

THE LESSON GRADED

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the School.

For Teachers of Bible Classes

By Rev. W. H. Smith, Ph.D., Fredericton, N.B.

As this is the first Lesson from the Book of Numbers, take pains to see that the class is familiar with the main facts in connection with it. Point out that it is named from the numberings of the people which are recorded in chs. 1 and 26. Analyze the contents, which consist mainly of legal enactments (chs. 1 : 1 to 9 : 14), and historical narrative, chs. 9 : 15 to 36 : 13. Bring out by questioning the main events leading up to the Lesson. Then discuss :

1. *The people's murmurings*, vs. 4, 5. Bring out the cause,—the hardship which comes with dreary drudgery and the memory of better things in the past. Show that their standard was the sense of satisfaction from abundant feasting, which they contrasted with the manna. The great work which God was doing, was entirely ignored. Discuss whether this is still a common evil.

2. *The results of murmuring*, vs. 10-15. (a) It temporarily crushed the patience and spirit of Moses. (See also ch. 20 : 10-13.) Bring out fully his pathetic complaint. Compare the experience of Elijah after the events on Mount Carmel (1 Kgs., ch. 19), and the common records of many a faithful friend who has been crushed by such murmurings. (b) God gave them according to their desires, and in their greediness a plague broke out and many died (see v. 33). Point out that the natural results of wrong-doing are the most effective punishments and means of breaking the power of sin. Discuss this as one of the ways they learned sin as sinful, which became the discipline of their murmuring spirits. Emphasize the sinfulness of murmuring. Show how it blinds to God's great mercies. See how Moses complained against God's treatment of him although God had so wonderfully honored him. See how it led Moses to doubt his acceptance (v. 11), how it led to ignoring the great privilege God gave him in being the father and founder of a nation. Compare Paul's attitude in 1 Thess. 2 : 7. The lesson to impress is the

shame and sin of yielding to such impulses. Seek to drive away the murmuring spirit which ruins self and others.

3. *God's response to Moses' cry and to the people's condition*, vs. 16-25. Show how God was willing to assist Moses by the aid of the seventy elders. Bring out the gracious aspect of it, the fatherly desire to meet the need. See Ps. 103 : 13, 14 as a commentary. Learn that God seeks to lead all to faith in Himself.

For Teachers of the Senior Scholars

By Rev. A. Wylie Mahon, D.B., St. Andrews, N.B.

Question the class about this new Book of the Bible which we are about to study,—how it gets its name from the two census-takings, one in ch. 1 and the other in ch. 26, and how it takes up the history of the Israelites where the Book of Exodus drops it, and carries it on till they reach the borders of the Promised Land. Bring out the fact that the Israelites remained for about a year at Sinai, and then the march began again. Our Lesson to-day has to do with the first days of this wilderness journey from Sinai. The points are :

1. *A Sound of Weeping*, v. 10. What was the matter with the people? Note that there is something in this strange dislike of the ancient Israelites for the bread of God which came down from heaven, and in their strange preference for the onions and the leeks and the garlic, the slave-food of Egypt, suggestive of certain experiences in the life of people in every age. This strange preference manifests itself sometimes in the food which the mind craves. If we prefer what is poor and trashy, what is altogether lacking in the elements which lead us to look up and live up, we have no better taste than these poor murmuring slaves. This strange preference manifests itself also when one sets his heart upon a poor kind of life and a poor kind of pleasure.

2. *A Cry of Despondency*, vs. 11-15. Bring out the surprise caused by this cry. We are never much surprised to hear the people murmur and weep, but it comes like a