

band of martyrs to whom reference is made in Heb. 11 ch., among whom might be mentioned Elijah, Elisha, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Amos, Zechariah, all of whom witnessed to the power of the truth in their lives and in their deaths (1 Kings 22: 24-27; Jer. 37: 15; 2 Chr. 24: 21; 1 Kings 18: 13; Neh. 9: 26; Acts. 7: 52).

II. THE REJECTED SON. 13. What shall I do?—Matters were assuming serious proportions. It was clearly evident that the sending of more servants would complicate rather than improve the condition of things. **Send my beloved Son**—"Having yet therefore one son, his well-beloved, he sent him also last unto them" (Mark 12: 6). The last opportunity given, and the greatest of all. (Heb. 1: 1, 2, R. V.) The measure of God's love to man (John 3: 16; Rom. 5: 8). **Will reverence**—Duly regard and respect him, accord him the honor due him as a son. **14. Reasoned among themselves**—Instead of receiving him gladly, they deliberately set to work to plan and to scheme. "The rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his anointed" (Ps. 2: 2). **Saying**—They give expression openly to their evil designs. **This is the heir**—They recognize him to be the heir and son, which makes their treatment of him entirely inexcusable. **Come**—Calmly, deliberately, and "with malice aforethought," they enter upon their fiendish plot. **That the inheritance may be ours**—In eastern lands it was the rule that if an occupier paid taxes for six years, and no owner could be found, he might claim the property. The chief priests wished to destroy Jesus in order that they might retain their power over the people (John 11: 47-53; Mark 15: 10). **15. Cast him out**—They rejected him. Jesus "came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John 1: 11). **Killed him**—"They filled up the measure of their iniquity by killing the heir." A vivid prophecy of what actually took place "in the eventful story of Israel."

III. THE REJECTED PEOPLE. 16. He shall come and destroy—Literally fulfilled with "terrible exactness" when Jerusalem was destroyed and the temple burned, 70 A. D., "after the most terrible siege on record; 97,000 were taken prisoners and 1,100,000 perished." (Peloubet). **Give the vineyard to others**—The Jews by their own act rejected the privileges and blessings offered them in "the Gospel of Christ," the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1: 16). Their rejection of Jesus led to their own rejection and dispersion: paved the way for the gospel being offered to the gentiles (Rom. 9: 26; 11: 11-17.) **God forbid**—Lit. "might it not be." An exclamation of horror at the very thought of such a crime, and the severity of its punishment. They were beginning dimly to realize that Jesus referred to them. **17. Beheld them**—It was a look full of meaning; he read their hearts. **Written**—In Ps. 118, the very psalm from which the "Hosannas" of two days before were taken. **The stone**—Jesus himself. The true foundation stone upon which the church of God, the body of true believers is built (1 Cor. 3: 11; 2 Tim. 2: 19; Acts 4: 12). **The builders rejected**—There is an old tradition, that the builders engaged on Solomon's temple laid aside one stone as useless, and it was not till the building was almost completed that they discovered the place for the rejected stone, as the "key" or "king" stone of the building. **The head of the corner**—The place of chief honor and distinction (Eph. 2: 20). **18. Shall be broken**—Christ alone is the foundation stone upon which Christian character must be built. Those who stumble at a suffering Messiah shall suffer great injury; but those that continue persistently to reject him will be utterly destroyed. **19. Sought to lay hands on him**—They were anxious to have him arrested that they might get quit of him; but "they feared the people." Guilty consciences make cowards of men.

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. *God has intrusted to each of us a vineyard.* The figure of a vineyard is often used in the Old Testament to represent the peculiar privileges of Israel. As God's peculiar people they enjoyed many special privileges. The same privileges are now given to all who have heard the gospel of Christ. Every one has a vineyard and must render to God a due return. We have only to consider a moment or two and our great privileges come to mind. National position and privileges which flow from it, religious privileges, ordinances of the gospel, the word of God with all the promises and rich blessings of the gospel dispensation. Think of our personal Saviour, pious parents, religious friends, the influence of the spirit, grand opportunities for spiritual growth, &c.

2. *God expects fruit from our lives.* In return for the privileges and blessings with which God has surrounded us, the opportunities

of getting good and doing good placed in our way, God has a right to expect the fruits of gratitude, love, obedience and consecrated service. For the blessings of the new life imparted, the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit in his indwelling power, God has a right to expect all that goes to constitute higher christian life. More devotion, more love, more perfect obedience, purer lives and more entire consecration of time, talents, &c.

3. *God's rightful claim is refused.* The action of these wicked husbandmen is only a type of the action of hundreds of impenitent sinners in the world to-day. They do not deny the claims of the Lord upon them; they will admit the reasonableness of the claims, but yet they will not yield themselves to the service of the Lord. The patience of the owner speaks to us of the marvellous mercy and wonderful forbearance and long-suffering of God towards