

Now study the fact that such a great one should so sadly fail. See probable causes, as the death of Miriam, which must have left a sense of loneliness and grief, the keen sense of disappointment at this second failure on the borders of Canaan and he had been so often slandered. Point out that Old Testament leaders stumble and fall as human beings, but they rise again as God's children. Discuss the penalty,—exclusion from Canaan.

Emphasize, in closing, the truth, that God's love and patience never fail.

For Teachers of the Senior Scholars

Have a talk with the class about the thirty-eight years which have elapsed since the spies came back with their evil report,—those hidden years in the wilderness—during which nearly all the grown-ups who came out of Egypt had died. The time has come now for the final march into the Promised Land. We shall now see what the thirty-eight years have done in the way of developing the people into a higher type of life. Note the death of Miriam. How little is said about it! Did the people not spend the usual length of time in mourning for her? Did she never recover her place in the affections of the people after her sin? Some one sin has blighted many a life. The Lesson may be dealt with in the following way:

1. *The People's Complaints*, vs. 2-5. What was the cause of their complaints? Against whom did they make their complaints? Is there any excuse for all this? They must have been good at forgetting, or they would have remembered what God had done for them in the past. There is no doubt they are the children of their fathers. They manifest the same spirit, and speak the same language. Thirty-eight years at school with God in the desert has not done much in the way of educating them into better life. How is it with us? Have we been schooled out of the habit of complaining? Have we learned to trust God in the trying times? Can we be bright in dark days? The late James Sherman, Vice-President of the United States, was called "Sunny Jim," because he could be bright under all circumstances. This is a spirit worth possessing.

2. *God's Goodness*, vs. 6-8. What has God

to say about the people's complaints? Note that there is not a word of rebuke, nothing but directions as to how their wants are to be supplied. How good God is! We all know something of God's goodness in dealing with us. (See Ps. 103 : 8.) There is no place where earth's failings have such kindly judgment given as up in heaven.

3. *Moses' Sin*, vs. 9-13. In what did Moses' sin consist? Was it in the ugly spirit he manifested? Was it in the ugly words he spoke? Was it in the ugly way he smote the rock? What excuse can you make for Moses? What punishment did he receive?

Teach the class what a weakness it is to manifest a spirit like this, and remind them that we cannot act in this way without suffering for it.

For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

Recall the decision of the Israelites in last Lesson, not to go up and take possession of Canaan, and remind the scholars that they were punished for their lack of faith and courage, by being obliged to wander in the wilderness about Kadesh for thirty-eight years. During this time, every Israelite over twenty years of age, at the time of last Lesson, except Caleb and Joshua, died. Today's Lesson brings us to the end of that period of wandering. The questions and discussions may follow the Lesson Plan:

I. *THE PEOPLE'S COMPLAINT*, vs. 1-5. Where were the people gathered? Why could Kadesh be said to be both in the wilderness of Zin and the wilderness of Paran? Who died at Kadesh? What can you tell about Miriam? What was lacking to the people? Describe the water supply at Kadesh. Why did it fail now? Against whom did the people complain? What wish did they express? What did they say of their surroundings?

II. *THE LORD'S ANSWER*, vs. 6-9. Whither did Moses and Aaron go? What appeared to them? What was Moses told to take? What was the "rod?" Where had it been kept? Whom were Moses and Aaron to gather? What were they to do to the rock? What did the Lord promise would happen? Explain "before the Lord," v. 9.