Sabbath School.

BIBLE LESSONS.

Adapted from Peloubet's Select Notes.

THIRD QUARTER.

Lesson VI. Aug. 11. Num. 21: 4–9.

THE BRAZEN SERPENT.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up."—JOHN 3: 14.

THE SECTION includes Numbers 16, 17, 20, and 21: 1–9, and Deuteronomy 1: 46; 2: 1; 3: 1–5.

EXPLANATORY.

I. THE FORTY YEARS OF DISCIPLINE.—In our last lesson the Israelites had arrived at Kadesh Barnea, within forty miles of Beersheba, the first large place in Southern Palestine. Here they remained more than thirty-eight years, the long time of Deuteronomy 1: 46. They arrived at Kadesh about a year and three months after the exodus, and left in nine months before taking possession of Canaan. During these years "Kedesh was probably their central nucleus or rendezvous. Some of these wanderings are given in Numbers 33: 19–36, extending as far south as Eston Geber on the eastern arm of the Red Sea (1 Kings 9: 26).

THE REASONS FOR THE LONG DELAY.—The reason is given by Moses in Deuteronomy 8: 2. It was "to humble thee, and prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or no." The people had shown by their conduct, and especially in reference to the reports of the spies, that they were not fit to take possession of their promised land, nor to use it aright if they did gain possession. They were prepared for their future by a long course of varied discipline.

All these things were both a probation and an education. All this time God "bare them as a nursing-father in the wilderness" Acts 13: 18, margin of R. V.) The people were treated and trained as little children.

All their misfortunes and their long delay were the fruit of unbelief (Heb. 3: 19). They would not trust God. "Some one has said that it takes God much longer to prepare us for a blessing than it does to give it when we are ready to receive it.

II. THE PEOPLE LOSE FAITH IN GOD.—Vs. 4, 5. 4. "And they journeyed," after the death of Aaron. They were now fairly started on the way to Canaan. "From Mount Hor." A conspicuous mountain half way between the Dead Sea and the eastern arm of the Red Sea. It is 4 800 feet above the Mediterranean. "By the way of the Red Sea." That is the Gulf of Akabah, the eastern arm of the Red Sea. "This sea is called by the Greeks Red from its beach, red with red sand and gravel, and the fragments of red coral which are forever being thrown up from the stores below; and it is these coralline forests which from the true 'weeds,' from which it is named by the Hebrews the "Sea of Weeds." "To compass," or go around "Edom." The country of the Edomites, the descendants of Esau Edom, like Esau, means red. "The modern name of the country is "Idumea," the Greek form of the Hebrew Edom." The children of Israel went around this region, a long distance out of their way, because the Edomites would not permit them to cross over their country (20: 14–21), and opposed them with a strong force, and God forbade them to fight their way, for the Edomites were their brethren (Deut. 2: 4, 5). "And the soul of the people was much discouraged by the way." They lost courage, and hope, and faith, for (1) they were travelling directly away from the promised land. "Hope deferred made the heart sick." (2) The way itself was very difficult. Water was scarce. The way was rough. (3) They were exposed to enemies from the highlands of Mount Seir, who at any time might make raids upon them from the hills. (4) Some of their leaders had died, and Moses was growing old. (5) They were tired of the sameness of their food (v. 5). These dangers and discomforts reacted upon their spirits. They only faintly discerned God's providence and his everlasting mercies.

5. "And the people spake against God, and against Moses." Their bitter feelings grew so strong that they were expressed in words. "Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt." The greatest blessing God had wrought for them, the very keeping of his promises, are complained of as if they were evils done to the people. "This light bread," i. e., vile, worthless, contemptible. Thus they spake of the manna from heaven, without which they would have perished. So the very commonness of God's daily mercies, the very frequency of God's gifts of daily spiritual food, of prayer, and worship, and His Word, often prevents us from realizing their value. The dawn of morning after the night is scarcely noticed, while, if it came but once, it would outweigh in value all the world.

III. THE PUNISHMENT OF UNBELIEF.—Vs. 6. "And the Lord sent," by providential guidance. The serpents were not probably created for this occasion. The punishment came from God by use of natural means, as is usual. Note the plagues of Pharaoh and the burning of Sodom. The obstinacy of the people may have led them to run into the serpent-infested places. "Fiery serpents." "Literally, burning serpents, so called from the inflammatory nature of their bite, which infuses a burning deadly poison, as the Greeks also name certain serpents, especially the "dipsas," because its poison wrought like burning fire." The peninsula of Sinai, and not least the Arabah, abounds in mottled snakes of large size, marked with fiery red spots and wavy stripes, which belong to the most poisonous species, as the formation of the teeth clearly shows.

Sin is like a fiery serpent, often beautiful in appearance, and secret in its approach. But the effects are pains that only fire can express. It infects the whole system. It inflames every evil passion. It is incurable by man alone. If permitted to go on, it is death. The world is full to-day of the sorrows, the burning remorse, the agonies of the body and of the spirit which comes from the fiery serpents of sin. Compare the old serpent, the devil, the tempter and destroyer of men.

IV. REPENTANCE.—V. 7. "We have sinned." The evil effects of sin made them feel conscious of their sin and its greatness. The real evil is the sin and not the punishment. But it is only by the punishment that men realize the evil of sin itself. We cannot help measuring the judgment of any people as to the evil of sin by the severity or lightness of the punishment they inflict on various sins. And the only way in which God can impress upon men the awful evil of sin is by His terrible punishment. Therefore He shows us hell. "Moses prayed." The first source of help for sinners is prayer. But we note in what a peculiar and yet blessed way the prayer was answered; not by removing the serpents, as they probably expected, but by a way that healed their souls as well as their bodies. So Paul's "thorn in the flesh."

V. THE MEANS OF RESTORING FAITH.—Vs. 8 9. As the sin and punishment of the Israelites were the fruits of unbelief, the true method of help was first to restore faith and then healing.

8. "Make thee a fiery serpent," of brass, verse 9, that is, of copper or bronze, which the word usually means. "And set it upon a pole," or standard, so that all who were bitten could easily see it. It was conspicuous all over the camp. "Every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live." (1) The power of healing was not in the brazen serpent. "It could no more heal them than it could sting them." Had the means of cure been a merely natural remedy, the people would have trusted in that instead of in God. (2) The condition of healing was a test of their faith, and thus led them to trust in God. It is easy to imagine how it would seem useless for them merely to look at a piece of brass. (3) The power was wholly in God. This was what made the means effective. (4) The healing of their bodies in this way was a healing of their unbelief and a removal of the cause of their sin.

THE BRAZEN SERPENT AN ILLUSTRATION OF CHRIST. (1) Its design was the same, to save suffering, sinful, dying men. (2) It was made in the form of the fiery serpents, but was itself perfectly harmless. So Christ was made like us, took the form of our sinful human nature, was subject to human conditions, yet without sin. (3) Like the serpent, Christ was lifted up upon the cross to draw all men unto Him. Christ crucified is the most conspicuous object in the history of the world. It is the center around which the whole moral and religious warfare of the world is gathered. It is the Alcyone around which all the stars of heaven are circling. So that both by enemies and friends the cross is made prominent, and all may hear of the Saviour. (4) The power of healing was not in the serpent, but in God through the serpent. The cross has no power in itself, but God has there shown his infinite love and power for salvation.

THE METHOD OF SALVATION BY FAITH (1) The people felt their need. (2) They repented of their sins; no one can be saved without repentance. (3) They had faith to seek and look upon the brazen serpent and be healed, as now all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved. Salvation was by a moral act. It would have been far easier to have cured their bodily pains by a direct act, but the moral result was by far the most important. (4) This faith that God requires is not an arbitrary, but a necessary condition of salvation. For (a) if men do not believe Christ they will not obey His instructions about heaven and the way there. (b) Faith is the test of obedience. Christ is the sum of God's character; and the test is whether we will obey "all" God's commandments, and not merely such as we may choose. (c) Faith in Christ is a test of our loyalty to God and His kingdom. It is the choosing God, not only as our Saviour, but our King. (d) Faith in Christ draws us close to Him in love as our Leader and Friend. (e) Faith is the act of receiving God into the soul. (f) Faith awakens every nobler motive of the soul,—love for Him who has done so much for us; duty, revealed in Him who died in doing His duty; hope of like holiness and blessedness; love to men, exemplified on the cross.

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As we hold a candle to the flame until it is fully lighted, so we must hold ourselves to Christ and His word by meditation.—Bengel.

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To be too near any one thing—that is fanaticism. It is the eclipse of God's great heavens in favor of our tallow candle.—David Swing.

B.B.B.

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B. Y. P. U.

OUR OBJECT.

The unification of Baptist young people; their increased spirituality; their stimulation in Christian service; their edification in scriptural knowledge; their instruction in Baptist history and doctrine; their enlistment in missionary activity, through existing denominational institutions

OUR FELLOWSHIP.

All Young People's Societies of whatsoever name in Baptist churches and Baptist churches having no organizations are entitled to representation. We depend for our unity not upon any young people's name or method. Our common bond is in the New Testament, in the full affirmation of whose teachings

WE ARE ONE PEOPLE WITH ONE MISSION.

Kindly address all communications for this column to Rev. G. O. Gates, St. John, N. B.

Prayer Meeting Topics for Aug. 4.

B. Y. P. U. Topic—"The Union Anniversary, Echoes from the Baltimore Convention." Scripture, Psalm 133.

C. E. Topic—"Our Promised Land and How to Reach It." Rev. 21: 1–7; 22–27.

The Baltimore Convention, so largely attended, so well conducted, so full of enthusiasm, is now of the past. Already the delegates, full of zeal and the best of resolutions, are at home. Now for the work of a new year. The C. C. classes, Biblical, Missionary, Literary, let them be early reorganized and let plans be carefully maturing for a coming autumn's and winter's work.

THE BANNER.—Once more the Banner in the S. L. C. comes to the Maritime Union and Amherst will claim it for another year. Good for Amherst—We trust the significant answer sent by telegram to Baltimore may be proven true at the meeting of 1896 in Milwaukee.

John H. Chapman was again reelected President, and while this was a signal mark of honor to the man, let us not forget that Mr. C. has honored the position of trust and responsibility.

THE C. C. COURSES.—The C. C. C.'s were strongly recommended by a committee and every Union was urged to take up these studies. We hope our Maritime Union will give emphasis to this part of our work.

We ought in some way to have better facilities for our young people engaging in the same. Many of our members are denied the advantages that others have been enjoying. The parents take a weekly or daily paper—they take or ought to take our own MESSENGER AND VISITOR—they can not well afford to take the Baptist Union. The time has come when either we should by some arrangement with the "Union" have the S. L. C. printed in the MESSENGER AND VISITOR so that the *thousands* who have not seen the "Union" nor will not see may enjoy the advantages of that course or else make more of *our* Union and have prepared for ourselves a P. L. Course.

THE LARGE CONVENTIONS.—It is not possible that we are getting the help that will stimulate our constituency from the large meetings such as have been lately held in Boston and Baltimore, and if we are going, as a Maritime Union, to develop any strength we shall need to strike out and do a little more for ourselves.

The Young People's movement has come to stay. It is now no longer an experiment and our churches need all of them to wake up to this fact. We ought as enthusiastically as possible to press on this work of complete organization. There ought to be *an organizer* in the field. The possibilities, "the unharnessed forces," in our constituency, can not be estimated. We could do a hundred times more for the cause of our Redeemer in the different departments through the instrumentality of the young people, than we are now attempting. This age has its peculiarities, railways, bicycles, telephones, and it has its *young people* to the front as never before. Shall we make the most of these? Shall we seek to harness these into the service for the Master and so lead them so that they shall accomplish most for Him? If so—let us keep in mind—time quickly flies. What the *young people* must do, must be done at once.

The Annapolis County B. Y. P. U. met at Hampton on Tuesday p. m., the 9th inst. Forty-seven delegates representing the different societies of the county were present. The articles of the district constitutions were adopted. Papers were read by Rev. J. H. King, on "Loyalty to Christ"; Sister Brown, on "Our Responsibilities as young Christians"; Sister Chipman, on "What am I to the Union, and what is the Union to me?"; Sister Grant, on "The Bible the Young People's Friend." These papers were practical and drew forth a lively discussion.

After a social service in the evening the "Question Box" was introduced. A number of questions relative to the internal work of the B. Y. P. U. was submitted for consideration. The music provided by the Hampton choir was of an excellent character and added much to the interest of the meetings.

A. D. BROWN, Sec'ty.

N. S. Eastern Association.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATIONAL UNION.—As has already been noted in the columns of the MESSENGER AND VISITOR, the Eastern Association met with the First Baptist church, Truro, on Friday the 12th inst. at 2 p. m., and on Thursday evening the 11th inst. The Young People's Associational Union held their first meeting, president Rev. H. B. Smith in the chair. After song and prayer Deacon Jas. Page gave an address of welcome on behalf of the first church Union. The address was brief, hearty and to the point. This was responded to by president Smith and addresses were delivered by Rev. H. G. Estabrooks, Rev. W. F. Parker and Geo. A. McDonald. The letter spoke of consecration and emphasized the great need of this state of grace and the subsequent meetings of the association seemed to feel the desire and necessity for the great motive power in the fight against sin and worldliness apathy. Evangelist Marple led an after meeting when the spirit of prayer seemed to control, and all were in a state of expectancy for rich blessings on the gathering.

On Friday morning at 9.30 the B. Y. P. U. held their first regular session, president Smith in the chair. The roll of societies and churches was called, 41 delegates and visitors responded. President's report read. It dealt fully with the year's work and showed progress. The election of officers resulted as follows: President, S. W. Cummings; Vice.-Pres., W. M. Skale; Secretary, W. D. McCallum; Treasurer, Bro. Ruggles, Acadia Mines. The executive consists of these officers and Revs. F. H. Beals, G. A. Lawson and H. B. Smith. Resolved to have a worker's conference from 5 to 6 p. m. each day. Social committee of the 1st church Union gave an invitation for Associational Union to go with them to Victoria Park for an excursion. At the 2 p. m. session of the convention the following committee on B. Y. P. U. work was appointed: Rev. H. B. Smith, chairman, Mr. Ruggles, Dr. Walker, Rev. G. A. Lawrence, Rev. Mr. Gardner and Geo. A. McDonald.

Workers conference, 5 to 6 p. m., Friday, Bro. Geo. A. McDonald led a short praise and prayer service which was heartily entered into.

W. D. McCallum opened a discussion on how to deepen and maintain our work in the association. Discussion followed. It was decided to adopt the flying news budget or circular, and have each union after they read it before their first young people's meeting add their words of cheer scripture greeting or God speed with any item of spiritual interest. The budget to return in reverse order to the place of starting. It was decided to have it start here.

Rev. F. H. Beals then spoke on what has the B. Y. P. U. accomplished in the Maritime provinces? Hearty discussion followed and questions poured in as to the progress of the work. The need of funds in the Maritime Union was felt and discussed and decided that a strenuous effort would be made to raise an amount equal to three cents per member for this necessary work.

An open parliament for twenty minutes was held and the questions asked were pertinent and helpful. Such as what is an ideal consecration meeting? What about the pledge? Objections were raised to the question. How many conversions have been directly traceable to the Unions during the year as it was stated it is impossible to tell what influences have led to the conversion of a soul. The retiring secretary presented a financial statement which showed a balance against the Union and it was decided to wipe this out by collections at these meetings, which was done before the association closed.

Saturday 9 a. m., devoted service was led by vice president W. M. Steele. Rev. M. P. Bowie spoke on the Christian Endeavor topics for B. Y. P. U. meetings, considered them too general and noted the absence of strong views on the atonement. Rev. John Miles on the need of more spirituality. Evangelist Marple on having a good grip of God's word and go to work. Rev. M. P. Bowie on knowledge. Rev. C. P. Wilson on the power of God, four corner stones: 1st know Jesus; 2nd God's Holy Word; 3rd Holy Spirit Himself; 4th love for the work. Geo. A. McDonald on opportunity.

Saturday 2 p. m., Dr. Walker led an open parliament for half an hour. It was suggested to have the young people's night at that association on Sunday instead of Thursday. A committee was appointed to meet a committee from association on the question. A motion passed to ask each Union to contribute an amount equal to two cents per member for funds of associational union.

An evangelistic service was led by evangelist Marple after the preaching service on Sunday night, the first church was full and the Spirit's presence was felt by speaker and hearers. Bro. Geo. A. McDonald ably assisted in the conduct of the meeting and joy was felt on earth and in Heaven when four or five souls found their Saviour.

Our prayer is that the work may go on and that all prayer to this end will be answered and that our God will get all the glory.

W. D. MCCALLUM, Sec'y.

Program of the Annual Session of the Maritime B. Y. P. U. to be held in the Germain St. church August '95.

FRIDAY EVENING.—Address of welcome, by a member of Germain street Society (5 minutes). Reply to address of welcome, by president, (3 minutes) Address, by Rev W. C. Goucher, subject: "Do the young Baptist's of the Maritime Provinces need the B. Y. P. U.?" (15 minutes). Address, by Rev. W. F. Parker, subject: "Junior work, its importance and how to conduct it." (15 minutes). Report of Baltimore Convention by Rev. H. G. Estabrooks. Open conference—Half minute testimonies to the value of B. Y. P. U. work, by those who believe in it.

SATURDAY MORNING.—8 30–9, Social service. 9 10, Union meeting conducted by I. M. Schurman. Appointment of committee's. President's report. Sec.-Treasurer's report. Discussion of reports and routine business.

SUNDAY EVENING.—Gospel sermon, by Rev. A. F. Baker. Evangelistic service conducted by Rev. J. A. Marple.

MONDAY MORNING.—8 30–9, Social service. 9–10, Union meeting conducted by A. H. Chipman. Election of officers. Practical hints on organization, by Rev. A. T. Dykeman (8 minutes). Practical hints on committee work by S. W. Cummings (8 minutes). Open conference on methods of work or "how we do it."

TUESDAY MORNING.—8 30–9, Social service. 9–10, Union meeting conducted by president. Address, by Rev. G. R. White, subject: "What should be the attitude of our pastor towards the B. Y. P. U.?" (10 minutes). Discussion and questions (5 minutes). Address by Rev. J. H. McDonald, subject: "Educational plans of International Union's for next year," (10 minutes). Discussion and questions (5 minutes). Reporting for B. Y. P. U. column, by editorial secretary, (10 minutes). Address by the president.

The eighth was August, being rich arrayed
In garment all of gold downe to the ground;
Yet rode he not, but led a lovely mayd
Forth by the lily hand, the which was crowned
With ears of corne, and full her hand was found. —*Spencer.*

O PARADISE!

O land beyond our human vision,
With hills and streams and fields elysian,
Where all who pass thy blissful portal
Are healed, forgiven, safe, immortal,
Forgetting all their toil and sorrow,
And fearing no unhappy morrow!

O land so far that never message
Returns from one who makes the passage
To thy fair borders; all unheeding
Thy sky smiles back to all our pleading,
And never any voice replying
Makes answer to our calls and sighing.

O land so near that but a curtain
Of mist enshrouds thee, and half-certain
Are we sometimes that echoes faintly
Come floating down from singers saintly;
And we could see thy turrets golden,
But that our mortal eyes are holden.

O land so fair, so full of glory,
So near, so far! We read thy story,
We sing thy praises, tell thy pleasures,
Have given to thee our dearest treasures;
To thee our homesick eyes are turning,
For love of thee our hearts are burning!

The trouble with the church is selfishness, thoughtlessness, heedlessness. We do not know the thing that need to be done at our own doors. We do not know what is going on in these saloons. Do the christian people visit jails? Do they know of the troubles in the hospitals? Do they know the needs of the people? If they do, things ought to be changed, and that right speedily. The church is an institution which stands for altruism, lives for others. That is taught in the life of its Divine Founder. Human life gives egotism, selfishness. —Richard T. Ely.

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F. BEATRICE HATHEWAY,
Assignee of said Mortgage.

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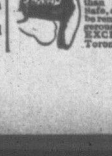

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Is the original and only genuine Worm Syrup. Beware of spurious imitations.