

my words and seen my works these years past—who hast had such opportunities of becoming acquainted with me, and for whom I have done and suffered so much. “Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.” It was an extenuation of the sin of Paul that he “did it ignorantly:” and of the “princes of this world that they did not know Christ, for, had they known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.” No such excuse had Judas. On the contrary, he was admitted to the most intimate fellowship with Jesus. He therefore sinned against the clearest light. “Betrayest thou the *Son of Man*—a title in which Deity and humanity were blended—thy truest friend, the world’s greatest benefactor. “Betrayest thou the *Son of Man* with a kiss?” This makes the sin aggravated to the last degree. When Joab took Amasa aside, as if he would have a familiar talk with him, saying, “Art thou in health, my brother?” and then drove a dagger to his heart: when he took Abner by the beard as if he would kiss him, and then stretched him a bloody corpse on the plain, the professions of friendship deepen the dye of the double murder. The kiss of Judas, like the kisses of Joab, sounded like the hiss of the serpent, and had in it the sting of the scorpion.

This emphatic, withering sentence, that expressive, gently reproving look, sunk into his shrivelled, shrunken soul, and stirred up the dying embers of his conscience. Each word rolled up into his soul like a wave of fire. The light of that countenance became a burning brand in his conscience. Wherever he goes, these words ring in his ears—that meek and gentle look haunts him. It is as if fiends and furies chased him. What avails money to a conscience in which the arrows of the Almighty stick fast! His silver is cankered, and eats his flesh as it were fire. We lose sight of him altogether for a while. He follows not his

master. He had confronted him unblushingly, and boldly given orders to the soldiers, “Hold him fast,”—bent on making a sure seizure, knowing as he did how easily on three different occasions he had slipped from the hands of his foes; but a single glance, and that appalling sentence, send him away abashed. He never faces Christ again. The rulers wait for him. They had counted on his acting the part of king’s evidence. But they wait in vain. At length the traitor, haggard and woe-begone, makes his appearance. There is a sensation in the crowded court. “Make way for Judas.” A death-like silence reigns. Disclosures are looked for—a thorough exposure of the Nazarene imposture. But no. The pieces of silver are thrown convulsively down, and shrieking in agony, “I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood,” he rushes from the court into eternity. “He that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be cut off, and that without remedy.” I know not if these unhonoured remains ever were entombed, but if so, surely no better epitaph could have been found than this—“It had been good for this man if he had not been born.” From this melancholy story learn the following lessons:—

I. *The hardening influence of SIN.*

How thoroughly hardened Judas must have become to join the holy family in the upper room, after having entered into the fiendish conspiracy with the Jewish rulers! For him, a devil incarnate, to recline on the couch adjoining his Master, to meet unblushingly his Master’s eye, to let his feet be washed by his Master’s hand, and to swallow without shrinking the extended “sop,” at the very moment when a hellish hate was harboured in his heart, when the brand of blackest infamy was printed on his brow, when his foul soul was stained with a crime such as can never find its parallel in earth’s voluminous calendar, when the poison of asps was under his lips.