

unbelief hindered them from entering at once upon the possession of the land.

V. 17.—In the beginning of the chapter we read that the Lord commanded Moses to send men to spy out the land. But in Deut. i. 22. Moses says that the people solicited him to this. The two statements are easily harmonized. In the spirit of unbelief the people asked that spies should be sent, and God remembering former manifestations of unbelief directed Moses to grant the request.

Vv. 18-20.—The Israelites should have been satisfied with the statements which God had made, that he would drive out the inhabitants from before them, and that the land was one flowing with milk and honey. Had they implicitly trusted in these assurances they would not have asked for spies.

V. 21.—The time of the first ripe grapes was in August.

V. 21. The wilderness of Zin bordered on the south of Palestine. It was a part of the more comprehensive district of Paran.—*Rehob* was a town near the northern boundary.—*Hamath* was a Syrian province on the north of Palestine, having a capital of the same name. "The entering in of Hamath" was the narrow pass leading from Canaan into Syria.

V. 22.—*Hebron*—originally called Kirjath-Arba, was a city about 20 miles south of Jerusalem.—The Anakims, remarkable for their great stature, were composed of three tribes descended from the sons of Anak, and named after them. See Deut. ix. 2.

V. 23.—*Eschol* was in the neighborhood of Hebron.—The cluster was so carried for safety as much as for convenience.

V. 24.—The word *Eschol* means a cluster.

V. 25.—They had travelled through the whole length of the land.

Vv. 26-29.—The spies gave a correct account of the fertility of the land, but evidently wished in what they said of the inhabitants to discourage the Israelites from attempting an invasion.

V. 30.—Caleb, no doubt with the concurrence of Joshua (Ch. xiv. 6, 9,) endeavored to quiet the people, and exhorted them to go up at once. For their trust in God the two faithful spies received a reward. See Ch. xiv. 30.

Vv. 31-33.—The sin of the unbelieving spies was the greater, because they persisted in disheartening the people.—*A land that eateth* &c. Some suppose that at this time there was a great plague in the country sent by God to weaken the Canaanites, but which the spies ascribed to an unwholesome climate. See Ez. xxxvi. 13.

LESSONS.

1. Let us learn to guard against the sin of unbelief. The spies virtually doubted the ability or the willingness of God to fulfil his promises. The sad results are stated in the next chapter. In his dealing with the Israelites for this sin God has stamped his dire disapprobation upon it. From the wilderness whitened with the bones of the unbelieving Jews comes to us the solemn lesson, "Take heed lest there be in any of you the evil heart of unbelief. See Heb. iii. 7-19. The Heavenly Canaan is offered to us through Jesus Christ. If we refuse to believe we shall eternally perish. See John iii. 18.

2. Obstacles in the way of duty should never deter us from undertaking the discharge of duty. Although the difficulties of conquest had been fully as great as the spies represented, yet the Israelites should have gone forward. God would have given them the land. Let us never say, in contemplating known duty, there is a lion in the way. If we honestly address ourselves to the discharge of duty God will either remove difficulties or give strength to surmount them.

3. In the wilderness of this world God gives his people foretastes of heaven. Clusters from *Eschol* are put into their hand. This is an earnest of their inheritance.

DOCTRINE.

Christ our forerunner. Heb. vi. 20; John xiv. 2-3.

SECOND SABBATH.

SUBJECT.—*Christ in the garden.* Matt. xxvi. 36-56.

See parallel passages in Mark xiv. 32-50; Luke xxii. 39-53; John xviii. 1-11.

After Christ had instituted the Supper, given his parting address, and offered up his intercessory prayer, he proceeded to Gethsemane accompanied by the eleven. This is holy ground. It becomes us to approach with awe.

V. 36.—*Gethsemane*—a retired place on the west side of Mount Olivet, about a stone's cast from the Cedron and in full view of Jerusalem. The word means *oil press*.

V. 37.—*The two sons of Zebedee*,—James and John (Matt. x. 2). These three disciples were with him on the mount of transfiguration and at the cure of the ruler's daughter. The other disciples were left near the entrance of the garden.—*Sorrowful*.—Mark says, Christ "began to be sore amazed."

V. 38.—The cause of Christ's anguish was not simply the contemplation of the death of the cross. As the substitute of sinners he was made to feel the manifesta-