

## First Quarter : The Patriarchs and Early Leaders of Israel

**LESSON FOREWORD**—To lose the initiative is serious for an army. Sometimes it is tragic. Reaching Kadesh-barnea, Israel sent spies to view the land of Canaan. Ten came back declaring the impossibility of advance. Two, Joshua and Caleb, declared its abundant practicability. Forgetting God's power, Israel allows the fear of the unknown to prevail.

## Lesson IX.

## THE REPORT OF THE SPIES

March 2, 1919

## THE LESSON PASSAGE—Numbers 14 : 1-10.

1 And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried ; and the people wept that night.

2 And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron : and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt ! or would God we had died in this wilderness !

3 And wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey ? were it not better for us to return into Egypt ?

4 And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.

5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel.

**GOLDEN TEXT**—This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith.—1 John 5 : 4 (Rev. Ver.).

SENIOR AND HOME DEPARTMENT TOPIC—Causes of Failure in Life.

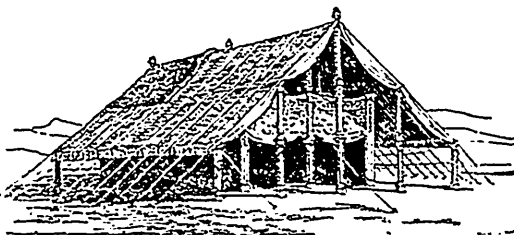
## THE LESSON EXPLAINED

## I. A COWARDLY

## PANIC.—1-5. All

the spies agreed as to the fertility of the land. But ten had seen nothing else during the forty days of search, except the stature of the people they had to dispossess, and the strength of the cities they

had to take. Caleb, speaking for himself and Joshua, urged the possibility and duty of immediate action. They saw the possibilities, not the impossibilities, of the situation. *Congregation lifted up their voice, and cried.* The Israelites responded to the pessimism of the ten spies. It was a majority report. As so often, the pessimism was taken for prudence, when it was not merely pessimism, but cowardice. The first failure of the Israelites was not to capitalize their past experience of God's mighty power and pit it against the report of the men who felt as small as grasshoppers. *Murmured against Moses and Aaron.* This is the bitter cross every leader has



THE TABERNACLE

to bear between the enthusiastic beginning and the glorious end of a great cause. *Would God we had died in Egypt.* Everything and anything seems better than the present prospect. Israel's second failure is in forgetting that every prom-

ised land can only be possessed by disposition. *Better . . . to return into Egypt.* They are blind to the dangers of retreat and keen to see the dangers of advance. *Let us make a captain and return.* The despairing thought becomes a desperate policy. They knew that Moses would not command a retreat. *Moses and Aaron fell on their faces ;* with true insight they see that retreat is not an alternative. It is advance or annihilation. There are times in the lives of individuals and causes when there is only one way—forward.

II. A BRAVE PROTEST.—6-10. Joshua and Caleb ; prompt helpers, as they were clear eyed