prefer this latter on account of the explanation following :—‘go before,’—not *entirely without hope* for you, that you may *follow,* but *not necessarily implying* your following. The door of mercy was not yet shut fo them: see John xii. 35: Lake xxiii 34. The idea of ‘shewing the way’ by being their example, is also included. There were publicans among the disciples, and probably repentant harlots among the women who followed the Lord.

32.] in **the way of righteousness,** not only in the **way of God’s commandments,** so often spoken of, but in the very path of ascetic purity which you so much approve; yet perhaps it were better to let the simpler sense here be the predominant one, and take *righteousness* for ‘repentance,’ as Noah is called a *preacher of righteousness* (2 Pet. ii. 5) in similar circumstances.

**repent afterward** are words repeated from the parable (ver. 29), and serving to fasten the application on the hearers.

33—46.] PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD LET OUT TO HUSBANDMEN. Mark xii. 1—12. Luke xx. 9-19. This parable is in intimate connexion with Isa. v. 1 ff., and was certainly intended by our Lord as an express application of that passage to the Jews of His time. Both St. Mark and St. Luke open it with a *“began to speak…,”* as a fresh beginning, by our Lord, of a series of parables. St. Luke adds, that it was spoken *to the people.* Its subject is, of course, *the continued rejection of God's prophets by the people of Israel, till at last they rejected and killed His only Son.* **The householder planted a vineyard:** i.e. *‘selected it out* of all His world, and *fenced it in,* and *dug a receptacle for the juice* (in the rock or ground, to keep it cool, into which it flowed from the press above, through a grated opening), *and built a tower* (of recreation—or observation to watch the crops).’ This exactly coincides with the state of the Jewish nation, under covenant with God as His people. All these expressions are in Isaiah V. The *letting out to husbandmen* was probably that kind of letting where the tenant pays his rent *in kind,* although the fruits *may* be understood of money. God began about 430 years after the Exodus to send His prophets to the people of Israel, and continued even till John the Baptist ; but all was in vain; they “persecuted the prophets,” casting them out and putting them to death. (See Neh. ix. 26. Matt. xxiii. 31, 37: Heb. xi. 36—38.)

The *different sendings* must not be pressed ; they probably imply the *fulness and sufficiency of warnings given,* and set the longsuffering of the Householder; and the increasing rebellion of the husbandmen is shewn by their increasing ill-treatment of the messengers.

**37.]** See Luke ver. 18: Mark ver. 6. Our Lord sets forth His heavenly Father in haman wise deliberating, “*What shall I do?”*