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SERMON IV.

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LESSONS FROM THE LIFE AND END OF JUDAS ISCARIOT.

“It had been good for that man if he had not been born.”—MATTHEW 26 : 24.

SUCH is the alarming and astounding language of the Lord Jesus Christ respecting one of his disciples and apostles. The Messiah needed not that any should testify to him of man; for he knew what was in man. He searches the hearts and reins. He declares the end from the beginning. “Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.” Christ’s ministers are often deceived; Christ, never. He knows all things. He never was overreached. His eyes are as flaming fire. He easily detects the most specious pretenses. He knows all men, all hearts, all destinies.

The person here spoken of is Judas, whose surname is Iscariot. Judas, Juda, Judah, Jehudah, and Jude are all the same word, varied only in unimportant particulars. The word Judas literally signifies, the praise of the Lord. The name was common among the Israelites. One of Jacob's sons was called Judah. From him descended the tribe, within whose territory was Jerusalem, and from which arose the name of Jews. After the ten tribes broke off, Judah designated the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, while the rest were called Israel. One of the Maccabees, very renowned in history, was called Judas. Another of them, who bore the same name, suffered martyrdom under Antiochus Epiphanes. Besides these, there are several other persons of the same name, more or less noticed in Jewish history before the coming of Christ. After that we have an account of four men called Judas. One was Paul's host at Damascus. (Acts 9 : 11.) Another was surnamed Barsabas. He was sent with Paul and Barnabas and Silas to carry to Antioch the decrees of the Council of Jerusalem. This was itself a high honor. Luke calls him one of the "chief men among the brethren." (Acts 15 : 22.) Another was surnamed Thaddeus, or Lebbeus, or Zelotes. In Matthew 13 : 23, he is called the brother (or kinsman) of our Lord. He is thought to have been the son of Mary, the sister of the blessed virgin, and the brother of James the Less. If so, he was, according to the flesh, cousin-german to Jesus. His father's name was Alphaeus. The last epistle in the Bible bears the name of Jude, and was written by this man. The other Judas, mentioned as living in the first century of the Christian era, is the betrayer of our Lord, surnamed Iscariot. The word Iscariot is variously derived. Some say it is an abbreviation of Issachariothes, and simply declares that he was of the tribe of Issachar. Others derive it from two Hebrew words that unitedly signify, a man of murder. Others suppose that his surname simply shows that he was of the place called Carioth or Kerioth. This is probably the true explanation. Ish-Carioth or Iscariot is literally, a man of Carioth.

Of this man the fearful sentence is uttered by the Lord: "It had been good for that man if he had not been born." What language of terror! Well might any ears tingle at the sound. "What heart can conceive the awful and tremendous import of those words?" Let us consider the life and end of him of whom they were spoken. But before entering into the particulars of his history, a few general remarks are pertinent.

1. There is no evidence that Judas Iscariot was a man of bad countenance. Most men are much influenced by looks, and many think they can tell a man's character by the physiognomy. This may often be true; but there are many exceptions. The case of Judas was probably one. In paintings intended to represent him,

he is commonly distinguished by a sly, mean, cunning, malicious countenance. There is nothing in Scripture to warrant artists in so painting him, beyond the simple fact of his wickedness. For aught that appears to the contrary, he was a man of calm, free, open, placid, benignant countenance.

2. There is no evidence that, up to his betrayal of his Lord, his conduct was the subject of censure, complaint, jealousy, or of the slightest suspicion. Until the night when he committed the traitorous deed, his reputation seems to have been fair, and without the shadow of a blemish. He was not ambitious, as James and John on one occasion were. He was free from the characteristic rashness of Peter. His sins were all concealed from the eyes of mortals. He was a thief; but that was known only to Omniscience.

3. There is no evidence that, during his continuance with Christ, he regarded himself as a hypocrite. Doubtless he thought himself honest. He knew no other kind of sincerity than that which he possessed. He may have had solemn and joyful feelings under the preaching of Christ. He may have had very awful and tender thoughts when he himself was preaching. Such is man's self-ignorance, that it is probable not one in ten thousand who are hypocrites firmly believe that such is their character. Nay, it commonly happens, that the worse men are, the better they think themselves to be.

4. Let it not be supposed that Judas ought not to have known his character. He shut his eyes to the truth respecting himself. He voluntarily rejected evidence that would have convicted him at the bar of his own conscience. Self-ignorance is a great sin. It is fostered by pride and unbelief and impenitence.

The first mention made of this man is entirely creditable to him. He is introduced to us as one of the twelve, whom Christ chose as disciples and confidential friends, to be with him and hear his instructions, both public and private. We are not told that Christ ever availed himself of the absence of Judas to make any communications to the eleven, until the night of his betrayal. Peter, James and John were more with Christ than the others. But between Judas and the other eight there does not appear to have been any marked difference in the treatment which they received at the hands of the Saviour.

Having for some time been a disciple, the Lord ordained him with the other eleven to the office and work of an apostle. (Matt. 10 : 2-4 ; Mark 3 : 13 ; Luke 6 : 12.) Since the birth of Christ this is the highest office to which any mortal could attain. The gifts requisite for the performance of its duties were extraordinary and miraculous. They belong to no man now living. The proofs of an apostle were in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. (2 Cor. 12 : 12.) Every apostle must have seen the Lord. (1 Cor.

9 : 1.) There were in early times, as there are still, vain pretenders to this office ; but it is the duty and honor of the churches to expose their idle claims. (Rev. 2 : 2.) But Judas was an apostle, and performed the duties of his office as did his fellows. He preached, he healed the sick, he cleansed the lepers, he raised the dead, he cast out devils. One part of the apostolic commission required the shaking off of the dust from the feet as a testimony against those who would not receive them nor hear their words. It may be that Judas did this very thing, but there is no evidence that he was more denunciatory than others.

After the return of the apostles from their first mission, and after they had given an account of their success, there is nothing said of Judas, until James and John, at the instigation and through the instrumentality of their mother, applied for the superiority over their brethren. On this occasion, it is said : "The ten were moved with indignation against the two brethren." (Matt. 20 : 24.) Luke says : "When the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John. (10 : 41.) The records shows no difference between the behavior of Judas and that of the nine others. They all may have spoken of the wickedness of such ambition, and their remarks may have been very just. Judas may have been as temperate as the others. There is no evidence that he possessed a bitter or intolerant spirit beyond others, nor that he was often guilty of censoriousness. It is not at all improbable that Peter was more liable to reproof in this matter than Judas.

Soon after this, we find Christ warning his disciples against "the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." (Luke 12 : 1.) Judas may have improved this hint so far as to attack these arch deceivers, and to preach some very searching, alarming sermons. But as a matter of personal application to his own heart and conscience, the warning seems to have been wholly neglected. Like many modern hypocrites, he probably gloried in his sincerity. Even bold transgressors, who break all God's laws, often boast of their truth, candor and honesty.

Not very long after this, Christ made a more pointed declaration, which must have excited considerable attention. It was this : "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (John 6 : 70.) We are not left to conjecture who was intended, for the Evangelist adds : "He spake of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon : for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve." (John 6 : 71.) Some time after Jesus said : "Ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him : therefore said he, Ye are not all clean." (John 13 : 10, 11.) What effect these sayings may have had, we are not informed. But they do not seem to have provoked any uncharitable remarks. Even Judas seems to have remembered that Christ had said : "Judge

not, that ye be not judged." (Matt. 7 : 1.) But we do not learn that these warnings of Christ caused Judas to search his own heart. It is certain that they had no permanent, salutary effect ; though it is almost inconceivable that they should have been wholly powerless.

The next account we have of Judas respects his apparent regard for the poor. When the affectionate Mary anointed the feet of the blessed Jesus, Judas was there. Being treasurer of Christ's family, and acting without auditors, he had dishonestly used some of the funds for his own private purposes. Hence he is called "a thief." It is no where hinted, however, that he esteemed himself a rogue. He may have thought that he ought to have more than any other, as he had all the care of the fisc. He may also have deceived himself with idle plans of future restitution. There is no evidence that he fully condemned himself for a moment, though he may have had qualms and misgivings. When Mary anointed the Lord, Judas objected to such an expenditure, and on grounds quite plausible to some minds : "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?" (John 12 : 5.) This reasoning seems to have struck others, who were good men. Matthew says : "The disciples had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste?" And Mark says : "There were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and given to the poor. And they murmured against her." (Mark 14 : 4, 5.) How often are good men led astray by the specious pretenses of bad men. Judas cared not for the poor, but he coveted that money. He did not see what good it could do to anoint the Lord with so very precious ointment. It was not necessary for purposes of health. And Mary might have honored Christ in some other way. Besides, by giving the price of that ointment to the Lord, who regarded the poor as his friends, and who always gave alms when he could, there would have been no waste. We have much Iscariot charity in our day. No doubt many said of Judas : "What a kind heart he has to the poor. He never forgets them." We have modern economists, who love Christ no more than Judas, and who extol every thing that looks like saving money in efforts that are merely to honor Christ.

It is strange that the enemies of our Lord seem never to have thought of winning over any of his disciples. This is strong proof of the entire absence of suspicion respecting their fidelity. Accordingly they did not apply to any of the apostles to turn traitor ; but "one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to

betray him." (Matt. 26 : 14-16.) This is the account given by one Evangelist. That of Luke is much like it: "Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. And he promised and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude." (Luke 22 : 3-6.) It is probable these enemies of Christ were much surprised when they saw and knew Judas, and still more when they learned his errand. This was the moment of exultation to wicked men and apostate angels. They seem to have thought that at last they would ease themselves of him whose sermons and miracles had made such an impression. When Judas went to the chief priests, he probably expected to obtain several thousand pieces of silver, and thought thus to make his fortune. Possibly he intended to get his money, fulfill his bargain, and put his Master into their hands; but expected Christ immediately to deliver himself out of their power. Thus the traitor would have become a swindler. Whatever were his thoughts, he made the offer to betray him. The chief priests loved money, and understood bargaining. They probably saw in Judas an anxiety to hasten the matter. This would make them appear less careful in the business, until at length he sold to them the Lord of life and glory for thirty pieces of silver, a sum equal to £3 17s. 6d. sterling.

The bargain being made, the difficulty with Judas now was to fulfill his part of it. "And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him." Wickedness is troublesome. Probably Judas gave frequent assurances of fidelity in his covenant with the Jews, and would have pretended to be grossly insulted if any had charged him with a design of fraud. Sin fearfully blinds the mind, and hardens the heart. The devil seems now to have had full possession of Judas. He took no time, he had no heart for reflection. He may have kept up some form of prayer, but there was no sincerity in him or his devotions.

At the celebration of the Passover, Jesus said: "Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say, Lord, is it I? And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said." (Matt. 26 : 21-25.) When it is said, "They were exceeding sorrowful," the reference is doubtless to the others beside Judas. It almost broke their hearts to think it possible that they should prove traitors.

But although Judas, last of all, asked, "Is it I?" yet there is no evidence that he had any right feelings, but the contrary. As soon as Christ told him what he should do, Judas withdrew and sought his accomplices in wickedness. This exposure before the whole family of Christ seems to have stirred up the deepest malice, and Judas felt no longer any restraint from the decencies of the case.

Judas being gone, Jesus said: "Behold the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me. And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master, and kissed him." (Matt. 26: 45-49. See Luke 22: 47, 48, 49.) What a band was this! How bent on shedding innocent blood! How cold and impudent the malignity of the traitor! How enormous his guilt! One would have expected that at this moment hell would have felt such mighty raven for her prey, as to open wide her mouth and swallow him alive. But his cup is not yet full. Vile as he was, he would yet sin more and more.

The deed was now done. The bargain was fulfilled on both sides. Judas had put his Master into the hands of his murderers, and he had obtained his reward. Yes, he had in possession "the goodly price," as it had once seemed to him. But presently the silver began to lose its lustre, and the money its value. The price of blood began to be a torment to its possessor. The inspired record is brief but striking. "Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that Jesus was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? See thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself." (Matt. 27: 3-5.) No mortal can endure the fell gnaw of the undying worm. Judas found it so. That silver filled his soul with horrors intolerable. Of late he had greatly desired to get it, but now he throws it down in the temple, and calls upon the priests, the ministers of religion, for some alleviation of his distress; but they pay him no regard. They would not even receive back the price of his treason. Not believing in the value and efficacy of that blood which cleanses from all sin, not beholding in Jesus the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, not finding any sympathy from his accomplices, conscience wielding over his guilty soul the terrible sword of eternal and inflexible justice, and a hell burning within him, he hanged himself, and shot the awful gulf of death, and plunged into an undone eternity. "He went to his own place." "It had

been good for that man if he had not been born." It is as true of those who kill themselves, as of those who kill their neighbors, that "no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."

The aggravations of the sin of betraying Christ were many and great. The traitor was eminent in place, in gifts, in office, in profession; a guide to others, and one whose example was likely to influence many, and if evil, to give great occasion to the enemy to speak reproachfully. His sin had for its object the Lord Jesus Christ. It was an attack on God himself.

This sin admitted of no reparation, no restitution. It was against mercies, against convictions of conscience, against frequent and recent admonitions, against his ordination vows, against his own preaching, against all the rules of friendship, against all the bonds of discipleship. It was committed deliberately, willfully, knowingly, presumptuously, impudently, maliciously. It was perpetrated just after the most solemn and tender interview on record, just after being engaged in the most solemn rites of religion. It was of a scarlet dye and of a crimson hue.

Taking his own life was but adding iniquity to iniquity. He may have justified himself in his suicide, and thought that he had a right to do as he pleased with his earthly existence. Perhaps he thought also that hell itself could not be more intolerable than his present anguish. Miserable man! why wilt thou place the seal of immutability on thy own perdition, making thy doom irreversible, and putting thy soul beyond the reach of even the mercy of God? Oh! what a fiend is man without the grace of God! No natural amiability, no faithful instructions, no power of working miracles, no solemn sacraments, no tears and warnings can save any man from the vilest sins and the hottest hell. God's free, sovereign, eternal love can alone save any soul.

This subject is full of instruction, and teaches many salutary lessons. Let us not so far separate ourselves from Judas as to suppose that we are naturally better than he, or that if left to ourselves we will not prove that we are ready for any deed of wickedness. A monster of depravity was he. But all sin is horrible. And God would have us learn wisdom from the fall of the worst men in the world. Thus we may profit by the overthrow of the most infamous. The lessons taught us by the life and end of Judas are such as these.

Though wicked men do not so intend, yet in all cases they shall certainly glorify God by all their misdeeds. "Surely the wrath of men shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." (Ps. 76: 10.) The wickedness of Judas was by God overruled to bring about the most important event in man's salvation. Let the wicked never forget that their unbelief, impenitence, profaneness and persecution of the godly, all their sins of heart and life and tongue, shall in spite of themselves glorify God,

though it be at the fearful loss of their own souls. The wicked now hate God but they can not defeat him. If they will not be vessels to honor, they shall be vessels to dishonor. If they refuse to be useful in a cheerful service, they shall be useful in their own destruction. (Ezek. 15 : 1-8.)

Nor shall God's unfailing purpose to bring good out of evil abate aught of the guilt of those, who work iniquity. Judas' treason was all foretold and of course it was predetermined. Yet his accountability for his wickedness was unimpaired; for he acted freely in all he did. Men may clamorously assert, but they never can prove, that the divine purpose so interferes with moral agency as to impair human obligation to do right. "It is wonderful that thinking and studious men do not see, that the whole system of prophecy is a direct and full confutation of all objections, on this ground, against the doctrine of predestination. The predicted events can not possibly fail of accomplishment: they must therefore either be absolutely decreed by the all-wise God, or there must be some necessity which can not be overcome even by the Deity himself. The first is Christian predestination, the latter is heathen fatalism; but neither interferes with man's free agency and accountableness; for he still acts voluntarily, according to the prevailing inclinations of his heart." Judas acted with perfect freedom. He could not have had more liberty. Therefore his guilt remained. That which was true of the betrayer, was also true of the murderers of our Lord. (Acts 2 : 23 and 4 : 27, 28.)

From the history of Judas we also learn, that when a man is once fairly started in a career of wickedness, it is impossible to tell where he will stop. God's grace may arrest one in the maddest career, as it did Saul of Tarsus. But left to himself, man will dig into hell. The good providence of God mercifully restrains even the wicked, else existence on earth would not be desirable. Scenes of violence and blood, deeds of outrage and atrocity, words of hatred and blasphemy, and looks of fierceness and terror would appall us every hour, but that God lays his almighty hand upon the hearts of men and commands them to be still. Unrestrained, every heart would show its possessor a monster of wickedness. Passions, which now lie smothered, would, if let loose, rage and sweep every thing before them. Natural affection, the voice of conscience, public opinion, regard to reputation, and fear of the law, are happily employed by providence to hold men back. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will." (Prov. 21 : 1.) Even in this life many a poor sinner has been affrighted at the lengths which he had gone in crime and debasement, and has cried out in sore amazement: 'And have I come to this?' In the next world surprise awaits all the impenitent. "When they

shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." (1 Thess. 5: 3.)

All men should especially beware of covetousness. "The love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (1 Tim. 6: 10.) Of the truth of this teaching Judas was a fearful witness. No tongue, no pen can describe the sorrows which rolled over his soul. When men are eagerly heaping up riches, they are doing work for bitter repentance in this world, or in that which is to come. Even on earth "the covetous man heaps up riches, not to enjoy them, but to have them; and starves himself in the midst of plenty; and most unnaturally cheats and robs himself of that which is his own; and makes a hard shift to be as poor and miserable with a great estate as any man can be without it." Nor can he divine who shall be the gainer by all his toils. "He heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them." (Ps. 39: 6.) God has specially set himself to punish covetousness. It is idolatry. It is as true of this sin as of drunkenness, that in the end it biteth like the serpent, and stingeth like the adder.

Did men but know how bitter would be the end of transgression, they would at least pause before they plunge into all evil. Seneca said: "Malice drinks half its own poison." The same is true of all evil passions. The madness of men in rebelling against God is beyond a parallel in human history. They delight in iniquity, they roll it as a sweet morsel under their tongues, they risk all for it, and they lose all by it. Their hearts are fully set in them to do evil. Oh! that men would hear the warning words of Richard Baxter: "Use sin as it will use you; spare it not, for it will not spare you; it is your murderer and the murderer of the world. Use it, therefore, as a murderer should be used. Kill it before it kills you; and though it kill your bodies, it shall not be able to kill your souls; and though it bring you to the grave, as it did your Head, it shall not be able to keep you there." James says: "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." (James 1: 15.) Yet no man, without the grace of God, sees the evil of sin till it is too late. Folly is bound up in the soul of man, till God drives it away by the beams of the Sun of Righteousness.

In Judas' pretended regard for the poor, we see what foul wickedness may be covered with the most plausible pretenses. The same thing is seen in every age. By false names every virtue is depressed and every vice exalted. Pascal says: "One of the greatest artifices the devil uses to engage men in vice and debauchery is to fasten the names of contempt on certain virtues, and thus to fill weak souls with a foolish fear of passing for scrupulous should they desire to put them in practice." The man

who begs widows and orphans, and holds back the wages of the hireling, and lives by the distresses he brings on others, would fain persuade himself and his neighbors that he is prudent. Indeed, any pretext will satisfy a blind, stupid conscience. The great concern of the masses is to justify themselves before men. They little regard the tribunal of God. Yet the investigations of the last day will tear off all false pretenses, and sweep away every refuge of lies.

Nor should we forget that character may as well be learned from small as from great things. Judas' petty larceny was as good an index to his character as his treason. A straw will show which way the wind blows. Human character is not made up of a few great acts, but of a multitude of little things. Every-day conduct shows the man. Great events, in which we are actors, will fearfully expose us, if in small affairs we are unable to behave well. "He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little." (Ecclus. 19 : 1.) The failure of our virtue on great occasions is but an announcement to the world that we have been habitually coming short in our more private behavior. Little rills form the greatest rivers. The ocean itself is made up of drops of rain or particles of mist. A man is what his habits make him. He who can not resist a slight temptation will never gain the mastery over a grievous one. "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?" (Jer. 12 : 5.)

It is also manifest that bad men may for a long time appear well. To do so may cost them trouble, but may still be practicable. Through life they may have such a fear of exposure, and be so studious of appearances, as to deceive all around them. Even suspicion may not soil their fair name, and yet they may be in the gall of bitterness. Eschewing the vices of the debauched, they may practice the sins of devils. It is true that this class of transgressors have a hard task. They are always like one who has a rent in his garment, which he finds difficult to conceal. Truth is one and simple. Falsehood is multiform and complex. An honest blunderer is to be preferred before the most cunning knave on earth. A life of deception is full of hardship and uncertainty; and at its close, when amendment is impossible, the truth comes out, and in a moment damnation flashes in the face, and the poor soul enters on an existence full of misery. When God tears away the mask, disguise is no longer possible.

And yet bad men might know the truth concerning themselves if they did not hate it. Judas well knew his own theft, yet he refused to consider it a sin to be repented of. He had before his mind the clear evidence of his own hypocrisy, but he was not dis-

posed to give it its just weight. He hated the light, and did not come to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. When will men learn that concealment is not innocence? We may hide our sins from our own eyes, but until God casts them all behind his back they may rise up at any moment and overwhelm us. If men were not as unwise as they are wicked, they would not go to the bar of God with a lie in their right hand.

How small a temptation to sin will at last prevail over a vicious mind. For less than twenty dollars, Judas sold his Lord and Master. Those temptations commonly esteemed great are not the most sure to prevail. The ribaldry of the Philistines did not move Samson from his fidelity; but the blandishments of Delilah overcame him. Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. Many a man consents to lose a friend for his wit, yea, to lose his soul for a quibble. Men may sin until the mere force of habit, without any apparent inducement, seems sufficient to impel them to great enormities.

Nothing prepares a man for destruction faster than hypocrisy or formality in actions of a religious nature. The three years which Judas spent in the family of our Lord probably exceeded all the rest of his life in ripening him for destruction. So many, so solemn, so impressive truths were presented to his mind, that he must have become very rapidly hardened. "I have peace-offerings with me; this day have I paid my vows," (Prov. 7: 14,) said one who was now ready for the worst deeds. The reason why, other things being equal, apostates are so much more wicked than others, is that they have learned how to resist all good influences. They have tried the remedy, but first learned to render it ineffectual.

It is a small matter to be judged of man's judgment. The judgment of God, it shall stand; it is righteous, it is always according to truth. Man judges of the heart by appearances. God judges of appearances by the heart, and he judges of the heart by itself. The tribunal, from which there lies no appeal, will reverse a vast number of the decisions made by the tribunals of earth. Public opinion often errs. Individual judgments are as often erroneous. If men condemn and God approves, all is well. But if men acquit and God condemns, all is lost. He that judgeth us is the Lord.

We should never forget that official character is one thing, and moral character another thing. *All* official characters may be sustained without any real grace in the heart. Balaam's prophecies were as true and as sublime as those of Moses or Isaiah. So far as we know, Judas' performance of the duties of his apostolic mission was as acceptable and as useful as that of the majority of his brethren. Even success in preaching is not proof of piety. It is the message, not the messenger; the truth preached, and not

the man who utters it, that converts the soul. Piety is of infinite importance to every soul of man ; but a man who has no piety may yet do good. Neither the validity nor efficacy of ordinances depends upon the personal worthiness of the administrator. It would be very dangerous to teach that our acceptance in approaching God is rendered less certain by reason of the hypocrisy of him who comes to us in the name of the Lord. The apostles expressly denied that it was by their own power or holiness that they wrought miracles. If we must know the sincerity of any man who is our minister, we could never be sure that we had served God acceptably in any sacramental service. The efficacy and saving power of ordinances is from the Lord alone. And as worthy partakers of the Lord's Supper can not be hindered from receiving a blessing by the insincerity of the administrator, so neither can the unworthy receiver secure the blessing by the piety of his minister.

The history of Judas shows us how man will cling to false hopes. Hypocrites hold fast their delusive expectations with the utmost tenacity. There is no evidence that during years of hypocrisy Judas ever seriously doubted his own piety. There were many sure marks, indeed, against him ; but what cares any hypocrite for evidence? His own blind confidence is to him more powerful than all the truths of God's word. Because he is determined to believe his state good, nothing will convince him to the contrary.

If men thus self-confident forsake their profession, and openly apostatize, we need not be surprised. "It is impossible but that offenses will come." (Luke 17 : 1.) "There must also be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." (1 Cor. 11 : 19.) Open defections from truth and righteousness are no strange things. It has been so from the beginning. Jesus had his Judas. Peter must deal with Ananias, Sapphira and Simon Magus. Paul was in perils among false brethren, and Demas quite forsook him. We must expect those that are not of us to go out from us. If they were of us, they would no doubt continue with us. The wicked will do wickedly, though for a while they may seem to be righteous.

The case of Judas gives us the rule of admission to church-membership, and, so far as moral character is concerned, to church offices. We may require a credible profession of piety. Infallible evidence of love to Christ is not attainable. A profession of piety, accompanied by such evidence as a consistent life affords, is as much as we may demand. Our Saviour knew Judas from the beginning to be a bad man, "a devil;" but his omniscience, not the overt acts of Judas, taught him thus, and so he received him into the church, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps. Our Lord judged of the members of his church, not by what he as God knew of their hearts, but by their credible profession. The Master never did evil that good might come. He practiced

on the true rule. Let us seek no other. However painful our fears respecting the real characters of men, we must respect a profession of piety, not contradicted by the life.

Thus, too, we have a full refutation of the objection made to a connection with the visible church, because there are wicked men in her communion. The apostles certainly knew that among them was one bad man; but they did not therefore renounce their portion among Christ's confessed friends. And Christ himself held intercourse with Judas just as if he were all he professed to be. So that if one certainly knew another to be an enemy of God, and yet could not prove it to the satisfaction of impartial church authorities, this should not debar him from the Lord's table. If dogs will sometimes get the children's bread, that is no reason why a table should not be spread for the children.

And in all our dealings with men, it is better to be sometimes imposed on, than to be of a suspicious temper. "With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged." Sometimes we must put ourselves in the power of others. To suspect every man will make us unhappy, and commonly prove us to be unworthy of confidence ourselves. Even a wise man of the world once said: "Always to think the worst, I have ever found to be the work of a mean spirit and a base soul."

How difficult it is to bring home truth to the deceitful heart of man. Hypocrites are slow to improve close, discriminating preaching. They desire not to look into their real characters. It was not until all the rest had inquired whether Christ referred to them in foretelling his betrayal, that Judas said: "Lord, is it I?" Thorough, impartial, frequent self-examination is not the characteristic of any who are at heart unsound. In fact the reluctance of some to this duty is sad evidence against them. It costs them too much. Aversion to close, searching sermons is a bad mark in any man's character. Such preaching often afflicts the righteous more than the wicked, though the latter are the most sure to be offended. When Christ had exposed the miserable hypocrisy of many who followed him, it is said: "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." (John 6: 66.) They could not endure the truth. Yet Judas smothered up his feelings, and bore it all. He cared not so much for his feelings. He went after his covetousness.

Nor could one do a wiser thing than to inquire whether he has better evidence of piety than the great traitor had during his apostleship. Judas could heal the sick, raise the dead, and cast out devils. He was first a disciple, and then an apostle of our Lord. He often heard Christ preach. He held the only office of trust among the apostles. His reputation for piety stood as fair as any man's. His persuasion of his good state seems to have been so firm, that he hardly felt inclined to look into the grounds of his

hopes. He was not a drunkard, nor a swearer. He was not a captious hearer of the Gospel. Without a murmur he bore all the fatigue of his apostolic mission. He was not an envious man beyond others. He was not a slanderer, a reviler, a backbiter, a whisperer. He displayed no inordinate ambition. He was not a brawler, nor a violent and outrageous man. And yet he was not a child of God. Mere negative goodness, mere freedom from open vice, proves no man an heir of glory. It is true there was sufficient evidence against Judas, but he willingly overlooked that. If many men had as good evidence against their enemies or their neighbors, as they have against themselves, they would speedily pronounce them hypocrites.

The case of Judas discloses the uselessness of that sorrow of the world which worketh death, hath no hope in it, and drives the soul to madness. It is not desperation, but penitence, that God requires. Regrets without hatred of sin are useless, both on earth and in hell. They avail nothing in time, nothing in eternity. When it is said Judas repented, the word translated, *repented*, is not the word used by inspired writers to express godly sorrow, or saving repentance. There is much sorrow that does but prepare men for other and more dreadful deeds.

In the case of Judas we have also a fearful example of the terrible judgment of God against the wicked. As he loved cursing, so it came unto him; as he delighted not in blessing, so it was far from him. As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment, so it came into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones. God's judgments are still abroad in the earth. Of all judgments, those which are spiritual should most alarm us. To have eyes and not see, to have ears and not hear, to have hearts and not understand, to hold the truth in unrighteousness, to be forsaken of God, to be given over to believe a lie—these are among the direst curses that fall on men in this world; and they are sure forerunners of God's sorest plagues in the world to come. And how fearful must it be to fall into the hands of the living God, when on earth a drop of his wrath will make men choose hanging rather than life. And how dismal must be the prospects of all who die in their sins, when they shall have for their companions Judas and all evil-minded men, the devil and his angels. The society of the damned is good ground of earnestness in fleeing from the wrath to come.

The doctrine of universal salvation has no countenance in Scripture. It is disproven by many express declarations, and by many fair and necessary inferences. It is disproven by the case of Judas. If, after many thousand years of suffering, he shall rise to everlasting happiness in the skies, it will be good for him that he was born. Eternal happiness far outweighs all temporal suffering, however protracted. Any existence which terminates in eternal

glory will prove a blessing beyond all computation. All temporal suffering can be gauged. But who can fathom the sea of love, the ocean of bliss, made sure to all believers? And eternal misery is as dreadful as eternal glory is desirable. Oh! how fearful must be the doom of the incorrigibly wicked, when in their case existence itself ceases to be desirable, or even tolerable! It is true of every one who dies without repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, that **IT HAD BEEN GOOD FOR THAT MAN IF HE HAD NOT BEEN BORN.**

SERMON V.

BY REV. WALTER CLARKE, D.D.,

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THE REIGN OF THE SAINTS.*

"AND the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High."—DANIEL 7: 27.

THIS is part of Daniel's prediction concerning the order of empire in the Christian ages. In a previous vision, the prophet had seen the world, with all its races, interests, institutions, and destinies, made over to Christ, the universal King. "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, and nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

But, as this great empire, and every part of it, was then in alien hands, Daniel was permitted to complete the vision, and, by a second revelation, beheld the historic transfer of races, and governments, and trades, and destinies, to their appointed owner—the King of kings and Lord of lords. These prophetic para-

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