

## Lesson XI.

## READING AND OBEYING THE LAW December 10, 1905

Nehemiah 8 : 8-18. Study the chapter. Commit to memory vs. 17, 18.

GOLDEN TEXT—Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it—Luke 11 : 28.

8 <sup>1</sup> So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and <sup>2</sup> gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.

9 And Nehemiah, which <sup>4</sup> is the Tir'shatha, and Ezra the priest scribe, and the Le'vites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the Lord your God ; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law.

10 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto <sup>2</sup> them for whom nothing is prepared ; for this day is holy unto our Lord : neither be ye sorry ; for the joy of the Lord is your strength.

11 So the Le'vites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy ; neither be ye grieved.

12 And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.

13 And on the second day were gathered together the chief of the fathers of all the people, the priests, and the Le'vites, unto Ezra the scribe, even to <sup>2</sup> understand the words of the law.

Revised Version—<sup>1</sup> And they : <sup>2</sup> they ; <sup>3</sup> so that they understood ; <sup>4</sup> was ; <sup>5</sup> him ; <sup>6</sup> grieved ; <sup>7</sup> heads of fathers' houses ; <sup>8</sup> give attention to ; <sup>9</sup> how that the Lord ; <sup>10</sup> branches of wild olive ; <sup>11</sup> broad place ; <sup>12</sup> dwelt in ; <sup>13</sup> ordinance.

## LESSON PLAN

I. Repenting, 8, 9.

II. Rejoicing, 10-12.

III. Feasting, 13-18.

## DAILY READINGS

(By courtesy of I. B. R. Association)

M.—Reading and obeying the law, Neh. 8 : 1-8.  
T.—Reading and obeying the law, Neh. 8 : 9-18.  
W.—Importance of God's law, Deut. 11 : 13-21.  
Th.—The law to be read, Deut. 31 : 7-13. F.—Observe and do ! Josh. 1 : 1-9. S.—Hear, and remember ! Psalm 78 : 1-11. S.—Making wise, 2 Tim. 3 : 10-17.

Shorter Catechism—Ques. 106. What do we pray

## EXPOSITION

Time and Place—October, 444 B.C.; Jerusalem.

Connecting Links—Measures having been taken for the defence of Jerusalem (see Lesson X.), Nehemiah (called "Tirshatha" or "Governor" in v. 9) felt that the time had come for realizing Ezra's original purpose (see Connecting Links, Lesson VII.) of re-establishing the authority of God's written law over His people.

## I. Repenting, 8, 9.

V. 8. *They read* (probably Ezra was aided in the reading by those standing with him, or by the "Levites"). *in the law of God*. "When Ezra, mounted on a wooden pulpit, and having (v. 4) six priests on his right and seven on his left, hand, opened the book, all the people stood up (v. 5); and when, before reading, he prayed and blessed the Lord, the

14 And they found written in the law <sup>9</sup> which the Lord had commanded by Mo'ses, that the children of Is'rael should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month :

15 And that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jeru'salem, saying, Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and <sup>10</sup> pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as it is written.

16 So the people went forth, and brought them, and made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the <sup>11</sup> street of the water gate, and in the <sup>12</sup> street of the gate of E'phraim.

17 And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and <sup>13</sup> sat under the booths : for since the days of Jesh'ua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Is'rael done so. And there was very great gladness.

18 Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the feast seven days ; and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly, according unto the <sup>14</sup> manner

as possible.

The Question on Missions—47. What is meant by "titinating" in missions ? Most of the people of India live in villages of about 400 inhabitants each. The missionary takes an ox-cart loaded with his tent, medicines, books to sell, etc., and with one or more native helpers visits as many of the villages as possible.

Lesson Hymns—Book of Praise, 438 (Supplemental Lesson) ; 559 ; 577 ; 91 (Ps. Sel.) ; 577 (from PRIMARY QUARTERLY) ; 589.

great God, they responded with loud Amens, lifting up their hands and throwing themselves on the ground in obeisance, v. 6." (A. B. Davidson.) *Gave the sense*, etc. This likely refers to a running comment made by the scribes and Levites, so that the people might understand clearly the meaning.

V. 9. *Nehemiah, . . Tirshatha*. See Light from the East. *Mourn not*, etc. Instead of lamenting they ought to rejoice, for it was the New Year's Day of Israel, and the first day of the glad seventh month (see v. 2), when the Feast of the Tabernacles, the joyful harvest-home festival, was held, Lev. 23 : 39-43. On this day itself the Feast of Trumpets fell, Lev. 23 : 23-25. It is a mistake to think of Old Testament religion as full of gloom. Its chief days were holidays, sunny and mirthful. *All the people wept*. Listening to the words of the law, they were overwhelmed