

Sabbath School Lessons.*April 12th.***THE SPIES.—Numb. xiii. 17-33.**

The children of Israel, the second year after leaving Egypt, had reached Kadesh-barnea, a town in the wilderness at the south of Canaan. From this place they proposed to send twelve spies to examine the country, and the Lord approved of the proposal. See Deut. i. 22.

Moses directed them as to the route they were to take. They were to enter the land at the south and pass through it. They were on their return to report of the people and their habits, and of the nation and production of the land. At the time they made their visit, the land must have been clothed in its richest verdure. It would be in its highest state of beauty when the first grapes were ripe.

THEIR JOURNEY.

They went from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob, at the northern boundary of Canaan, near Lebanon, about 150 miles from Kadesh. They came to Hebron. Hebron was the place where their fathers were buried. It had been the residence of Abraham and Jacob.—See Gen. xiii. 18, xxxvii. 14. Eschcol was near Hebron, and is still celebrated for its grapes. When they came there they cut down what must have been a very large cluster of grapes.

THEIR RETURN

Must have been eagerly expected by the people. Considerable excitement must have prevailed in the camp on their arrival. The report of the land which they gave was all that could be desired. They said that it was very good. It was flowing with milk and honey, what a beautiful and powerful metaphor. The abundance of milk indicates that it was a place of pastures, flocks and herds.—The abundance of honey suggests a land luxuriant with flowers. *Nevertheless* there was a drawback. The people were *strong*. The cities were *walled*. Israel was a nation unaccustomed to war, and quite unable to carry on a siege operation. The people were evidently quite disappointed. A controversy arose among the spies themselves. Caleb and Joshua urged an immediate attack, and the other ten dwelt exclusively on the difficulties that lay in their way.

Learn. 1. *The Canaan which these spies saw is an emblem of the Heavenly Canaan, to which all Christians look.* God has prepared it for those who trust and obey him; 1 Cor. 2. 9. In it there is no sickness, no sorrow, no sin. It is said to be a home, a temple, a

city, a place prepared by Christ. It is being ever with the Lord.

2. *We should often think of heaven.* We should think of its beauty, think of its joy, think of its holiness, think of it as our fathers' home, as the place where Christ is, and where all the good will one day be.

We should fight for heaven. It is worth fighting for. Many who expect to go to heaven, never fight for heaven. They never fight against their own lusts, tempers, or wickedness around them, they go floating down, the stream, sailing along with its current.—The Christian has many enemies. He has enemies within and enemies without; Eph. vi. 12. Christ is our leader. The gate is strait, the way is *narrow*, but it leads to God. We must strive to enter in at the straight gate, and fight against every thing that would interfere with our entering it.

4. *We should beware of unbelief.* It was this shut Israel out of heaven; Ps. xcv. 11. Trust God, follow Jesus, and heaven is sure; John xiv. 2, 3. Unbelief can shut you out, "only believe" Numb. v. 36.

*April 19th, 1863.***THE PHARISAIC TRADITIONS.—****MARK VII. 1-23.****I.—THE PHARISEES FIND FAULT.**

The Pharisees laid great stress upon outward rites and ceremonies. Their principal motive in making a profession of religion seems to have been to gain the applause and respect of the multitude.

Unwashed hands. The Pharisees performed these ablutions of their hands and utensils much more frequently than they were required to do by the Mosaic law. They, therefore, esteemed themselves highly for strictness in religion, and their hearts were filled with self-righteousness. *Tradition of the elders.*—Superstitious practices, which had been introduced by their forefathers, and which were not authorized by the word of God.

II.—OUR SAVIOUR ANSWERS THEM.

Hypocrites. Well did they deserve the name for with all their high-sounding profession, their principles were evil, and their practice immoral. *It is a gift.* Consecrated to God. Under this pretence they excused themselves from supporting their parents, and broke the fifth commandment.

III.—WHAT IT IS THAT DEFILES A MAN.

Nothing from without can defile. This was in direct opposition to the teaching of the Pharisees whose religion wholly consisted in outward things, in formal prayers, in external