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IS THERE HOPE FOR JUDAS?

Wisconsin.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL: – In reading the article on Venial and Mortal Sins in the TOWER for June 1, '96, I found a statement on page 122 which, if it is true, would seem to show that Judas' case is not a hopeless one. The statement is as follows: "On the contrary, those who have sinned wilfully and with full intent, and whose sin is mortal, do not feel penitent; but afterwards approve their sin and boast of it generally as greater light and liberty." This does not seem to be true in Judas' case. He repented of his sins, and that his repentance was sincere is shown by the fact that he restored to the Priests the money for which he had betrayed Jesus, and confessed to them that he had sinned, and in his despair went and hanged himself. – Matt. 27:3,4,5.

In the article on Judas' case in the TOWER for April 15, 1896, one of the reasons given for believing [R2283 : page 102] that Judas' case is a hopeless one is our Lord's statement in Matt. 26:24. It seems to me that Jesus could not have meant that it would have been better for Judas never to have lived, as this could not be true. For even the short span of life he did enjoy was better than no existence at all. May the meaning not be that it would have been better for Judas if he were not born *yet*? This seems to be the meaning in the Diaglott translation of Matt. 26:24. It certainly appears that Judas did not expect that the Jews would be able to capture Jesus and condemn him to death. For if that was what he expected and desired, then he would not have repented of his sin. In John 17:12 Jesus calls Judas "the son of destruction." This would tend to prove that Judas' case is a hopeless one. But we find that Jesus applies just as strong names to the Scribes and Pharisees. He tells them they are of their father, the devil, calls them serpents and generation of vipers, and asks how they can escape the damnation of Gehenna. So it would seem that if Judas has died the second death, at least some of the Scribes and Pharisees must also have

suffered it. Judas' case resembles somewhat that of the lady, described on page 41 in the booklet on Spiritism, who had permitted the evil spirits to get control of her will and lead her to wrong a dear friend, and then make her believe she had committed the unpardonable sin. She, too, would have killed herself as Judas did, if she had not been prevented. From what is stated in John 13:2,27, it would seem that Satan was the evil spirit who led Judas to betray his Savior.

Hoping you will kindly help me to get a correct understanding of this question, I remain,

Yours in the Redeemer,

R. A. LINDBLAD.

We give the brother's argument space because it is as good as we have ever seen on that side the Judas question.

Some twenty years ago we were inclined to think that *all* must come to a *full* knowledge of *all* truth ere they could be liable to the Second Death; but we have come to the conclusion from the general tenor of Scripture that this is not the Lord's view and plan. On the contrary, deliberate and intelligent rejection of the first principles of the gospel seems to imply an unfitness for further favors on the ground that he that is unfaithful in that which is least, would be unfaithful also with more. Adam's knowledge of the divine plan was very slight, yet his disobedience brought full death penalty. The real grounds for sympathy with and hope for the masses is the Apostle's statement that Satan has blinded their minds, – misinterpreted the facts. All such will by and by "see out of obscurity" when Satan shall be bound – during the Millennium.

We confess little hope for the Scribes and Pharisees who, when they could find no other fault, ascribed our Lord's good works to the devil. As for Judas' tears, – were they better than those of Esau (Heb.

12:17)? Did his repentance lead him to a *renewed* and reformed life, or to self destruction? – Heb. 6:6.
