

SABBATH SCHOOL.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON FOR FEBRUARY 20.

Lesson Text: "Reading the Law," Neh. viii. 1-12—Golden Text: Psalm cix. 18—Commentary.

1. "And they spake unto Ezra, the scribe, to bring the book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel." The temple had been finished, and also the building of the wall, and though the city was large and houses and people few, yet they would without further delay seek to worship the God of Israel according to His law. The water gate was toward the east (iii. 26), and therefore near the temple, for the temple was at the east of the city, facing the Mount of Olives. Ezra was a ready scribe in the Law of Moses, for he had prepared his heart to seek and to do and to teach the Law of the Lord in Israel (Ez. vii. 6, 10).

2. "And Ezra, the priest, brought the law before the congregation upon the first day of the seventh month." This was the regular day for the feast of trumpets (Lev. xxiii. 24), to be followed on the tenth day by the great atonement and on the fifteenth day by the feast of tabernacles (Lev. xxiii. 27, 34). The priest was the messenger of the Lord of Hosts, keeping knowledge that the people might be faithful at the feast (Mal. ii. 7), and Ezra was by his application to the study of the Law qualified to teach the people.

3. "And he read therein from the morning until midday, and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the Law." I wonder how many of an audience he would have in our day at the end of the second or third hour. A political speech or a concert or something of that sort is all right, even if it is two hours long, but a sermon or a Bible reading must be within the limits of propriety, for too much of religion (as they say) is unendurable. One can read a novel a whole day, but a chapter in the Bible is often more than enough.

4. "And Ezra, the scribe, stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose." Elevated above the people that all might see, as well as hear, he is supported by thirteen of his brethren, six on his right and seven on his left hand, but I have no doubt that the Unseen One who said to Moses, "Certainly I will be with thee," said to Joshua, "As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee," and to Gideon, "Surely I will be with thee" (Ex. iii. 12; Josh. i. 5; Judg. vi. 16), was far more to Ezra than the brethren who were by his side.

5. "And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people (for he was above all the people), and when he opened it all the people stood up." With great reverence he unrolled the scroll of the Law, and with reverence the people stood up to hear what the Lord, their God, wanted to say to them. We do not worship the Bible, but we worship Him who is therein revealed to us as our God and Saviour, and when we open our Bibles to read the words of the living God we should do so with great humility.

6. "And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and they bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground." If they all meant it in their hearts, then it was true worship; but if only bowed the body without bowing the heart before God, then He did not regard it, for, though His eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are perfect toward Him (I Chron. xvi. 9, He looketh on the heaven and not on the outward appearance (I Sam. xv. 2).

7. "And the Levites caused the people to understand the law." Another thirteen are here mentioned who with the Levites caused the people to understand. To read is good; to understand is better. A few of His disciples, in which Jesus had said that if one does not understand the word the wicked one catcheth it away. He asked the disciples, "Have ye understood all these things?" (Math. xiii. 51). When Philip drew near to the chariot of the Ethiopian eunuch his first question was, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" (Acts viii. 30). If one should ask, "How can I understand?" I should reply, "Through faith we understand" (Heb. xi. 3; iv. 2). Receive it unquestioningly, and thus understand.

8. "So they read the book in the Law of God, distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." This is the best way for the Law for right-ness to every one that believeth, teaches us when we receive Him not to weep, as well we might, because of our sin, but to rejoice in Him who became a curse for us, and is now our righteousness (Gal. iii. 13; II Cor. v. 21; Rom. x. 4). The purpose of this chapter which follows our lesson brings before us the feast of tabernacles, and as atonement came between trumpets and tabernacles we seem face to face here with atonement and His result.

9. "The joy of the Lord is your strength." How passing wonderful is the grace of God, which not only takes away our sins, but gives us His joy to be our strength! He becomes our salvation, our strength and our song (Isa. xli. 2), so that it becomes us to say, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord. My soul shall be joyful in my God, for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; He hath clothed me with the robe of righteousness" (Isa. lxi. 10).

10. "So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved." Stillness, peace, holiness, joy, all because of the love of God to us in the gift of His dear Son. Whether it be passover or pentecost or atonement, whatever the feast or the sacrifice, each and all speak of Him. Apart from Him all is death but in Him all is life and peace (I John v. 12; Eph. ii. 14).

11. "Great mirth because they had understood the words that were declared unto them." And they understood because they received them. It made Jesus so glad because His disciples received His words that He mentioned it to His Father in His great prayer, saying, "I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me, and they have received them" (John xvii. 8). It does seem to me that if you will believe the hundredth part of what He says in Him we would be overflowing with joy. It is doubt and unbelief that causes sadness, but truly as it is written, "The God of Peace will fill us with all joy and peace in believing" (Rom. xv. 13). Forget not the portion as for others.—Lesson Helper.

The Rev. Carlos Martyn, a pulpit-teacher of realistic tendencies, electrified a Chicago congregation by asserting that the "devil lurks in the journalist's ink-stand." The Rev. Carlos apparently knows but little of modern journalism. In any well-conducted newspaper office the devil lurks in the composing-room during working hours, and where it listeth his diabolical soul to lurk at other times. Realistic preachers should be sure of their facts, as should realistic novelists, painters, and actors. Realism and metaphor are to each other as oil is to water—they don't mix, and in the attempt to make them do so a grewsome mess is usually the result.



All skirts are now bordered. Jet is very much used on black silks. The sleeve has dropped from its high estate.

Leather mats are shown for polished tables. There are 160 flourishing women's clubs in Bohemia.

Jerry Simpson's daughter is attending Baker University, Kansas.

Mrs. Robert Goeliet, of New York City, pays taxes on \$5,000,000.

Many waists are being made with diagonal fronts in surplice manner. Princess May of Teek still wears black for her lost fiance, the Duke of Clarence.

From the memorandum book of a Gotham debutante—"gloves, flowers and sweets, \$500 a year."

Miss Mary Wilkins, who is present on the topping wave of literary success, is a tiny, shy, little woman.

The Queen of Henry IV., of France, on one great occasion wore a dress worth 32,000 pearls and 3000 diamonds.

Mrs. Le Grand Cannon, of New York City, has a diamond tiara which is considered one of the handsomest in America.

Mrs. Whitelaw Reid's boudoir is all in white and gold, with panels of satin cloth and a mantle of onyx, inlaid with gilt.

An Indian potentate, the Maharaja of Bettiah, has engaged the service of an English woman physician for his woman's hospital.

Baroness Hirsch, the wife of the banker-philanthropist, has been struck with apoplexy and her tongue is partially paralyzed.

Onda has each of her favorite dogs cremated upon its death, and has a little cemetery for them connected with her home in Florence.

Here is a new whim in regard to autograph albums: Each contributor furnishes a personally approved cooking recipe, over his or her signature.

The heaven is working everywhere. Even in conservative Germany a little booklet has been published, "Darf die Frau Denken?" "May Woman Think?"

Mrs. Frederick Vanderbilt's boudoir aboard the Conqueror, the yacht which is soon to cruise in southern seas, is finished in rose pink satin and mahogany.

Miss Sydney Randle, of the Georgia Normal and Industrial College, junior class, has been appointed postmaster of the House of Representatives of Atlanta at \$4 a day.

The cheapest dress made by Worth, the Parisian milliner, even if of cotton, does not cost less than \$150, and this he calls his "pauvrete costume"—the poor girl's dress.

Lillian Russell, the singer, has a face preparation for which she pays \$4 a pound. To it she attributes her well kept skin, freedom from wrinkles and good complexion.

It comfortably preserves tradition to notice that Queen Victoria did not forget the inevitable Indian shawl among her wedding gifts to her granddaughter, the Princess Marie.

Something new in veils is made of very fine Russian net, bordered around the lower edge with three rows of very narrow black velvet ribbon, tied in front with three tiny bows.

The progress of the co-education movement may be estimated from the fact that of the 345 colleges and universities reporting to the National Bureau of Education 204 are co-educational.

Boston's ultra literary elite has, about thirty of it, started a new woman's club—the Ymerian. This is not Sanskrit, but Scandinavian, and the club every other Monday burrows deep into Norse mysteries.

"The Very Peculiar" is the objectionably significant title of a young girl's club in Leavenworth, Kan. Eccentricity in young women or in anybody, indeed, except the always excepted genius, is not apt to be desirable.

Mrs. Isabella Beecher Hooker, of Hartford, Conn., writes to say that she thinks it would be a good idea to elect a lady as George William Curtis's successor in the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York.

Miss Louise Aldrich Blake, eldest daughter of a Herefordshire (England) clergyman, has just achieved the highest distinction as a student in medicine ever won by a woman. She has taken a "double first" in the examinations at the London University.

Lady Charlotte Schriber, who has been presented with the freedom of one of London's honorary guilds, is said to be the only woman, with the exception of the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, upon whom has been conferred the distinction of being a "free woman" of a city company and of the city of London.

The Woman's College, of Baltimore, enters '03 with a new dormitory added to its lists of buildings. It is a splendid brick and granite structure and accommodates about seventy-five students. The long discussed question as to whether or not the college shall adopt caps and gowns has been decided affirmatively.

The striking feature of the drawing room in Mrs. Langtry's luxurious house in London is a huge couch, occupying nearly one side of the room, covered with superb skins, and with a wonderful array of barbaric weapons displayed on the wall back of it. The room is furnished in heliotrope and green, with most costly and ornate decorations.

SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL.

Jupiter was known to the Chaldeans as a planet as early as B. C. 3000.

It is said to be a geological fact that gold strata underlie Philadelphia.

The planet Neptune has the longest year, consisting of more than 60,000 of our days.

More than one-half of the street railway mileage in Massachusetts is now operated in whole or part by electricity.

The moon gives out heat enough to affect the thermometer and makes a difference of two degrees or three degrees.

The average weight of the Chinese brains is said to be heavier than the average weight of the brain in any other race.

On the Royal Sovereign, the new English battleship, there are 800 electric lights, connected by thirty miles of wire.

Inventors are now turning their attention to devices for the utilization of electric heating, especially for domestic purposes.

The largest pumping plant in the United States was that placed in a mine at Iron Mountain, Mich. It pumps 4,000,000 gallons in twenty-four hours.

Genuine volcano dust has been found in Kansas and the Indian Territory. There is a deposit near Galena, in the Territory, which is said to be many feet in thickness.

To make glue water proof, dissolve of gum sandarac and mastic each five and one-half drachms in one-half pint of alcohol, and add five and one-half drachms of turpentine.

Seventy-five miles an hour is 110 feet a second, and the energy of 400 tons or a train of cars, moving at that rate is nearly twice as great as that of a 2000 pound shot fired from a 100 ton Armstrong gun.

In the manufacture of Great Britain alone the power which steam exerts is estimated to be equal to the manual labor of 4,000,000,000 men, or more than double the number of males supposed to inhabit the globe.

From a rift in a great rock at Santa Cruz (Cal.) water spurts to a height of sixty feet. The waves that beat on the shore near by have worn a tunnel through the rock coast, beaten through the roof of the tunnel and formed this apparent geyser.

A fine specimen of the egg of *Epyornis*, the extinct giant bird of Madagascar, was exhibited at a recent meeting of the Zoological Society of London. It will be remembered that this egg is about thirteen inches long and of the capacity of 150 hens' eggs.

The captains of ships which carry bricks have to be very careful. An ordinary brick is capable of absorbing a pint of water. So with a cargo of brick in the hold serious leakage may quite well go on undetected, for the water that enters is sucked up as fast as it gets in. If this should be the case, the consequences are bound to be most serious.

Exploration is improving the popular knowledge of the Sahara. Instead of being largely below the sea, the greater part of it is from 6000 to 8000 feet above the level; instead of being rainless, showers make it bloom and cover it with green grass for a few weeks every year; large flocks and herds are maintained upon its borders; the oases are depressions where the water can be collected and stored and are villainously unhealthy in hot weather because of this stagnant water and the habits of the inhabitants.

What a Difference! Away back in the year 1313 eggs sold in London at 8 pence for two dozen.

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Sworn to before me and subscribed in my presence, this 6th day of December, A. D. 1902. A. W. GLEASON.

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Tennessee Onyx Cave.

"What I believe to be the largest and finest onyx deposits in the world," said Mr. Philo B. Shepard, "have recently been discovered in some caves in the Cumberland Mountains of West Tennessee. It has been known for some time that there was a fine quality of onyx or chalcodony there, but the mines or caves have scarcely been touched, and recently my attention was brought to the existence of large caves in Anderson County, the roofs of which are bristling with stalactites of onyx, and in some cases the columns reach to the floor of the cavern. I found one column fourteen feet in length, the top of which is more than four feet in diameter, and, I believe, an onyx slab four feet wide by six long could be sawed from it. The onyx in these caves is wonderfully free from sand pockets and other blemishes, and is more richly colored than any I ever saw, and seems to exist in unlimited quantity. Onyx, as you may know, is formed by the drippings of limestone, and in early stages looks like prisms of glass or frosted icicles hanging from the roof, and countless ages must elapse before even the smallest cone of onyx could form, while the large columns I have described must have been growing since the beginning of time. When the value of these stones becomes known to the world then Tennessee onyx will be more widely known than Italian marble, but as yet only a few samples have been taken out."—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Clever Work of Pirates. A story from the native Chinese papers reproduced in the Hongkong press tells of the clever methods of Chinese pirates. A party of the freebooters boarded a passenger boat bound from Shek-lung to Canton, and distributed themselves among the travelers. They told stories and performed tricks of jugglery until the passengers were enchanted. A poisonous snake used by one of the jugglers disappeared and while a search was being made for it a female pirate made an outcry, declaring that she had been robbed of a bracelet. All the baggage was searched and the woman found

the missing article in her own jewelry box. While she was being denounced the male pirates suggested that, as a punishment, she be compelled to serve tea to the company. This met with unanimous approval. The woman pirate was young and pretty. The tea had been judiciously doctored and soon every one but the pirates were asleep. The luggage and trunks were speedily ransacked of everything of value, even to the money box of the passenger boat, and the booty carried on shore, the boat being left to the mercy of wind and waves with its cargo of drugged inmates. —San Francisco Chronicle.

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