

WAS JUDAS A HYPOCRITE?

IT IS DIFFICULT for any noble minded person to read the account of Judas' course without feeling a sense of righteous indignation – a disgust for the baseness of character which could thus betray, for thirty pieces of silver, the one whom he recognized as the noblest of men, whether or not he was sure that Jesus was the Messiah. It may not be amiss here to reflect that Judas did not reach this depth of iniquity suddenly, but rather that the disposition toward unrighteousness had grown upon him during the three years of his intimacy with the Master, when the reverse disposition should have had control.

At the time he was chosen to be an Apostle he was evidently a good man, so far as outward appearance, at least, was concerned; and his name, which signifies "Praise," would seem to indicate that his parents had been of a religious cast of mind and had wished and, so to speak, had prophesied of him that he would be a messenger of God to sound forth His praise. And what a privilege and opportunity he enjoyed in this direction!

From the meager mentionings of the Gospel records we may reasonably infer that the beginning of his downfall was the harboring of a love of money. Instead of rebuking this wrong spirit and seeking, on the contrary, to cultivate generosity, love and benevolence, he permitted selfishness to have control, more or less, in his heart and life. We may surmise that he chose the office of treasurer for the little company, whereas, had he been sufficiently alive to his own weakness, his proper course would have been to refuse it, realizing that already he had too much love of money, and that the handling of the funds might prove a temptation to him. But on the contrary, he sought and obtained the office, and carried the bag with the money put therein; and the Apostle John tells us that he was a thief. (John 12:6.) This passion for money, like all other abnormal propensities of our fallen

nature, grew stronger as it was encouraged and cultivated, until finally it knew no bounds and he was ready to *sell his loving Master, Messiah*, for thirty pieces of silver!

Probably Judas had made the same profession of consecration as did the other disciples: "Lo, we have left all to follow Thee; what, therefore, shall we have?" And, with the others, he had left all, and perhaps, in a certain way, was very sincere and recognized that this was the Messiah. But Judas had a business turn of mind. He wished to be associated with such a great Kingdom as the Messiah would set up. So there was a measure of selfishness connected with his consecration. Perhaps this is true with *all of us*. We are all sure that the Lord has a Kingdom and we hope to have a share in it. But this thought should be secondary. Our merit should be of a higher order than merely a desire for reward for service.

As treasurer of the disciples Judas looked out to get a good share for himself, to "feather his own nest." In the case of the ointment used for our Lord by Mary, he said, That ointment is worth a great deal of money, and it should have been put into the treasury instead of being poured on Jesus' head. "This he said because he was a thief and carried the bag."

So it seems that this spirit of avarice grew upon him. As matters progressed he began to see that things were not reaching the culmination for which he had hoped and looked. Probably he was one of those who said, at least in his heart, "If Thou do these things, do them publicly, so that others may see." This would seem to have been the spirit of Judas and of many others. They wanted Jesus to do the things that would establish Him with the people. We can imagine their saying, "Ask some thousands to come and see the raising of some one from the dead, and have a good demonstration," etc. But nothing of this kind was done. Each miracle was performed by our Lord in a quiet way.

Probably Judas began to think that Jesus could not manage affairs nearly so well as if He would allow Judas to "coach" Him a little. As time passed, he began to keep some of the money. Perhaps he thought, "Now things are not coming out very well. I will keep some of this money for the disciples and Jesus for a rainy day." But he was really thinking about Judas.

THE NECESSITY OF JUDGING OURSELVES

By following a similar course of reasoning many people persuade themselves that they are trying to help others, when really they are looking out for their own interests. Hence there is a necessity for judging ourselves. The new creature should get the old creature into a corner and cross-question him: "Why do you act thus and so? Are you sure that you did not have some *selfish* motive in this matter?" If Judas had thus examined himself it would have been better for him. But not having done so, he drifted farther and farther away from a right spirit. Finally he went to the chief priests and said, "What would you give me if I were to give Jesus over?" They said, *So* much. Then he turned the matter over in his mind for several hours. So when he was in the "upper chamber" his mind was abstracted, and he sat quietly watching what the others were doing. **[R4906 : page 404]**

When our Lord washed the feet of His Apostles, before partaking of the Passover Supper, He intimated that as they had bathed (in accordance with the Jewish requirement of the putting away of all filth at the beginning of the Passover season) they merely needed now the rinsing of their feet, the cleansing of the members that had come in contact with the earth. "He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet to be clean every whit." (R. V.) Our Lord added, referring to Judas, "Ye are clean, but not all." This expression shows us very clearly that He had in mind a higher cleansing, of which this washing of their feet and their previous bath were but the figures.

The Lord knew that the hearts of His disciples were loyal. He had accepted them as His disciples and had reckonedly imputed to them

the merit of His sacrifice as a covering of their blemishes, the full testimony of which would be given them by and by at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit testifying that the Father had accepted the Lord's atoning sacrifice on their behalf. There was one, however, of the number whose heart was not clean. Our Lord did not pass him by, but washed the feet of Judas with the rest, knowing the while of his perfidy, and that he had already bargained with the chief priests and was merely awaiting the opportune moment for the carrying out of his malevolent scheme.

Our Lord's words, although not understood by the rest, must have been appreciated by Judas, as were His subsequent words. Our Lord went so far as to quote the very prophecy which marked Judas and his disloyalty, his violation of even the common hospitality. (Psa. 41:9.) None of these things moved Judas; none of these things appealed to his heart in such a manner as to change his course. We have thus strong evidence of the wilful intention which marked his crime and makes clear the meaning of our Lord's words when He called him the "son of perdition," and declared that it would have been better for him if he had never been born.

**"MINE OWN FAMILIAR FRIEND HATH LIFTED UP
HIS HEEL AGAINST ME"**

While they were at supper Jesus, appearing very sorrowful, gave as an explanation that it would be one of His own chosen twelve that would betray Him and thus become accessory to His death – one of those who dipped with Him in the dish, partaking of the same supper, the same bread, the same roasted lamb. Then He pointed out that although this was all written (Psa. 41:9), and thus no alteration would be made in respect to the Divine Plan, nevertheless it signified a very gross breach of friendship – one sad to contemplate. It really made no difference to the Lord, so far as His intention and His consecration were concerned, whether He were apprehended by the rulers without any betrayal, or whether betrayed by a comparative stranger or by a

disciple. The fact would make no change in the Divine arrangement; but it was a cause of great sorrow to the Lord that the traitor should be one who had been a bosom friend and disciple. [R4907 : page 404]

Amongst the Jews and Arabs deceit and betrayal were not uncommon; but there was a code of honor recognized according to which no one would eat the food of the person whom he sought in any wise to injure. As food was seasoned with salt, it was probably this custom, of being faithful to those with whom one ate, that was known as the "covenant of salt" – the covenant of faithfulness. To succeed in having an enemy eat at one's table or partake of one's food seasoned with salt was amongst that people equivalent to a pledge of lasting friendship – that he would never do his host injury. Apparently Judas was so lacking of a proper spirit that he did not even acknowledge and obey the custom of his time – to be loyal and faithful to the one whose bread he ate, of whose salt he partook; hence our Lord's words, "He that dippeth his hand with Me in the dish, the same shall betray Me."

When Jesus passed the sop to Judas, he perhaps understood in some measure our Lord's meaning; but the other disciples did not understand. They thought that Jesus was telling Judas to get in his proper provisions before the stores would be closed. But Judas may have thought thus: "Jesus has intimated that I will betray Him. I had not intended to do this, but now I will show Him. I know, of course, that He can get away from those officers; but I am treasurer of this company, and I will show Him something. While I do not believe they could ever take Him, yet the experience will be a good lesson. He will see henceforth that it will be better for Him to go ahead. This thing has been dallying too long. It needs a business push behind it. So here goes!" Thus Judas reasoned, and he carried out his part. No doubt Judas expected that Jesus would escape. Not for a moment did he expect that Jesus would suffer; for when he found that his plan had carried out and that Jesus would be crucified, he went and hanged himself, and then fell headlong, at the breaking of the rope.

"BETTER FOR THAT MAN IF HE HAD NOT BEEN BORN"

Jesus testified that His death would not be a victory on the part of His betrayer and His enemies, but in harmony with what had been written of Him by the Prophets. Nor are we to consider that Judas was simply fulfilling a prophecy irrespective of His own responsibility, his own wilfulness in the matter. Such a thought is negated by our Lord's statement, "Woe unto the man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It would have been better for that man if he had not been born."

This statement implies to us that, from the Lord's standpoint, Judas had already experienced so large a measure of knowledge and opportunity for better things that his responsibility for his act was complete, and that there would be no hope for him at any time in the future. These words leave no question, we think, that Judas had already enjoyed his full share of the great atonement work through the intimate association with our Lord and the abundant opportunities he had of coming into a clear knowledge of the truth, and the corresponding responsibilities. From our standpoint Judas sinned against great light. Evidently his was the "sin unto death" – the "Second Death." Hence, aside from any future existence, we are to consider that his life was a useless, wasted one, and that its joys did not overbalance its sorrows and anguish when to the latter were added his despair and suicide. Judas' end was a sad one. Every suicide, by his act, confesses his wish that he had never been born.

While Judas lived prior to Pentecost, we are to remember that he was one of the twelve upon whom Jesus had specially conferred a measure of His spirit – such a measure as enabled him, with the others, to perform miracles of healing, casting out devils, etc., *in the name of the Lord*, as *His representative*, using *His power*. The position of Judas, therefore, was one of special closeness to the Lord and to His personal instruction, both by precept and example. We remember our Lord's words to His disciples, "To *you* it is given to know the mysteries

of the Kingdom; but *to them that are without* these things are spoken in parables."

All this privilege, opportunity, knowledge, contact, made Judas specially responsible. But his crime would [R4907 : page 405] have been inexcusable had it been against any ordinary person, and it was seriously intensified by being a crime against Him who spake and acted as never man spake or acted before. From this standpoint our Lord's declaration that Judas was the "son of perdition" seems to have special import or weight, as implying that Judas had enjoyed a sufficiency of light and knowledge of righteousness to constitute a trial, and that his deliberate sin against such light and knowledge meant the Second Death.

But while hating such a character, loathing it, despising it, and seeking to go as far as possible in an opposite direction in our own characters, we are not to overlook the fact that there are amongst the Lord's professed disciples some who, in a less degree, commit a crime very similar to that of Judas; they sell their Lord, they betray Him, while professing to love Him! True, this cannot today be done in the same literal and personal manner, but the spirit of it may be seen occasionally, we regret to say; we find some who really believe in Jesus, some who have consecrated their lives to be His followers; some who have been engaged in the ministry of His Truth, as Judas was there, but who are willing to sell the Lord for a mess of pottage – for good things of this present life – for a salary, for social position, for honor amongst men, for popularity and titles; who are willing to sell even their lips, as Judas did; so that while professing to honor and serve the Lord they are willing to join with those who misrepresent His character, His Plan, His Word – willing to join with those who seek to assassinate the Lord.

Ah, how well it is that each one ask himself the question raised upon the night of the Supper, "Lord, is it I?" And let none be too ready to excuse himself; but let each search earnestly his own heart and life

and conduct to see that He is not in any way sacrificing the Truth and the Life for any consideration whatever.

More than thirty 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 the Scriptures 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 in *more*.

Adam's knowledge of the Divine Plan was very slight; yet his disobedience brought the death penalty. The real grounds for sympathy and hope for the masses is the Apostle's statement that Satan has blinded their minds, misinterpreted the facts. (2 Cor. 4:4.) 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 – they were no better than those of Esau. (Heb. 12:17.) His remorse led him, not to a renewed or reformed life, but to self-destruction. – Heb. 6:6.

PETER, THE IMPULSIVE – JUDAS, THE DISLOYAL

While Judas betrayed our Lord, another disciple, an intimate friend and companion, denied Him. Peter's case we remember well. A good man, of strong character, he realized not his danger, and hence was not prepared for the arts of Satan, by which he was placed in so trying a position that his boasted courage fled, his wonted strength of character vanished, and he denied his Lord even with profanity! What a lesson to us of human frailty! How we ourselves might be overtaken and ensnared by the wiles of the Devil! How much each one needs to watch and pray lest he enter into temptation – lest he succumb to

temptation! How much we need to remember the prayer the Lord gave us for an example: "Abandon us not in temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One!"

That was a fateful time for *Judas!* If the Adversary could so juggle, deceive and mislead the true-hearted Peter, because he was off his guard in watching and praying, what might we not expect he would be able to accomplish with Judas, whose heart was not right, who was selfish, self-seeking, ambitious, covetous! We do not wonder that Satan's victory over Judas was soon accomplished – that he fell quickly into the snare of the Adversary, and lent his heart and energy to the betrayal of the Master, for thirty pieces of silver! His case was very different from that of Peter, the loyal, the true, for the moment bewildered, off guard and fearful. Although the danger was the same in either case, their hearts were in different conditions.

Is it not so with all the Lord's followers? Is not this the secret of the results of temptation as they surely come to each one of us? The Judas class of today and always are those who, when temptation comes, receive it, entertain it, enter into the spirit of the ambition or otherwise strong allurements, and are swallowed up by it. The Peter class has also been with us ever since; and today even the true-hearted, not sufficiently watching and praying and on guard against the Adversary's allurements, are at times taken unawares, and for a moment dishonor, not only the Lord, but their own hearts and consciences also.

The difference between these two classes is in the heart condition; the Peter class do those things which they do not wish to do, and their difficulty lies evidently in the weaknesses of their flesh, in the power of the Adversary, **[R4908 : page 405]** and in their failure to lay hold upon the help which the Lord has promised, the succor in their time of need.

The Judas class, on the contrary, are those whose hearts are not loyal, but selfish, and who, therefore, enter into the Adversary's

schemes heartily, and are not, in their wrong course, going contrary to their own wills, but in harmony therewith. The difference in God's sight is seen in that, *although both Peter and Judas were penitent*, the one was accepted back to Divine favor, but the other was not. The one who was merely entrapped, but who at heart was not disloyal, was restored and blessed; the other, though not without conscience, as shown by his later remorse, was without the genuine loyalty of heart which in the Lord's sight is indispensable, and the absence of which, considering Judas' intimate acquaintance with the Lord, was inexcusable.

The Lord's words to Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat; but I HAVE PRAYED FOR THEE, THAT THY FAITH FAIL NOT" (Luke 22:31,32), give us the assurance that, because of this difference in the hearts of the two men, our Lord could properly be the Advocate of the one before the Father, but not the Advocate of the other. He could stand for and represent the one who at heart was loyal to Him, however weak his flesh, however careless he might have been of the Divine provision for his protection. He was still one of the Lord's sheep, and therefore subject to the Shepherd's care. He was still of the Lord's members, subject to the oversight and interest of the Head. He was still a member of the Lord's espoused virgin Church, whom our Lord loved and for whom He gave His life and for whom, therefore, He might properly make supplication as the betrothed Bridegroom.

But in the case of Judas, his heart being alienated through selfishness, any appreciation and love which he [R4908 : page 406] possessed for the Lord at the beginning of His ministry had evidently died, swallowed up of selfishness and ambition; and into that heart, thus fully withdrawn from the Lord, we are told that Satan entered. By thus willingly withdrawing his heart and strength and consecration from the Lord, and lending the same by deliberate intention to self-seeking, he became a tool of the Adversary. As our

Master said, "It must needs be that offenses come (that He should be crucified), but woe unto that man by whom the offense cometh!"

THE HARVEST A TIME OF SEPARATION

Although we know in advance that none of the Lord's disciples, true at heart, will be plucked out of His hands by the Adversary, nevertheless we fancy that we can sympathize to some extent with our Lord's feelings when He exhorted the disciples, "Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation."

True, Jesus knew who it was that should betray Him, and was, therefore, neither surprised nor disconcerted because of Judas' course; and yet, undoubtedly, the thought that one who had eaten bread with Him should "lift up his heel against Him" (John 13:18) must have had a saddening effect upon our dear Master, who could assuredly have pity for even His bitterest enemies as well as those who, Peter like, fail at first to withstand the Adversary's assault, but who subsequently are recovered by Divine mercy and aid.

Since the Body of Christ is *one*, and since our Lord declares that whatsoever is done to one of the least of His members is done unto Him, it follows that the Judas class and the Peter class, all down through the Gospel Age to the present moment, have been betraying or denying the Lord in proportion as they have betrayed or denied His members. We, therefore, should note the significance of His statement to Peter, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not!"

For all of the Peter class the Lord is the Head, the Representative, the Advocate before the Father. Without His aid, without His appearance for us and the application to us of the merit of His own sacrifice, none of us could stand; all would be judged unworthy, unfit to have part or lot in the great blessings which the Lord has invited us to share with Jesus. And as the Master prayed for such, and now intercedes for such, and makes good their unwilling imperfections, so should all who have His spirit feel kindly, generously,

sympathetically, and speak helpfully to the Peter class. But as the Master had no such words of sympathy for Judas, the open and premeditated enemy and traitor, so likewise, whatever our sorrowful feelings for such may be, there is no room for any expression of sympathy or co-operation in their evil work, as for any of the Apostles to have co-operated with Judas would have meant a share in his evil deeds.

However much sympathy we may feel with Peter and others of similar character and experience, however much we may rejoice with him that the Lord prayed for him so that his carelessness in watching and praying for himself did not result in his undoing and his loss of relationship to the Lord – nevertheless, we should strive not to be of the Peter class, but of the class represented by the Lord Himself. Let us be of the watching, praying, faithful kind, who will not be overtaken by the Adversary's temptations of the present time.

We are in the Harvest of the Gospel Age; the separation of the wheat from the tares is due; and, more than this, the separation of the chaff from the wheat is also due – a sifting process. While this figure may to some extent have fit the experiences of the Church in the past, we are sure that it specially applies to the Church in the "ends of the Ages" – to those who were living in the end, or harvest, of the Jewish Age, and to those who are now living in the end, or harvest, of the Gospel Age. And our Lord is pleased to permit these siftings; they are necessary, apparently, that the Judas class may be entirely sifted out, and that the Peter class may be so thoroughly stirred up by the trials and difficulties and realization of their own weaknesses, and the knowledge that they would utterly fail without the Lord's sustaining grace, that these lessons may prove profitable to them, developing in them more of meekness, watchfulness, prayerfulness and trust in their All-Powerful Head.

WHY JUDAS' CASE IS HOPELESS

Heretofore we have pointed out that during this present Age (the Gospel Age, or Spirit Dispensation), the world of mankind is not liable to the Second Death: (1) Because this Age is for the *Church's trial* and not for the *world's judgment*, or trial; (2) Because now the world has not that degree of enlightenment which would involve the full, extreme penalty of God's Law, the Second Death; (3) Because the inspired Apostle declares that now Satan is exercising a blinding, deceiving influence upon all except true believers (2 Cor. 4:4; Rev. 20:3), and that "the *natural man* receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, *for they are foolishness unto him*, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." – I Cor. 2:14.

These conclusions from the Scriptures in general are so abundantly confirmed by the statements of Heb. 6:4-8 and 10:26-31, in which the Apostle warns the Church that wilful sin, or apostasy, on the part of those who have enjoyed the privilege of consecrated believers – those who have tasted of the good Word of God, and the powers of the Age to come, and who have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit – as to leave hopeless the case of such. It will be found *impossible* to renew such, for there remaineth no longer any part *for them* in the sacrifice for sin. They *have had and have misused their share* in the great "ransom for all."

We have called attention to the fact that *the world in general*, even in civilized lands, *has had no opportunity to sin after the example of wilful apostasy*, described by the Apostle. And it is well to note that this *sin unto death* on the part of believers is not at all the same as the missteps and stumblings which may occur in the path of any through weakness of the flesh (Gal. 2:11-14), and which are among the sins which may be repented of, reformed from, and forgiven. – I John 2:1; 5:16.

In view of the above, and of our further claim that the Spirit Dispensation began at Pentecost, after our Lord was glorified (John

7:39), some have wondered that we teach that Judas' case is a hopeless one, since his sin and death were before Pentecost. We are asked to explain this seeming inconsistency.

We answer, the period of the *Lord's presence* at the first advent – from His baptism to His ascension – differed from the period after Pentecost, throughout this Age, in which believers walk *wholly by faith* and not *by sight*, even as the Millennial Age will differ from the Gospel Age.

In the Millennium knowledge and responsibility will no longer be confined to the spirit-begotten, for it is written, "The earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea [knowledge ocean-deep]"; "All shall know Me [Jehovah] from the least unto the greatest." – Isa. 11:9; Jer. 31:34.

It will no longer be the rule that the consecrated must "walk by faith and not by sight," for the consecrated of that time, while no doubt still having room for the exercise **[R4908 : page 407]** of faith, will, to a very considerable degree, walk by sight. It will no longer be true that Satan, the god of this world, will blind and deceive all except believers, for Satan will be bound and can deceive the world no longer; and "this world" [Age] shall then have given place to "the world [Age] to come," "wherein dwelleth righteousness"; and "all the blind eyes shall be opened." – Heb. 2:5; 2 Pet. 3:13; Isa. 35:5.

When knowledge is thus general, the possibility of sinning wilfully against great light will be general. Whosoever will may then accept the Divine favor and use the Divine aids, and attain to perfection and life everlasting; and whosoever will may intelligently reject God's favor in **[R4909 : page 407]** Christ, and die the Second Death – the everlasting death, the hopeless death.

Now let us return to the case of Judas, and consider the conditions which obtained at the time of his trial and failure, in the period of the Lord's presence in the Jewish harvest. The circumstances of that time

differed from those of the present Age and also those of the Millennial Age in the conditions, and hence the responsibilities differed also. ***Our Lord was present*** and performed marvelous works, ***illustrative of*** "the powers of the world [Age] to come." The truth was presented to the people in such a manner that the Lord declared that its rejection would bring "stripes" and "woes" upon those who, after hearing, loved darkness rather than light. He declared that some of those, because of their rejection of the Truth, would be counted worthy of "many stripes"; and that it would be, therefore, more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment than for those. Our Lord's declaration was, "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did they had not had sin." – John 15:22,24.

And if the people had such responsibility because of what they heard and saw, how much greater was the responsibility of the twelve chosen Apostles! They had professed much, saying, "We have left all to follow Thee." They were always with Him; and not only beheld many of His mighty works, of which the multitudes in various places saw but few, but more; He communicated to them, severally, a measure of His spirit and power, and sent them out to proclaim Him and His Kingdom and to work miracles – to heal the sick and cast out devils in His name.

The Apostles received also a special insight into the Divine Plan, an enlightenment not granted to the people, the equivalent to much that is now granted to the spirit-begotten ones of this Age. The Lord addressed the multitudes in parables and dark sayings, but these He interpreted to the Apostles, saying, "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God; but to them that are without [outside of the twelve and other special disciples], all these things are done in parables." Again He said to them, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear; for verily I say unto you that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." – Matt. 13:11-17; Mark 4:11.

If, then, the people, who saw a few of our Lord's mighty works and heard a few of His words of life, under *parabolic cover*, were declared "worthy of stripes" for not receiving the light, what shall we say of the responsibility of the twelve who not only saw much more, but by His power in them performed His miracles; who not only heard the parabolic words of life, but who had them expounded to them by the great Teacher? (Matt. 13:36-43; Mark 4:10-20.) And what punishment less than death – hopeless extinction – shall we suppose was merited by one of these who, after all this, according to his own confession, "betrayed innocent blood"?

We judge that if Pilate and Herod and the Roman soldiers had some responsibility for Christ's death, the multitude who clamored, "Crucify Him! His blood be upon us and on our children!" had much more responsibility; that the better educated, envious Pharisees and Priests who incited the illiterate, common people, had yet a greater responsibility (Matt. 23:15-33), and that Judas, His betrayer, was the chief, the real crucifier, because of his knowledge and wilfulness.

Upon him alone, of all who had to do with His death, our Lord placed the full responsibility, the *full guilt*, when He said: "The Son of Man goeth [to death] as it is written of Him [prophetically], 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!" (Matt. 26:24.) Should Judas be granted eternal life, under any circumstances or after any experience, his birth could not be considered a disadvantage to himself. See also Psa. 109:6-8; John 6:70,71; 17:12.

So, likewise, those who (with good knowledge of God's grace in Christ) sin wilfully and count the precious blood of the Covenant wherewith they were sanctified [set apart], a common thing, "crucify Christ afresh and put Him to an open shame." And, like Judas, they often accompany this denial of His ransom-sacrifice with the words, "Hail, Master!" and a deceitful kiss. All such should be an abhorrence

to every one who possesses to any degree the true, noble, Christ-like spirit.

"BE NOT WISE IN YOUR OWN CONCEITS!"

Some of the dear friends feel very loath to "give poor Judas up," and some seem to feel that their sympathy for him is an evidence that they have "more love than others." Those who come to Christ are not selected because they are the least blemished amongst men; they are oftener the more blemished; the less blemished often feel a self-complacency and satisfaction which hinders them from coming to God as repentant sinners and from realizing that they can be justified only through the imputed merit of Christ. But those who come to Christ and *hear* Him, soon learn how imperfect are their depraved conceptions, and they seek and obtain *His mind*, that it may be theirs thenceforth, as *instead of their own judgments*. "We have the mind of Christ," says the Apostle. It is our "new mind"; we are "transformed by the renewing of our minds," so as to be able to "prove [know] what is the good, acceptable and perfect will of God." – Rom. 12:2.

Those whose hearts go out so strongly to Judas seem to indicate by their questions that, however much they have submitted their judgment to God's will on some questions, they have not submitted them on this point. The reason seems to be that they deceive themselves into thinking that their sympathy with Judas is the true love which the Scriptures everywhere enjoin as the essence of Christian character. But they are deceiving themselves. To love an evil thing is on a par with hating a good thing. Both are wrong; both are sinful; both are evidence that the depraved mind is not renewed, remodeled, transformed into the mind of Christ.

The mind of the Lord, inculcated by His Word, teaches that we are to love the beautiful, pure, true, noble; we are to love (in the sense of sympathizing with) the weak, the penitent and oppressed, who are seeking for the paths of righteousness and truth; but we are to "*hate*

iniquity" and "every false way," and all the meanness and sin which is wilful, against light and of the Devil. [R4909 : page 408]

Cease to pride yourself upon love for one of the most detestable characters known to the pages of history, of whom our Lord, who so loved (sympathized with) the world that He laid down His life for it, said, "It had been better for that man if he had never been born." Adopt God's standpoint. As the Apostles say, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked;" "He that doeth righteousness is righteous [and approved of God], but he that practices sin [knowingly, wilfully] is *of the Devil*." – Gal. 6:7; I John 3:6,7.

For our part, we have no thought of ever becoming more loving than the Lord; we accept His definitions and seek to be conformed mentally to His standard – the image of God's dear Son. We want to love *just as* He loves and just *what* He loves, and we want to *hate* what *He hates*. Of Him it is written, "Thou hast *loved righteousness and hated iniquity*; therefore, God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." (Heb. 1:9; Psa. 45:7.) "Do not I *hate* them, O Lord, that *hate Thee*?...I hate them with a perfect hatred." – Psa. 139:21,22.

We are glad that neither Satan nor Judas nor any other creature will ever be tormented to all eternity. We are glad that a full, fair opportunity for coming to a knowledge of the Lord and of the way of righteousness will be granted to every member of Adam's race; and we are glad that, on the contrary, all who rejoice not in the Truth, but rejoice in iniquity, will be utterly and everlastingly destroyed in the Second Death. We abominate Satan, who, for over six thousand years, has wrought unrighteousness and gloated over the evil and pain and sorrow which he has wrought, and who with clear knowledge of the redemptive work has for eighteen centuries opposed the Kingdom and the great salvation. The person who could believe in Satan's conversion after all this battling against the Light and the Truth has a

perverse mind, very sadly blinded by the "god of this world" – a mind thoroughly out of harmony with the Word.

