

that God was too ready to forgive, that He was pitiful when He should have been stern. But no one so grossly misrepresents God as one who puts limits on His mercy.

But oh, the composure of God. Like the sunshine, which all the clouds and shadows and storms cannot diminish or offend, God is the same patient, faithful, merciful Father, in spite of either the grumbling or the ill-temper of men. We cannot irritate God. A lady in New York said of a famous preacher who had gone thither from Canada, "I like Dr. Ormiston. He makes me feel that God is so big." This is the greatness of God, His magnanimity. Not that He is everywhere. Not that He is without beginning or end. But that

"His greatness flows around our incompleteness,
Round our restlessness His rest."

"And He was sanctified in them." The real character of God was made known to

His people. Dr. Henry van Dyke tells, in one of his beautiful stories, of a very good man, a minister, who had three children. These he loved dearly, and he strove earnestly, by his prayers and training, to keep them from the evil in the world. One day news came that a brother of the minister, who had given himself up to a worldly life, was coming to the manse on a visit. The minister dreaded the brother's influence over his children, and prayed earnestly, that they might be kept free from it. The brother was killed by an accident, and the minister blamed himself as a murderer, because of his prayer. He could not be comforted until his daughter asked if he himself would kill her if any one should ask him to do so. Then he realized that God was far too loving to do harm to any one, even in answer to prayer however earnest. There is something wrong with the prayer which would bring evil upon a brother, however unworthy.

THE LESSON GRADED

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

For Teachers of Bible Classes

The points to elicit from the class are :

1. *The distress and murmurings of the people, vs. 2-5.* Bring out (a) The occasion was the dry midsummer and the concentration of so many people at a given point. Natural and human causes frequently lead to most unexpected results: (b) The strange attitude of the people, a bitter attack on Moses. Show that they had just finished thirty-eight years of discipline, and now they repeat the offence in another form. Is growth in moral and spiritual attainments necessarily slow? Allow, in blaming the people, for natural disappointments and great distress. Discuss how to account for their attack on Moses after so many great deliverances. Show their utter recklessness in their attack, even wishing all would perish even as Korah (see Lesson Explained) and his fellows.

2. *Moses' appeal to God, vs. 6-9.* Discuss : (a) The wisdom of Moses and Aaron in taking he complaint to God. Get Moses' view-

point, that it was God who led them there and He would provide. Press home the value of prayer in meeting trouble in any form. (b) God's readiness to meet the need. Dwell upon the lovingkindness of God and His sympathy with these failings which are inherent in life as such. Bring out each factor as the representative of a great spiritual truth : the rod, divinely blessed (ch. 17); the rock, a testimony to the power of God (Ps. 78 : 16) ; and symbol of life, 1 Cor. 10 : 4.

3. *The sin of Moses, vs. 10-13.* Bring out what constituted the awful nature of his offence : (1) Its spirit was so unlike that of God who, notwithstanding Israel's murmurings, graciously supplied water. (2) He assumed God's prerogative,—*"must we."* It was angry scolding because of wounded self importance. (See Ps. 106 : 32, 33.) (3) In a passionate spirit he smote the rock, thereby failing to carry out God's command merely to speak to the rock. See ch. 27 : 14 as a commentary. It was a direct misrepresentation of the character of God, a failure to make God holy before men, v. 13.