

the usual provisions which were made for securing the produce of the vineyard. The hearers of Jesus would easily enough see that he meant to say that Jehovah had done enough to warrant the expectation that Israel would be an obedient and righteous people. **Husbandsmen.** As the tenants had full charge of the vineyard, so the rulers whom Jesus addressed were the acknowledged spiritual leaders of the people. **Went into another country.** Left the vineyard absolutely under the control of the tenants.

B. The Tenants (vers. 2-8).

2. The season. The harvest season. **A servant.** The representative of the owner. In the case of Israel, prophet (Zech. 1, 6), "my servants the prophets." **Husbandsmen.** The repetition of the word and its position in the Greek sentence mark it as emphatic. He made a demand upon those whose duty it was to respond. **Fruit.** The returns which he had a right to expect from his investment, and which the tenants had agreed to render. In the application "fruit," as so often in Scripture, represents righteous conduct.

3. Took him. Seized and held him. **Beat him.** Punished him as though he were an intruder. **Empty.** Without the fruit for which he was sent.

4. Again he sent. Thinking they would repent of their first impulse, and not repeat the outrage (Rom. 2, 4). **Him.** Emphatic; the second righteous demand is met with the same spirit as the first. **Wounded in the head.** Increasing cruelty. **Shamefully.** Insult added to injury.

5. Sent another. They certainly will not dare to persevere in their rebellion, now that the owner the third time insists on his rights. **Him they killed.** They mistook the leniency of the owner for weakness, and went a step further in their defiance (Psa. 50, 31; Eccl. 8, 11). **Many others; beating some, and killing some.** They adopted a settled policy of ignoring the rights of the owner. Compare the testimony of Jesus, uttered perhaps on the same day (Matt. 23, 34-37, 37). Recall Stephen's later testimony (Acts 7, 52).

6. He had yet one. One whom he could send. The language is striking. It indicates at once the wonderful long-suffering of the owner and the rank of his servant. He would expect no new result by sending a servant. There was indeed one left; but would he send him? It is loving forbearance reduced to its last extremity. **A beloved son.** Compare John 3, 35; Mark 9, 7, 11. What pathos must have come into the voice and face of Jesus as he uttered these words! The priests, scribes, and elders have the answer to their question now as to his authority (11, 28). He comes to the temple not as a servant, but as a Son, and speaks of the place as "My house" (11, 17). **He sent him.** Where their sin abounds his grace much more abounds (Rom. 5, 20). Love hopeth all things, love never faileth (1 Cor. 13, 7). "He spared not his own Son." **Last.** If this last expedient fails there is nothing more that mercy can do (Heb. 10, 36, 37). **Will reverence my son.** The bond-servants, though my representatives, were servants; but my son, as being the prospective owner and speaking in my name with peculiar authority, they cannot disregard.

7. Husbandsmen. Notice the emphatic repetition. They were not owners, they were men who were under obligation to heed the owner's command and attend to the righteous demands of the real proprietor. **The heir.** He will by-and-by take possession of the property himself. The bearing of this part of the parable would not be lost upon his auditors; the rulers at least knew that Christ was the Son of God. Before they asked they were well aware by whose authority he taught and cleansed the temple. **Come.** They promptly make up their minds what they will do (3, 6). **Let us kill him.** Jealousy, but no reverence. They have become accustomed to murder. Perhaps this last stroke will put an end to further demands upon them. Did not some of the rulers turn pale when Jesus thus calmly exposed to the people their secret thoughts? Elsewhere he acquaints them with the origin of their temper for assassination (John 8, 44). **Shall be ours.** In their infatuation they do not think that the owner himself may return. They rashly conclude that their brief success in the bribe-begging policy is to continue indefinitely. Paul had to blame the Jews for making the same mistake (Rom. 2, 5). If Jesus is put out of the way, no one will be left to enforce the inconsistencies of the hierarchy, and bribery, robbery, and hypocrisy will continue their undisturbed sway. So Jezebel and Ahab reasoned, 1 Kings 19, 2;

18, 17; Herod the Great, Matt. 2, 16; and Herod Antipas, Matt. 14, 3.

8. Took him. Treacherously seized him. **Killed him.** Wounding, beating, or shamefully murdering would not accomplish their purpose; his death alone would nullify his authority. Jesus mercifully shows the rulers what they are about to do, that they may repent before it is too late, if they will. **Cast him forth.** Would not allow him so much as a burial place on his own estate. To murder they added the indignity of exposure. They did not give him a decent burial. This casting forth from the vineyard represents the delivering up of Jesus to the Gentiles (chap. 10, 33), a fate peculiarly horrible to a Jew.

C. The Owner (ver. 9).

9. What.... will the Lord.... do? An appeal to the religious consciousness of the hearers. What sequel could be expected in such a case? Will the owner abandon all claim on his vineyard? Will the hearer abandon his claim if he were the owner? Would that be human nature? And will God do less than man may? Matthew tells us that the hearers at once gave answer as to what the owner would do (Matt. 21, 41). **He will come.** He will send no more representatives. He will come in his own majesty. He will not come asking fruit, but to administer punishment (Mal. 3, 2, 3). **Destroy.** Take their life. The righteousness of the act would make the word "kill" inappropriate. The destruction here prophesied began a few hours later, when the veil of the temple was rent (Matt. 27, 51), and was consummated (while some of the rulers were still living, doubtless) with the destruction of Jerusalem, A. D. 70, and the breaking up of the temple service. **Husbandsmen.** The word which reminds the reader of the duties which had been ignored appears yet again. **Unto others.** To other tenants. The Gentiles, Acts 13, 46. According to Luke (20, 10), the rulers replied, "God forbid."

II. The Application (vers. 10-12).

10. Have ye not read. They were professional experts in the Scriptures. **Even this.** Not to speak of other passages of less distinct import. From Psa. 118, 22, which was very familiar, as is shown by the fact that the common people had sung it at Jesus's entry two days before. Peter makes the same quotation only a few words in Acts 4, 11 and 1 Pet. 2, 7. **Stone.** A heavy stone, shaped and marked by the architect for a definite place in the structure. **Builders.** The rulers of the Jews; the "husbandsmen" of the parable. **Rejected.** Ignored, neglected, cast aside. **Was made.** By the power of God. **Head of the corner.** The cornerstone, without which the construction of a building cannot be properly begun. This was Paul's teaching (Col. 1, 18), "that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." He is to the Church what a corner-stone is to a building, a head to a body. The heir cast out of his vineyard is to be reinstated in the vineyard, and the husbandsmen themselves cast out and rejected. This is the note of divine triumph with which he concludes his answer to their question. They may destroy the temple of his body, but in three days he will raise it again (John 2, 19).

11. This. This corner-stone, not this placing of the stone, as the Greek plainly says. Jesus tells them in parabolic form that they are rebelling against one who, like the "beloved son" of ver. 6, came from God the Father. **Marvelous.** The corner-stone, Isa. 28, 16. Isa. 9, 6, "His name shall be called Wonderful." These very rulers complained (John 12, 19) that "the world had gone after him."

12. They sought. In Greek, they were seeking an opportunity to do so; that is, they were when this parable was uttered. Now that the parable had been spoken, the danger was that the people also would see that it had been addressed to the hierarchy. Any attempt on their part to arrest Jesus now would only reveal the fact that the hierarchy themselves recognized the application of the parable, and would place a powerful weapon in the hands of the people. A pretense on the part of the questioners that they saw nothing in this public rebuke, was their best policy. **To lay hold on him.** Not to lay their own hands upon him, but by stealth to secure evidence on which they could send their own officers to arrest him (John 7, 69). **They** tended to compromise him before the people, had been answered in a wholly unexpected way. An outward affectation of lagging interest in him was the best present policy.