

III. Application.

1. Has God spoken to you or to your class in parables? Is there not in some recent event a divine message to your soul, or to the soul of some one of them, unnoticed by others? Think!
2. "At the season he sent." Do you note the spiritual seasons in the souls intrusted to you? Perhaps to-day you may speak the word in season that may save a soul.
3. "Again he sent." Did you yield your heart to the Lord the first time he called? Do you persevere in prayer for those who have often refused your invitations?
4. "Yet one, a beloved son." The last desperate exponent of divine love (John 3. 16; 1 John 4. 10, 16; Rom. 8. 32). Try to make this truth real to yourself and others.
5. The exaltation of Christ (ver. 10; Phil. 2. 9; Rev. 5. 12).
6. The whole lesson is a rare example of "speaking the truth in love" to prejudiced and hardened hearers.

English Teacher's Notes.

The passage and Golden Text for to-day are in striking contrast to those for last Sunday. Last Sunday we saw a king welcomed with rejoicing; to-day we see a Messenger rejected. Last Sunday gave us a glimpse of the kingdom of Christ, of his all-embracing claim, his all-subduing power, of his full recognition. But how is this recognition finally secured? In the case of an earthly monarch the recognition is brought about by outward success. The Stuarts—so-called "Pretenders," whose place on the throne of England was occupied by the Hanoverian dynasty—were by birth rightful kings. But they were unsuccessful. And therefore even many who had at first recognized them as such were forced to abandon their cause and to acknowledge another as king. It was by outward success that both Napoleon the First and Napoleon the Third secured their recognition by the French nation. When the tide of war turned against them they became simply usurpers. With the kingdom of Christ it was just the reverse. And the passage and Golden Text for to-day show us the tremendous nature of that outward defeat which secured his final recognition.

It shows us how his claim was met. The figure is changed here. He comes, not as a king, but as a Messenger from the owner of the vineyard, yet not as a simple messenger, but as heir to the inheritance. He comes after messenger on messenger has been sent in vain. And, as the heir, he "comes unto his own"—his own inheritance, which has been planted, and cared for, and watched over, and protected, that it may yield him fruit. And how is his claim to his own met? It is fully understood: "This is the heir." His claim is just. Yet they are determined not only to oppose it but to make away with him. And why? "That the inheritance may be ours." They know it to be his by right, but they will have it for theirs. This was the spirit of the Jewish rulers. The scribes and the Pharisees "sat in Moses' seat." They occupied the place of honor and of power (Matt. 23. 2-4, etc.). And they were determined to keep it. They would have the inheritance for their own. Hence their bitter opposition to our Lord.

It shows us how he was received. "His own re-

ceived him not." Instead of giving him the welcome and the homage that should have been accorded to the heir, the husbandmen treated the son of the owner as an enemy. From the first public appearance of Jesus at Jerusalem he was met by determined opposition (John 2. 18, etc.). The ruler who wanted to hear more from him dared not come to him by day (John 3. 1). All through his ministry his movements were dogged by foes (see Luke 5. 17, 21; 6. 2, 7; Matt. 12. 14, 24; 15. 1, 2; 16. 1; 19. 3; John 5. 11, 15, 16; 7. 1, 32; 8. 13, 59; Luke 11. 53, 54; 14. 2; 15. 2; 16. 14; 17. 20; John 10. 39; 11. 53, etc.).

It shows us how his power was kept in abeyance. The owner's son, knowing the hostility of the husbandmen, came nevertheless without guard or retinue. Jesus suffered himself to be taken and bound (see John 18. 4-12). He would not ask for "twelve legions of angels" (Matt. 26. 53). "Pilate could have had no power at all against him except it were 'given him from above'" (John 19. 11). None can take his life from him, but he laid it down of himself (John 10. 18). He resisted not. He was "led as a lamb to the slaughter." And so the terrible deed was done, and Jesus suffered "the death of the cross."

But this was how his universal recognition as Lord and King over all was to be brought about. Changing the figure, our Lord told the Jews that thus should the old prophecy be fulfilled, "The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner." The cross is the foundation of the kingdom. It is as the One who was crucified that he asks the sinner's trust, the forgiven one's love, the saved one's service. It is vain to think of receiving him as King in the heart till he has been received as Saviour.

Cambridge Notes.

(Mark 12. 1-12—Matt. 21. 33-46; Luke 20. 9-19.)

The narrative of Matthew should be examined to see the circumstances of this parable. The chief priests and elders, hoping to get some answer that might start a charge of blasphemy, demand of Jesus by what kind of authority he acted as a rabbi. His reply convicts them of degrading cowardice, veiled by professed ignorance upon a point which they were absolutely bound to have considered, as the religious leaders of the people. The parable of the two sons made them pronounce a verdict on themselves, their self-satisfaction too dense to let them understand the point. The parable which follows exposes them before the people. By revealing the wickedness of the meditated crime he would fain deter both leaders and people from incurring it: comp. Elshaz's warning to Hazael (2 Kings 8. 12). The two parables teach complementary lessons. In the first we see the despised and degraded doing God's work while the professed workers are idle; in the second, these teachers are indeed working, but for their own selfish ends, treating God's vineyard as their own private property. Primarily designed for the Jewish leaders, it will clearly fit "shepherds" in every age "who feed themselves," not God's flock. *V. 11. Began.* It was a fresh beginning because addressed to the people as well. *A man.* The details are taken from

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