

The spies returned, showed the fruit and told their story. *The fruit of the land.* The fruit spoke for itself. *It floweth with milk and honey.* Milk was an important element of food in Palestine. Goat milk was esteemed the best. Honey was also much prized. In 1 Kings 14 : 3, a bottle of honey is presented to a prophet, and in 2 Sam. 17 : 29, honey, along with other gifts, including butter and cheese, are taken to David when he flees from Absalom.

Vs. 28, 29. *Nevertheless.* The fruit spoke more eloquently and faithfully than the men. The sight of it was a silent invitation to the people to trust in the God to whom the good land belonged, and who had brought them safely almost to the borders of it. But the men began to raise doubts. The fruit was not



Pomegranate—(Peloubet)

all that they had seen. They had also seen strong, tall men, and fortified cities, and their faith fell and their hearts sank at the sight; and they terrified the people they should have encouraged. *The children of Anak*; the name of a people—like the names in the next verse—not the name of a family. *The Jebusites* were the old inhabitants of Jerusalem, and Judah of which it was later the capital, was a hill country. It is interesting to think of the fear of Israel at this time to go up to Jerusalem; so different from the song they sang in much later times. "I was glad when they said unto me, 'Let us go up,'" Ps. 122 : 1. The Jebusites held Jerusalem till the time of David.

II. The Advice Given, 30-33.

Vs. 30, 31. There was, however, one man of courage and faith, if not two, among the spies. *Caleb stilled the people.* "Hushed them" is the meaning of the word; and we see from the use of this word, what we directly learn from 14 : 1-4, that the people had uttered rebellious words against their leaders, as they were so fond of doing when anything seemed to go amiss. They "murmured," 14 : 2. It is this angry, faithless and cruel murmuring that Caleb stills. Caleb has faith enough to believe that the victory will lie with Israel, and he says so, though everybody is against him, the murmuring people and the unbelieving spies. He said, "We are stronger than they." The other spies said, "They are stronger than we." The ten spies saw only the strong Anakim, and forgot the stronger unseen God.

Vs. 32, 33. *An evil report of the land.* Now the spies do not even speak well of the land. In verse 27 they had said, "It is a good land, this is the fruit of it." Now they say, "It is a niggardly land, and eats up those who live upon it." In this they contradict not only Caleb, but the divine promise. And they are led into this blasphemy, simply through fear of the "men of measure," as the Hebrew calls them, that is, men of great stature. They called them *the Nephilim*, v. 33, (Rev. Ver.). Now this word occurs elsewhere only in Gen. 6 : 4, and there it refers to a race of giants unlike the men whom we see upon the earth. The use of the word here, shows how intense was their fear of them: they felt like grasshoppers in the presence of men so tall and strong, and they knew, too, that those tall men despised them.

III. The People Dismayed, 14 : 1-4.

Vs. 1-4. The responsibility of prominent men like the spies is very great. Their mood affects the mood of the people. The unbelief of the spies created or deepened the unbelief of the people; and they expressed themselves in ready murmurs. The murmurs indeed amount to blasphemy: for "Would God," they say, "that we had died in the land of Egypt"—the very land out of which they had been delivered and redeemed by the marvellous and gracious might of