

raged that he ordered all present that had bows to shoot up their arrows at Jupiter, (then their chief god,) as in defiance of him for that rainy weather. But their arrows fell short of heaven, and fell upon their own heads, so that many of them were very seriously wounded. Even so do our muttering and murmuring words, either for that or this which God sendeth; they hurt not him at all, but return upon our own heads, and wound both deeply and dangerously.—*Spencer.*

English Teachers' Notes.

We have already, in the preceding note, considered the unreadiness of Israel to fight their way into Canaan, and traced the spiritual counterpart of this craven fear and lethargy in ourselves. Let us now observe how this negative lack of faith, which we should perhaps be disposed rather to pity than to condemn, grew into positive unbelief, and how unbelief led to open rebellion.

The spies have come back, (and an interesting picture of the excitement in the camp on their return may easily be drawn for children,) but the reports differ. All agree that the land is a fruitful one—as, indeed, is shown by the grape-clusters they have brought back. But ten of them qualify this seriously. See xii. 32, which probably means that the very fertility of the country was its danger, making it the prey of the surrounding nations; and they also urge the impossibility of dispossessing its mighty occupants or capturing their well fortified cities. Caleb and Joshua, on the other hand, have nothing but good to say of it, and, while not denying the difficulties, remind the people of Him through whose strength they can surmount them all.

The evil report is accepted, and what is the result? We see at once most sinful unbelief manifested in two ways, which are succinctly expressed in Psa. cvi. 24. "They despised the pleasant land, they believed not His word." They disbelieve (1) the goodness of the Land of Promise, and (2) the power and faithfulness of the Promiser. Or, rather, the order should be reversed; they mistrusted God, and then it suited them to believe that the land was not worth having. Remembering that sample of its products which had been exhibited to their wondering eyes, the old fable is peculiarly descriptive of the case—"the grapes were sour."

Now this is precisely what comes of want of faith in the strong arm and all-supplying love of

God. People do not believe in "the peace of God which passeth all understanding," and the happiness of whole-hearted devotion to Christ's service, which, as was explained in the last note, are the "promised land" into which, even in this life, we are invited to enter. Not being happy in their religion, because they do not give themselves wholly to the Lord, they refuse to believe the word of those who are; resent their "assumption of superior goodness," and even figuratively "stone them with stones."

It is a solemn thing to observe what this led to in Israel's case—open rebellion, with a view to actually going back to Egypt, and then the just judgment of God, who "swore in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest." So in spiritual things unbelief leads to backsliding, and it may lead to the loss, not only of present peace, but of those joys to come which, in a yet higher sense, are foreshadowed by the promised land of Canaan.

One other word, specially to teachers. We have to report on "the land" to our classes. What report are we giving? Do our words and our lives unite in testifying to the *fact* that there is such a land, that it is an "exceeding good land," and that the God who has given it to us can give it also to them?

Seed-Thoughts for Senior Scholars.

1. Had the children of Israel any occasion for weeping at this time?
2. Is the most of human sorrow from real or unavoidable causes?
3. What should they have regarded as an offset to this bad report of the ten spies?
4. What should have given weight to the minority report.
5. How could they expect to get back into Egypt?
6. Did they actually appoint a leader to take them back? Neh. ix. 17.
7. Were the ten spies cowards or demagogues?
8. Wherein appears the debased spirit of the people?
9. To prefer their Egyptian bondage (not a year and a half out of it) to a struggle for God's fulfillment of promises to them, shows what?
10. Who *now* make dastardly reports of religion and its promised rewards?
11. Who are readily influenced by these reports?
12. What is the difference of view of obstacles, as seen by *real* and heartless Christians?
13. Why was God, and why is he so offended by such slanderous reports of his *promises* and *his aids*?
14. Are the *true* friends and saviors of good causes found among the *many* or the *few*?