

and what a breathing of unspeakable affection in the heart of the beloved John, as he leaned on the dear Saviour's bosom! Oh! who would break in on such an hour of holy joy with harsh and cruel words about the betrayer? who would dare to ruffle the calm tranquillity of such a moment by one word of dark suspicion? Hush! brethren, it is the Saviour that speaks: "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.*"

I trust, then, my friends, you see plainly, from the example of our blessed Lord, that the awfully solemn warning of the text, instead of being a rash and unwarrantable intrusion upon the joyous feelings with which every true disciple should encompass the table of the Lord, is, of all other Scriptures, the most appropriate, and the most like what Jesus would have us to say upon this solemn occasion. It is not, then, with the harshness of an unfeeling man, but it is with the tenderness of the compassionate Jesus, that we repeat these words in your hearing: "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.*"

There is a cruel kindness, almost too cruel, one would think, for this cruel world, which is sometimes practised by the friends of a dying man, when from day to day they mark the approaches of death upon his pallid cheek and yet they will not breathe a whisper of his danger to him. They flatter him with murderous lies—that he is getting better, and will yet see many days, when his days are numbered. But ten thousand times more cruel, more base and unfeeling, would that minister be, who, set over you by God to care for your never-dying souls, should yet look upon those of you who surround so willingly the table of the Lord, but whose whole life, and walk, and conversation, proclaim you to be the betrayers of that Lord, and not once lift up the warning cry: "*Ye are not all clean* Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me."

**Ques.** What could be Christ's reason for so often and so solemnly speaking of his betrayer?

**Ans.** I can see no other reason for it but that he might make one last effort to melt the heart of his betrayer.

**Doctrine.** Christ is earnestly seeking the salvation of those unconverted persons who sit down at his table.

There are two arguments running through the whole of this scene, by means of which Jesus tried to melt the betrayer, 1st, *His perfect knowledge of him.* As if he had said: I know thee, Judas; I know thy whole life and history; I know that thou hast sold me for thirty pieces of silver; I know all thy plans and all thy crimes. In this way he tried to awaken the traitor—to make him feel himself a lost sinner. 2d, *His anxious love for him.* As if he had said: I love thee, Judas; I have left the bosom of the Father just for lost sinners like thee; I pitied thee

before the world was; I am quite willing still to be a Saviour to thee. In this way he tried to win the traitor—to draw him to himself.

I. All the Saviour's dealings with Judas were intended to convince him that he knew his whole heart: "*I know thee, Judas, and all thy crimes.*"

1. This was plainly his intention when washing the disciples' feet, and telling them, that if they be oathed in his blood, they need nothing more than to have their feet washed—their daily sins wiped off daily: "*Ye are clean every whit.*" He then adds, but "*Ye are not all clean.*" This was evidently intended as a hint to Judas, to awaken his guilty conscience.

2. And then, when he had sat down again, to partake of the passover with them, and had sent round the cup of the passover, saying, as we are told in Luke: "*Take this and divide it among yourselves,*" he would not let Judas slumber, as if he were unknown to him; but declares more plainly than before: "*I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.*" This was evidently intended as a plain intimation to Judas, that, however concealed he might be to others, he was naked and laid open to the eyes of the Saviour, with whom he had to do.

3. And, *thirdly*, when he was about to put the bread and wine into their hands, to institute the holy ordinance of the supper, he would not do it without a still more convincing proof to the conscience of Judas that he knew him perfectly: "*As they did eat, he 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 unto him, Lord, is it I?*" And he answered, He it is that dippeth his hand with me in the dish; he it is that betrayeth me. And Judas answered and said, Lord, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said." Here we find the Saviour no longer deals in hints and intimations, but tells him plainly he is the man. Oh! my friends, if we did not know the deceitfulness of the natural heart, how it evades the most pointed declarations of the Word, we would be amazed that the heart of Judas was not overwhelmed with the conviction: "*Thou, Lord, seest me.*" But no; the arrows of the Saviour, so faithfully directed, yet strike off from his heart as from a flinty rock, and Judas sits still at the table of the Lord, still secure, to receive with his bloody hands (those hands which so lately had received the thirty pieces of silver, the price of blood) the symbols of the Saviour's broken body, which he himself was to betray. Ah! my friends, are there no hearts here like Judas, from which the plainest arrows of conviction, having written on them: "*Thou art the man,*" glance off, without even wounding? Are there none of you who sit, Judas-like;