

affect to despise; but Lazarus was a person of consideration, as is evident from the history (John 11. 19, etc.); so that they saw no means of

effecting their purpose but by destroying him—whose living evidence could not be set aside.”—*Churton.*

## CRITICAL AND HOMILETICAL NOTES.

### LOVE'S PRODIGALITY.

Love's impulse is to prodigality of sacrifice. The heart keeps no ledger, and its gifts are not by measure and weight. In love's sight the greatest is little, in love's light the least is immeasurably great. Love is the maker and the measure of value. It transmutates the coarse into the fine, and multiplies pennies into pounds. A mite with love outweighs a million without it. The loveless is always worthless in the celestial markets, but the commonest deed that has in it the soul of love is above price. Love always outmeasures its gifts, as the sea outmeasures the tide which it pours into the channels of the rivers. A gift is but the transmitter of love, the conductor through which love is communicated. Love is guided by instinct, not by logic, and gives by inspiration, not by calculation, and its instincts and inspirations are heaven-born and divinely generous. Love is unconscious of the greatness of its deeds, and is stateliest in the sight of God when it is lowliest in its own eyes. The love that in the utter self-forgetfulness of gratitude anoints the feet of God is surest of being exalted to a seat on his throne. It is most immortal when it has no thought of immortality. A loving deed is always as an alabaster box of precious ointment poured forth, and the fragrance of such deeds fills the whole earth with sweetness, as the odor of Mary's nard filled the fast room in Simon's house.

### GREED'S PROTEST.

Judas was its spokesman. There is progressive definiteness in the accounts of the evangelist with regard to the protest against Mary's loving act. Matthew (26. 8) says, "When the disciples saw it," as if all were included. Mark (14. 4) says, "There were some that had indignation," limiting it to part of the disciples. But John says, "One of the disciples, Judas Iscariot." From which we conclude that Judas, as the pre-eminent exponent of avarice, gave angry expression to a sentiment with which others more or less sympathized. Judas did not and does not stand apart from other men as unlike them in the quality of his character; only in him moral elements became crystallized, which in many others are held in diffused solution. In Judas the poison broke into an ulcer, which, in less degree of virulency it may be, is in the blood of most people. In Judas the devil of dishonesty and

hypocrisy was unmasked, which, though snugly hidden away and disavowed, has his dwelling place in the heart of all worldliness and selfishness. John tells us (verse 6) that Judas was a thief (*kleptas*, a stealer, a petty thief); not necessarily that he had ever actually stolen anything, but that he had the spirit of a thief. Paul says (Col. 3. 5) that covetousness is idolatry; not that every covetous person actually bows down in formal worship before an idol, but that covetousness, which displaces the love of the Father with the love of the world, is the spirit of idolatry. John says (1 John 3. 15) that a hater is a murderer; not that everyone who hates actually commits murder, but that he has the character of a murderer. So also does Jesus teach with regard to lust (Matt. 5. 28). So Judas's protest and Judas's spirit were the protest and the spirit of greed and selfishness. And it is illustrative of a deep law of our natures—that an evil passion may issue in all damnable acts in the line of its bent—that Judas from this time opened negotiations with the rulers for the betrayal of Jesus. (Matt. 26. 14-16).

### THE HIGHER PRACTICALITY.

Matthew (26. 8) and Mark (14. 4) tell us that Judas's protest was put in the form of the question, "To what purpose is this waste?" It is interesting to know that the original of this word waste (*apoteia*) means "perdition" or "ruin." It is the very word which Jesus (John 17. 12) applies to Judas himself: "None of them is lost, save the son of perdition"—that is, the son of "ruin or waste." What moral irony, therefore, is there in this question: "And the son of waste asked, To what purpose is this waste?" The trouble was that Judas himself represented waste and ruin, not Mary's broken alabaster box. In the enduring perfume of life's love-sweetened air Mary's spikenard, lavishly poured forth, was saved; in the dwindling and parching of its own selfishness the soul of Judas, kept back from all generous thoughts and deeds, was lost. Besides, Judas's suggestion that it would have been better to have sold the ointment and given the money to the poor, was not only insincere on his part, but untrue in itself. There is no higher practicality. The most or the best has not been done for the poor when they have been fed and clothed. The feeding and the clothing will be to little purpose if there is not also the