah had diligently worked to rebuild the city wall. And now with such security against the outside world their duty was to reach the correct standard of obedient, devout lives. Expounding the scriptures brought the reading and preaching together in such a way as to make the reading more intelligible and the preaching more convincing. A proper appreciation of God's word was necessary to their spiritual success. The object of God's law is to reveal Himself and the duties he sets before men. The revival spirit under Erza's teaching took the correct order. Godly sorrow worketh repentance. Seeing all God had promised and what He had wrought, compared with what they had done to prove their love and devotion, brought tears of sincere repentance. The Lord had brought them back from a miserable and degraded captivity, from under the yoke of a marvellous manner, restored them in Zion, softened the king's heart toward them so that they were securing a settlement in their own land. If their

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No other emollients do so much for pimples, blackheads, red, rough and oily skin, itching, scaly scalps, dry, thin and falling hair, chapped hands and shapeless nails. They do even more for skintortured and disfigured infants.

Although Cuticura Soap and Ointment are sold by druggists and dealers everywhere, a liberal sample of each, with 22-page booklet on treatment of skin troubles, will be sent, post-free, on application to "Cuticura," Dept. 512, Boston, U. S. A.

repentance was sincere there was occasion for rejoicing, for joy is the voice of order and peace in the soul. True joy can only begin when the self-life has surrendered. The better they understood the word of God the more comforted the people in their spiritual progress. He had no intention of making light of their sorrow for sin, nor to represent it as aught else than a necessary ingredient in the composition of genuine repentance. He would lead them to see that sorrow for sin must not hinder joy in God, but rather rather lead to it and prepare them for it. II. Promoted by the practice of charities. The sacred scriptures were useful to them in proportion as they were helped to worship God more reverently, intelligently and spiritually, and this would be seen in the development of practical self-forgetting generosity. Illustrating what God was for them and to them, they would be for others and do others, making practical use of piety. Joy in the Lord was their strength, position, actual power for service, strength that led to practical results, making all work for the good of man as work for the Lord. For their own sakes, for the sake of others and for their own great name's sake the Lord would have his people rejoice. His word promises joy. His spirit inspires it. Service for him produces it. Joy is like oil to the wheels of obedience. Pure spiritual joy refreshes and quickens the whole nature. It helps to fortify the soul against the assaults of the enemy, and was the great need of the people to whom Erza spoke. They needed strength for endurance, for service and against temptation. They needed an inward testimony of God's approval upon their efforts, enabling them to do what was well pleasing and acceptable in his sight. "The joy of the Lord is your strength." are words which sound like a promise uttered in the full knowledge of the gospel rather than under the law, for such joy is peculiarly and peculiarly the joy of the Holy Spirit is the author. "The joy of the Lord is that sensation of gladness and happiness which the Holy Spirit conveys to the soul and maintains in the soul through the knowledge of God in his true character toward us." The law, prophecies and Psalms declare that God's people are a happy people. God has made provision, not only for the maintenance, but for the joy of his people.—R. R. A.

# MARKET REPORTS

**TORONTO MARKETS.**  
**FARMERS' MARKET.**  
Dressed hogs to choice... \$3.60  
Butter, new laid, dozen... 28  
Eggs, new laid, dozen... 18  
Ducks, lb... 12  
Fowl, lb... 12  
Turkeys, lb... 12  
Apples, bb... 12  
Potatoes, bag... 1.50  
Beef hindquarters... 10.00  
Do. forequarters... 7.50  
Do. medium, carcass... 7.50  
Veal, prime... 10.00  
Mutton, prime... 10.00  
Lamb... 10.00

**SUGAR MARKET.**  
Sugars are quoted in Toronto, in bags, per cwt., as follows:  
Extra granulated, St. Lawrence... \$5.95  
Do. Respath's... 5.95  
Do. Acadia... 5.95  
Imperial granulated... 5.95  
Beaver granulated... 5.75  
Do. Respath's... 5.45  
In barrels, 50 per cwt. more, car lots, 5c less.

**OTHER MARKETS.**  
**WINNIPEG GRAIN MARKET.**  
Prev. Close. Open. High. Low. Close  
Wheat— 34% 34% 34% 34% 34%  
May, old... 34% 34% 34% 34% 34%  
Oats... 34% 34% 34% 34% 34%  
Do... 34% 34% 34% 34% 34%  
May... 34% 34% 34% 34% 34%

**NEW YORK LIVE STOCK.**  
New York—Receipts—Cattle—1,000  
Hogs—1,000  
Sheep—1,000  
Lamb—1,000

**CHICAGO LIVE STOCK.**  
Chicago—Receipts—Cattle—1,000  
Hogs—1,000  
Sheep—1,000  
Lamb—1,000

**BRADSTREET'S TRADE REVIEW.**  
Montreal reports to Bradstreet's say trade has held steady during the past week. The movement of general merchandise is heavy, there being an active demand for sorting lines and for heavy shipments of holiday goods. Factories are busy and all kinds of laborers to be well employed. Local retail trade is also brisk and business is expected to be good from now until the end of the year. Country trade is rather better but good sleighing is needed to insure a heavy movement of merchandise from country stocks.

**QUEBEC MARKET.**  
Quebec reports to Bradstreet's say reasonable goods are in demand. As a rule wholesalers are busy with holiday shipments.

**HAMILTON MARKET.**  
Hamilton reports say all lines of business are active there. Retail trade is beginning to show the effect of holiday business. Wholesalers have about all they can conveniently attend to in supplying the demand for sorting lines and Christmas goods. Manufacturers are busy and expect a large volume of cash orders all through the month. Country trade is fairly brisk and collections are generally satisfactory.

**LONDON MARKET.**  
London reports say the year has been one of the best for general trade, and active there.

# ROYAL YEAST

MOST PERFECT MADE  
MAKES LIGHT WHOLESOME BREAD.  
REFUSE SUBSTITUTES.

# Treatment of Swine Mange

It is impossible to make satisfactory gains on a hog whose skin is unhealthy. In most cases when skin is unhealthy it is due to a parasite commonly known as swine mange. To get rid of this trouble it is necessary to go to the seat of the matter and kill the mite.

# OUR HEALTH.

## November Report of Provincial Health Officer.

Toronto, Dec. 11.—Dr. J. W. McCullough, chief medical officer of the province, states that there has been a marked decrease in three contagious diseases: infantile paralysis, scarlet fever and typhoid for the month of November. There were only three cases of infantile paralysis, none of which were fatal, compared with 21 cases and 5 deaths in November, 1910. Last month the scarlet fever returns are 167 cases and 8 deaths, as compared with 340 cases and 15 deaths in November, 1910. For typhoid there were 108 cases and 13 deaths, as against 260 cases and 50 deaths for November, 1910. There were 72 cases of tuberculosis and 40 deaths, while for the corresponding month last year there were 105 cases and 93 deaths. Dr. McCullough points out that the tuberculosis returns are not sufficiently accurate for purposes of comparison, as notification of this disease is not compulsory.

# CANADA SCORES

## More Prizes Won in the Chicago Stock Show.

Chicago, Dec. 11.—Canada came again through with flying colors to-day at the International Stock Show. In the senior yearling bull class J. A. Watt, of Salem, Ont., took the first prize. T. E. & H. C. Robson, of Herten, Ont., took third prize in the class for bulls two years old and under three years. Canada also carried off the highest honors in the sheep class, the grand champion wether being owned by J. Lloyd Jones, of Barford, Ont.

# BIG ARMOUR MEAT DEAL.

London, Dec. 11.—The proposed prospective purchase of Nelson & Company's Argentine meat plant by Armour & Co. for two and a half millions of dollars is generally credited here, and has filled British salesmen with some apprehension, as they foresee the complete monopolization of the British Transatlantic importing trade by American interests, to the detriment of Canada and Britain alike.

# BONDS PAY BETTER INTEREST ON YOUR MONEY

In point of security and interest return, the small investor in bonds is on the same footing as the institution or individual with thousands or tens of thousands to invest. United Bonds in their present form were devised, it was not an easy thing to find an investment, safe, easily convertible into cash, and simple in form, and yielding as high as 5 per cent. interest.

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LONDON (ENGL.)

# The Ideal Reading Lamp

Opticians agree that the light from a good oil lamp is easier on the eyes than any other artificial light. The Rayo Lamp is the best oil lamp made. It gives a strong, yet soft, white light; and it never flickers. It preserves the eyesight of the young; it helps and quickens that of the old. You can pay \$5, \$10, or \$20 for other lamps, but you cannot get better light than the Rayo gives.

# NA-DRU-DYSPEPSIA TABLETS

relieve and cure indigestion—acidity of the stomach—biliousness—flatulence—dyspepsia. They re-inforce the stomach by supplying the active principles needed for the digestion of all kinds of food. Try one after each meal.

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A handsome Watch & Decorated Tea Set.

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Fowl, lb... 12  
Turkeys, lb... 12  
Apples, bb... 12  
Potatoes, bag... 1.50  
Beef hindquarters... 10.00  
Do. forequarters... 7.50  
Do. medium, carcass... 7.50  
Veal, prime... 10.00  
Mutton, prime... 10.00  
Lamb... 10.00