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The Sabbath School.

LESSONS FOR JUNE

FIRST SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—*The Serpent of Brass.* Numbers 21, 4-9. Golden Text. John 3, 14-15. Parallel pages, Acts 16, 32. Heb 11, 6. John 3, 36.

V 4th. The people journeyed southward to the head of the Red Sea, and compassed the south eastern border of the land of Edom, which extended to the head of the Arabian Gulf. They then reached the high ground of the great Eastern desert, along which they passed, with the mountains of Edom and Moab on their left, between them and the Dead Sea. They traversed southwards the arid, hot and sandy Arabia, or "way of the Red Sea," and entered the equally desolate region east of the mountains of Edom. The whole region is dreary in the extreme; and the heat and scarcity of water which they suffered, and the circuitous route which they were commanded to take, caused, while it did not justify, the discouragement which they felt.

V. 5. They not only murmured against Moses, but against God himself, thus affording an astonishing instance of the unbelief, folly, and wickedness of men when left to themselves. Overlooking all the wonderful mercies already received, they showed the same spirit as their fathers, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, by treating the manna, that greatest of all God's gifts to them, with insolent contempt. The expression "light bread," properly signifies "trashy or worthless" bread.

V. 6. God punished them by sending fiery serpents among them, the bites of which invariably proved mortal. The regions at the head of the gulf of Akaba, where the Israelites at this time were, are still infested by large numbers of serpents and scorpions, which inflict wounds that are very painful though not

ordinarily fatal. On this occasion they were perhaps assembled in large numbers, and endowed with an unusual propensity to assault those who came in their way.

V. 7. Chastisement in this case answered its intended end. It brought the people to repentance and confession of sin, without which there can be no pardon. Moses whom they had abused as their worst enemy, is now appealed to as their best friend, and besought to be their advocate with God.

Vv. 8 9. Show us the remedy. Moses was commanded to make a serpent of brass—rather copper—and to set it up upon a pole; and God ordained that all who were bitten, and looked on it should live. The Israelites probably carried this image with them in their journeys, for there is reason to think from the account of its destruction by Hezekiah, given in 2nd Kings, 18, 4, that it had been deposited somewhere in the promised land.

The healing of the dying Israelites by means of the brazen serpent, was in several important points a most striking type of the salvation of perishing sinners by faith in a crucified Saviour. He himself points this out to us in the golden text. The following are some of these points of resemblance:

1st. The disease in both cases is similar—the sufferers in the one case being bitten by the serpents of the desert, in the other by that old serpent the Devil, whose fiery darts inflame men's lusts, and bring them at last to everlasting death.

2ndly. In both cases the remedy was divinely prescribed.

3rdly. In neither case was it what might have been expected. It could not have been supposed that the sight of an image of brass would be an antidote to the poison of a serpent. So salvation by the cross of Christ is to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness.

4th. In both cases mere human remedies were of no value. The most skilful medical prescriptions could not heal the dying Israelites, nor can repentance, or reformation or good works, remedies devised by human reason, ever save the sinner.

5th. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so was the Son of man lifted up.

6th. As the dying Israelite was saved by a believing look on the brazen serpent, so is the perishing sinner saved by a believing look at the Saviour on the cross. Look unto me, He says, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved.

SECOND SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—*The True Prophet.* Dent. 18: 9-16. Golden Text. John 1: 45.

Vv. 9-14. In these verses God warns the Israelites against the idolatrous customs of the Canaanites. He knew how prone the human heart is to follow idols instead of Himself, and to indulge in practices which His word condemns; and in His kindness He forewarned the people that they might be forearmed. They had therefore no excuse when