

for you to carry them out. You would ~~thin~~ keep by me, but you cannot; you are pressed against your will into the service of my enemies." Speaks he thus of him? Ah, no, the thunder rolls, forked flashes shoot, Judas is scathed, blighted by the tremendous sentence, "Woe be to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed," Mark xiv. 21. "It had been good for that man if he had not been born," Matt. xxvi. 24.

VII. *Finally*—Beware of hypocrisy and self-deceit—be on your guard against hollow-hearted professors, but be not discouraged because of them.

Within this little flock creeps a wolf in sheep's clothing. See how far a man may go, and how long he may pass without being detected. Judas has secured so much of the confidence of his comrades, that they do not suspect him to the very last. He has kept company with them on all occasions, and has secured their good opinion to such an extent, that from his business habits or supposed honesty, he is made their treasurer. A man may be a professed follower of Christ—may be a minister of Christ—may hold high office among his brethren, and be universally esteemed—may be guilty of no open sin—may keep company with the best Christian society, and yet prove false.

Take heed that your hearts be not deceived. Be not high minded but fear.—Be jealous over yourselves.

God's dear people are apt to be discouraged by the discovery of such hypocrites, and many are deterred from casting in their lot with them, because of this. Some will call in question the reality of religion altogether. They forget that if there were no genuine coin there would be no counterfeit, and that after all it is the greatest compliment to religion, that men have recourse to it as a cloak for their sins. The mark of what is bad will never be assumed. We can never expect perfection in any Church. And perhaps Judas was allowed to remain so long in the band of disciples to teach this truth.

"It must needs be that offences come." But let all who would throw such a stone of stumbling and rock of offence in a brother's way, over which so many have

fallen into perdition, remember—"Woe be unto him by whom the offence cometh.—It were better that a mill-stone were tied about his neck and that he were cast into the sea."

"SHOULD WE THEN MAKE MIRTH?"

A malefactor might perhaps say that he would be merry as long as the scaffold was not erected on which he was to die. But if he were told that the scaffold was quite ready—that the sword was sharpened, and the executioner standing ready—oh! would it not be madness to make mirth? Alas! this is your madness, poor Christless soul. You are not only condemned, but the sword is sharpened and ready that is to smite your soul; and yet you can be happy, and dream away your days and nights in pleasures that perish in the using. The disease is ready, the accident is ready, the arrow is on the string, the grave is ready, yea, hell itself is ready, your own place is made ready; and yet you can make mirth! You can play games, and enjoy company. How truly is your laughter like the crackling of thorns under a pot: a flashy blaze, and then the blackness of darkness forever!

Not only are Christless souls condemned already and not only is the sword of vengeance quite ready, but the sword may come down at any one moment. It is not so with malefactors; their day is fixed and told them, so that they can count their time. If they have many days, they make merry to-day at least, and begin to be serious to-morrow. But not so Christless persons; their day is fixed, but it is not told them. It may be this very moment. Ah! should they then make mirth?

Some malefactors have been found very stout-hearted to the very last. Many have received their sentence with quite unmoved, and with a determined countenance. Some have even gone to the scaffold quite unmoved; some even with a light, careless spirit. But when the head is laid down upon the block, when the eyes are covered, and the neck laid bare—when the glittering sword is lifted high in the air, and may come down any one moment—that is a dreadful time of suspense. It would be very horrible to see a man in a light, careless spirit at that time. Oh! it would be madness to be merry then.

Alas! this is your madness, poor Christless soul. You are not only condemned, and not only is the sword ready, but it may fall on you at any one moment. Your head is, as it were, on the block. Your neck is bared before God, and the whetted sword is held over you; and yet can you make mirth? Can you take up your mind with business and worldly