

JUDAS THE "HIRED."

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THE interesting article of Mr. Dudley Wright in the May number of *The Open Court* omits some views of Judas Iskariot which have suggested themselves to me, and I have not seen them advanced.

Paul is one of the first Christian writers in point of time, and the two epistles to the Corinthians are among his undisputed writings, and perhaps were written as early as A. D. 55. The author of Acts makes him a witness of the death of Stephen, and more than once has him tell of a curious vision when on his way to Damascus, which Paul was perhaps too modest to relate in his own writings (comp. Gal. i. 13-17; 1 Cor. xv. 8-9). He is also made to say that he was educated at Jerusalem. Now he alludes to "scriptures" several times, but all such allusions are to the Old Testament; hence Paul appears the oldest of the New Testament writers, and evidently nearer the contemporary of Jesus than any of the unknown authors of the Gospels.

Yet Paul has not heard of Judas. He asserts that Jesus appeared "to the twelve" (1 Cor. xv. 5) after his death. If it be replied that neither does Paul allude to the manger at Beth-Lechem or to the revivication of Lazarus or to the prodigies at the resurrection, etc., etc., I answer that this is further evidence that there were no Gospels of that tenor in his time, or that he was more ignorant than others, for he never mentions any of the miracles and prodigies of which the Gospels tell us, as indeed his own marvelous exploit of raising of the dead (Acts xx. 9) he likewise leaves to be told by another.

Revelations (xxi. 14) also mentions the twelve Apostles of the Lamb, and Judas still appears to be one of the twelve foundations of the heavenly fortress.

The other epistles of the New Testament are equally silent as to the treachery of Judas.

If it were not for the positive authority of all the Gospels that Judas was one of the twelve it would be possible to hold him as a figurative personage of the Judean people, for it is these whom Stephen declares (Acts vii. 52) were "betrayers and murderers" of the Righteous One. Peter, for instance (Acts i. 16-20), is made to speak of Judas and his conduct as the fulfilment of a prophetic utterance of one of the Psalms. Again, A-Kel Dama seems the Kol Dama or "voice of blood" that cried against Kain (Gen. iv. 10), and the words suggest that the Judeans owed their dispersion and the curse of their country to their treatment of Jesus. Judas is of course the Greek form of the name Jehudah.

And the "fulfilment" theory of the treason is mentioned in all the Gospels, as we must expect. Matthew (xxvii. 9-10) refers the matter to the remark in Zechariah (xi. 12-13), not as put, Jeremiah, "And I said to them, if good in thy eyes, give me my Sechar," etc., and they gave him thirty pieces of silver; but Jehoah told him to cast the money to the Jozer in the house of Jehoah, which was done, and Jozer is rendered "potter." From the word Sechar we have the Greek form I-Skar-iot, and the Hebrew word means "hire" or "wages"; and the suggestion that it is the name of a town is of no value. This text is really the key to the story of poor Iskariot, or at least to that part of his name and to the financial part of his conduct. That he hanged himself, as Matthew says, seems suggested by the fate of Achi-Tophel the counsellor of David (2 Sam. xvii. 23), called the Giloni or "revealer," whose advice caused Abeshalom to pollute the harem of David; and it is possible that, while Tophel means "suppliant," "folly," the consonance of the word with Aophel or "inflate," "tumor," and with Nephel "to fall," gave rise to Peter's version of the fate of Judas. As none of the other Gospels speak of the fate of Judas it might be urged that Matthew and Acts enlarged the account of this from Mark (xiv. 21), where Jesus alludes to fulfilment, and which account is also expanded in Matthew (xxvi. 24-25) and altered in Luke (xxii. 22-23), which I take to be later writings.

In the Gospel of John (xiii. 18-19) "fulfilment" is referred to Psalms xli. 9. This is a reference appropriate to the sop, perhaps suggesting it, and this Gospel enlarges upon that incident (xiii. 21-30). Jesus points out Judas by handing him the sop, "and after the sop then entered Satan into him," as if he was appointed by Jesus to perform the act of fulfilment; and, though verse 2 is

athwart this, the spiritual character given Jesus in this Gospel, and his developing divinity a generation later than the synoptics, enables us to understand the difference of his authoritative conduct in the principal text, for "the Father had given all things into his hands," says John (xiii. 3), and Judas as Satan was only serving one whose hour had come (verse 1), and who came forth from God and was going to God (verse 3). It was this increasing estimate of Jesus that, "knowing all the things that were coming upon him," causes his mere presence, at his arrest and recognition as told in this Gospel, to make Judas and the constabulary move backward and fall to the ground (John xviii. 4, 6), as against the simple "Rabbi" and kiss of Mark (xiv. 45), the "Hail Rabbi," kiss, and reply of Jesus in the later Matthew (xxvi. 49-50), and the still later approach to kiss and question of Jesus to Judas in Luke (xxii. 47-48); so that the dramatic scene progresses till Jesus becomes too lofty and Judas becomes too base for any familiarity or even recognition in John; for such is the course of a popular legend. So, too, the bargain of Judas to deliver Jesus to the authorities, set forth in the synoptics, is ignored in John, which treats Judas as fore-ordained to take part in the divine dramaturgy; a passive agent, chosen because he was a dæmon (John vi. 70), whereas the synoptics in their list of the twelve speak of his treachery as if this was a development, a fall from a higher state.

So, to sum up, we come from the express words of Paul, in the same generation of Jesus, that after his death he appeared to the twelve, to the end of the century when the Greek Gospel of John was written, and find that the doctrine of fulfilment has placed a dæmon at the side of Jesus, his "familiar man" (Aish Shelom, Ps. xli. 9), whom "he knew from the beginning would betray him" (John vi. 64), and whom he chose therefore to serve as his guide or usher to the Shades; ordered to "do what you do quickly (xiii. 27). This leaves a very wide margin between the assertion of the contemporary Paul and the transition along fulfilment lines to Hellenic and Egyptian mystics. Accounts so opposite cannot be reconciled.

It is well to understand, however, that no Judean is reported to have followed Jesus; all his little following, which was so small that they could gather in one room (Acts i. 13-15), were Galileans (ii. 7). Those who read Josephus are familiar with the fact that Galilee was in the time of Jesus the turbulent district, and no doubt they gave many riotous demonstrations when they came to the feasts at Jerushalem, for even their chief men were "unlearned and ignorant" (Acts iv. 13), hence the more opinionated and restless. Even

Jesus is averred to have scourged people in the temple itself; a fact which no doubt contributed largely to his execution. At his execution no one came to his help, or even spoke in his behalf, save Pilate the governor and his wife. Even his chosen Apostles, who had seen his prodigies and miracles, "all forsook him, and fled"—the saddest or the most significant words in all Christ-lore. The Galileans resented his death, and began at once to regard him as a martyr; hence Christianity was born, not in a manger, but in a sepulchre.

Now it is possible that Judas was a Judean; or that from his name of Judas or Judea-s, coupled with that of I-Sechar, or the "hired,"* the Gospel writers, thirty or forty years after the Crucifixion, suspected Judas of "hiring" himself to the Judeans to guide them to the hiding-place of Jesus; and this inference was confirmed by certain texts of Zechariah (xi. 12-13) where Sechar and thirty of silver are spoken of, and by the eater friend of the Psalm (xli. 9), which were used as the bases of the details as to him. It might be, also, that, after the death of Jesus, seeing his failure and discounting then his pretensions, as well as resenting the turbulence of the Galileans, Judas abandoned the new sect, thus incurring odium; for "many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" (John vi. 66), is a sentence with allusions to betrayal and dæmon immediately before and after (verses 64, 70); and, though this was during the life of Jesus, we must remember that the Gospel of John was written long after. Yet it must be admitted that his apostasy and bad name had not been "received" (1 Cor. xv. 3), that is, heard of, by Paul, as I also admit that all of Paul's resurrection faith must have been "hear-say" or he would not have persecuted the Church (verse 9).

Certainly the disciples, who forsook their Master in his hour of peril and fled, whose chief talker thrice denied him, were a sufficiently sorry lot to have produced a traitor; at least before they received the Holy Inflatu; but there seems to have been no need for a traitor. As Jesus "sat daily in the temple teaching" (Matt. xxvi. 55), there could have been no need for one to be hired to recognize him by a kiss or otherwise. Neither could the fear of the multitude have obliged the authorities to catch him at night by using a traitor, for he was executed in day-time with the boisterous and unanimous approbation of "all the people" (Matt. xxvii. 25), who knew Jesus well enough to prefer his death to that of the murderer and robber Bar-Abbas.

* Already an evil name (Gen. xlix. 14-15; also xxx. 14-18).

Wherefore, desiring to prove to the Jews that Jesus was their expected Me-Shiach, the "fulfilment" of the texts of their sacred books are carried into most of the incidents of the career of Jesus, and the miracles and prodigies of Elijah and Elisha are well-nigh those repeated by Jesus, while the trials of Jeremiah resemble those of Jesus. So, Judas the "hired" or I-Sechar, having an unfortunate name, is condemned by writers a generation later to "fulfil" the texts of Zechariah (xi. 12-15) and of the Psalm (xli. 9).