

was such scope for the manifestation of human characters as never occurred before or since. That season was "the hour" in the world's history, "and the power of darkness," when the elements of good and evil were engaged in the most eventful conflict. At that time especially came to pass the saying of just Simeon respecting the Messiah,—*"He is set for a sign which shall be spoken against, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed,"* Luke ii. 34, 35. It is this revelation of men's thoughts and ruling passions, in connection with Messiah's crucifixion, that forms the subject of these Sketches. And who does not see and feel that it must be an attractive and instructive study?

Our author has not only conceived a happy and original idea, but he has also, in our opinion, worked it out very fully and successfully. We give in brief the subjects of his Sketches:—Judas who betrayed our Lord—Peter who denied him—John who adhered to him—the Apostles who forsook him—the Women who ministered to him—the Chief Priests and Rulers who persecuted him (in four Sketches)—Pilate who condemned him—Herod who mocked him—the People who demanded his death—the Soldiers who crucified him—the Centurion who believed in him—the Malefactors who suffered with him—Joseph and Nicodemus who buried him—the Illustrious Sufferer—the Model Character. These subjects are all handled with excellent judgment and practical effect, displaying the writer's extensive observation of men and things, and his skill in the anatomy of the human heart. We will now present an extract or two in support of our opinion. In his Sketch of Peter, the author takes occasion to set forth the nature of true repentance, as follows:—

"We may learn from the case of Peter the nature of true repentance. 'Peter went out and wept bitterly.' If we compare the case of Peter with that of Judas, we shall learn the nature of true repentance, we shall perceive the characteristic difference between that which is true and that which is false, that which is saving and that which is destructive. Wherein does the difference consist? Not in the sincerity or depth of the

conviction which was felt, not in the reality of the sorrow, or the intensity of the remorse which was experienced, not in the ingenuousness of the confession which was made, or in the anxiety which was manifested to make every possible reparation for the injury inflicted on the Redeemer. In what then? In two things; the first has relation to the *object*, and the second to the *subject*.

*First.*—Judas saw clearly the enormity of his conduct, but it was *only in and through its consequences*, he had no perception of the evil of his conduct *in itself*. If Jesus had not been condemned by Pilate, Judas would not have condemned himself. If our Lord had rescued himself from his enemies, he who betrayed him into their hands would have felt no sense of shame or sorrow, but would have looked on his thirty pieces of silver with feelings of unmingled satisfaction. So completely was he under the influence of a lean and sordid avarice, and so incapable, therefore, of understanding the real nature of his conduct, that he would not have been driven from the society of the apostles by a sense of shame, if Jesus had rescued himself from the hands of his enemies. But though addicted to covetousness, he was free from cruelty; though steeped in meanness, he was a stranger to blood. While, therefore, he would have seen nothing shameful in his treachery, if no evil consequences had resulted from it; yet when consequences the most appalling did result from it; when he found it led to cruelty and blood, he was overwhelmed at once with remorse and despair. With Peter it was otherwise. He saw the greatness of his offence *in itself*, not in its consequences. Indeed no serious consequences resulted, at least directly, from the denial of Peter. It did not contribute in the slightest degree either to the apprehension or to the condemnation of his Lord. But though there were no injurious results; though he could not say, it is owing to my perfidy that my Lord is taken, and cruelly entreated, and condemned—yet he felt that he had sinned against God, and against his Master; he felt that he had sinned against truth and conscience, against equity and goodness; he felt that he had wronged his own soul: and this filled him with shame