

It was a blessed proof of the Saviour's love to his believing disciples, as is recorded by Luke, when he said: "With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." One would have thought that to the eye of the Saviour this passover must have appeared covered with threatening clouds—involved in the deep gloom of the garden of Gethsemane, and the bloody cross from which the sun himself hid his beams. You always find, that when you are in immediate expectation of some calamity, it renders gloomy and uninviting every event that bespeaks its near approach. You would have thought, then, that the human soul of Jesus must have shrunk back from this passover with horror. But no; he felt the shrinking of humanity which more plainly showed itself in the garden, but his love for his own disciples was stronger than all beside, and made him look forward to this passover, when he was to picture out to them his dying love more clearly than ever, with intense desire: "With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." But how much more wonderful is the proof of the Saviour's love to the unbelieving—to those who care not for him, but are his betrayers and murderers—when, with such divine complacency, he dips his hand in the same dish with Judas, and tells him, at the same time, that he does it not through ignorance, but that the prophecy might be fulfilled: "He that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up the heel against me."

Ah! my unbelieving friends, I know well the dark suspicions that lurk in your bosoms. Because you have done everything against Christ, you think that he cannot have any love for you; but behold, dark and proud sinners, how lovingly, how tenderly, he tries, if it may be, to awaken and to win over the heart of Judas! and then think how anxious he is this day to win and awaken you, though you are of sinners the chief—to bow that brazen neck—to break that heart of adamant—to wring a tear from those eyes that never wept for sin.

3. The *third* instance of Jesus' love to the traitor is, his faithful declaration of his danger to him: "The Son of Man goeth, as it is written of him; but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had never been born." In the two former instances Jesus had shown his love, by showing how willing he was to save him to the very uttermost—that he would bear all things to save him; but now he uses another way—he shows him the terror of the Lord—tells him that if he will persist, "it had been good for him that he had not been born." As a mother, when she wishes her child to take some wholesome medicine, first wins upon its love, and then, if that will not do, tries to win upon its fears; with the same more than mother's tenderness did Jesus first try to win upon the affections, and now upon the fears of Judas. And he is

the same Saviour this day in the upper chambers of the universe that he was that night in the upper chamber at Jerusalem; and he sends his messengers to you to carry the same messages of kindness and of love. It is only in love that he threatens you. And, oh! that in love we might speak the threatening to you—that if you have no part in Jesus, and yet, by sitting down at his table, are becoming guilty of the body and blood of our Lord it were better for you that you had not been born. It is a happy thing to live; there is a blessedness which cannot be expressed in having life. The fly that lives but for a day—the veriest worm or insect that crawls upon the ground, has an amount of blessedness, in the very fact that it lives, which it is far beyond the skill of man to calculate. To breathe, to move, to feel the morning sun and the evening breeze—to look out upon the green world and the blue sky;—all this is happiness immense—immeasurable. It never can be said of a fly or worm, that it had better never been born; but, alas! it may be said of some of you: If you are living, but not living—united to Christ—if you are sitting at the table of Christ, and yet unconverted—it had been good for you that you had not been born. Ah! my friends, there was once a heathen man who always wept, and got the name of the Weeping Philosopher. One would almost think that he had known this truth which we preach unto you—that if that union which you make with the bread and wine at the holy table be not a picture and a seal of the union between your soul and the Saviour of sinners, you had far better never have been born. Better not to be, than to be only in hell. "They shall wish to die, and shall not be able; they shall seek to die, and death shall flee from them."

4. The *fourth* and last instance of Jesus' love to the traitor is the most touching of all. After the supper was over, Jesus was troubled in spirit, and testified and said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me." It was but a few days before that he came riding down the declivity of Mount Olivet upon an ass's colt; and his disciples, behind and before, were all rejoicing and praising God, crying "Hosanna!" and Jesus—what was he doing? He was weeping: "When he came near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." He wept over the very city which he doomed to destruction. And just so here: when his disciples on every hand were filled with a holy joy, and John most of all rejoicing, for he lay in the bosom of Immanuel, what was Christ doing—the author of all their joy? He was heavy and troubled in spirit. He was always the man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, but now a ruffle of deeper sorrow came over the placid calm of his holy