

**THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY
OF JUDAS ISCARIOT:
A CHARACTER-STUDY**

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The Autobiography of Judas Iscariot: A Character-Study by James W. T. Hart

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JUDAS ISCARIOT

A CHARACTER-STUDY

BY THE REV.
JAMES W. T. HART, M.A.

'Those that Thou gavest me I have kept,
And none of them is lost,
Save the son of perdition'

St John xvii, 12

LONDON
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1884

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PREFACE.

ALTHOUGH many incidents which occur in the life of Christ are necessarily touched upon in this book, yet the reader will at once see from its title that it is by no means intended to take its place among the several 'Lives,' 'Studies,' and 'Histories of Jesus Christ' which are already numerous. It is a book upon the character and motives of the False Apostle, not those of his Master. Numerous events and narratives, therefore, which occur in the Gospels receive no notice in the following pages, as not directly bearing upon the problem treated of in them. For instance, the author has, of course, omitted any mention of the

Transfiguration, for the simple reason that Judas Iscariot never knew anything of it. Christ's words to the three Apostles who were present at the time (St. Peter, St. James, and St. John), were: 'Tell the vision to no man *until* the Son of Man be risen from the dead.' By the time that that prohibition was removed the 'Man of Kerioth' had put an end to the life which he could no longer endure.

The character of Judas has been keenly debated by theologians, and with the result of varying judgments. Some see in him an almost complete incarnation of evil, pursuing a course of fiendish and appalling crime, with no compunction until his last hour. Others have been more disposed to take into account that 'iron force of circumstance' which plays so large a part in the lives of the best and worst men. This book is an attempt to solve the question: 'What was the motive which induced Judas to betray his master?' Was it revenge for disappointed hopes, or simple

avarice, which ultimately fell far short of its expectations? Was it long-planned wickedness, or sudden impulse, or the seeking his own personal safety? These questions possess a deep interest. How far the writer has succeeded in finding their solution the reader must be judge.

It may fairly be assumed, however, by way of premiss, that no man ever reached the highest point of excellence, or sank to the lowest depth of degradation—suddenly. The final development of either may appear to be sudden, but it is not so in reality. The causes which led up to the crisis had been surely, although perhaps slowly and almost imperceptibly, maturing. That 'iron force of circumstance' already alluded to; the man's own natural temperament; his correct estimate of present and future events, or on the contrary, his wholly erroneous views of them; all these, with other factors, largely assist in bringing about the culminating moment of his life. One

need be no Fatalist or Pessimist to hold this belief, which simply forces itself upon one, by the unanswerable logic of facts, in studying and forming a judgment upon any man's life, famous or obscure, historical or actual.

It must be admitted that the materials for such a study of the life of Judas are few. The Gospels contain only some fourteen direct notices of him. But a careful apprehension of these, and a diligent comparison of them with the rest of the events of Christ's life, will result in the discovery of much ground for reasonable inference. Imagination must supply the rest. And it has the great advantage of presenting a solution of the question proposed in a more attractive form than an essay, or strictly theological treatise.

But while freely using the imaginative element, the writer has endeavoured to avoid representing Christ as uttering words of which there is no record in the Gospels. The natural feeling of reverence would alone urge this