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look for clear vision, local colour, the entrance into the Syrian's mind. And we find it all. But, more than that, we find a certain creative imagination which gathers up the Scripture narrative and its environment into a picture that is vivid and arresting. Take one example: it is not too long.

'Cautious on account of his position, timid in his method of approach, with a dim foreshadowing of a greatness he could not comprehend, Nicodemus came to Jesus by night. From his stately mansion in the city, by the light of the Passover moon, the ruler threaded his way through the dense crowd of transitory dwelling-places on the slopes of Olivet to the temporary abode of Jesus. In the courtesy of Oriental language he addressed Him in the hope of receiving some assurance that he was right in assuming His works were the signs that He had come from God. He accosted Him as if he had been the deputy of a party representing the current opinion of the people; and the collective form of his opening remarks has led some men to believe he was sent by the Sanhedrin to prepare conditions of an agreement on which they might appeal to the nation.

'Our Lord answered him in the plural number, because it was the most suitable reply for the occasion. Nicodemus had identified himself with

his associates; Jesus followed his lead and answered in the corporate capacity of Himself and His followers. He invariably dwelt with men who were sincere in their desire for knowledge by taking His stand with them on their platform, on the basis of a mutual understanding from whence, if they were willing, He might lift them into the higher plane of His own life. Even when they hesitated their reluctance was not due to His teaching, but to their lack of appreciation. Having met Nicodemus on the ground of his appeal as a member of a community, He proceeded to reveal to him the fact of individual responsibility. The personal life of a Jew was absorbed in the race; the man was a part of the people; his religion was national; he believed all the promises of God were for the commonwealth, and every member of it was, by the nature of his position, a recipient. Christ came to teach the value of the individual soul, to proclaim a tremendous change as the necessary condition for recognizing it; that without this new movement, which He termed being born again, no one could participate in the true privileges of God's children. Man must be separated from his people, and in his own person realize the fundamental moral principles of the new life, and become convinced by his own vision of its reality, before he could enter into it.'

Notes on John xi.

BY THE REVEREND ARCHIBALD HENDERSON, D.D., PRINCIPAL OF THE
UNITED FREE CHURCH COLLEGE, GLASGOW.

THE interpretation of the whole narrative of this chapter depends largely on the meaning of v.³⁹. What caused the deep emotion of our Lord which is described by the words, *ἐνεβριμήσατο τῷ πνεύματι, καὶ ἐτάραξεν ἑαυτόν?* 'Ἐμβριμάομαι (also in v.³⁸) denotes the feeling of anger and indignation. In Mk 14⁵, following *ἀγανακτοῦντες*, it implies the expression of such feelings; in Mt 9³⁰ and Mk 1⁴³ the great displeasure which it would cause if something were done. As qualified in these verses by *τῷ πνεύματι* and *ἐν ἑαυτῷ*, the indignation is to be understood as expressed not by words but by look or gesture, as on the occasions recorded in Mk 3⁵ and

5^{39, 40}, when He cast forth the 'wailers' in the house of Jairus. One thing that always stirred our Lord's indignant anger was unbelief that rejected His gospel, or opposed its progress, or, by hypocrisy, discredited it (Mt 11²⁰ 17¹⁷ 23¹⁵, etc.). It was the cause of that indignant displeasure which was now manifest to those accompanying Him. The other much-debated phrase *ἐτάραξεν ἑαυτόν* is more easily explained. It is sometimes taken as synonymous with the foregoing; but the successive aorists, linked by *καὶ*, indicate historic progress. *Ταράσσω* means to stir up, or rouse, as chap. 5⁷; and in this sense it is to be understood here. The evangelist records the

visible change as our Lord, who had seemed passive in sympathy, was by His indignation moved to action—He bestirred Himself.¹ The thought is familiar in the O.T., as in Ps 35²³ 80², etc., and Is 64⁷. The word occurs in the LXX, Gn 43³⁰, to describe the overmastering feelings of Joseph which compelled him to seek where to weep. So our Lord's resolve to act found its expression in His immediate question, 'Where have ye laid him?' He was yet without the village in the place where Martha met Him; but now He hastens to the tomb to do that which He had come to do, thereby to vindicate and establish the faith in Him which was assailed, and, by some standing by, was mocked and resented (vv. 37. 46. 48. 53). If these words are thus understood the whole story of this chapter becomes luminous. Some have interpreted them as telling of our Lord's anger and indignation, or even horror, of death and its evil power. But that is inconsistent with our Lord's words about death (v. 11) as sleep (Mk 5^{39. 40})—this was His manner of speaking of it. The remark of Westcott (*in loco*) that 'the unbelief or misapprehension of the Jews, and even of the sisters, have not been brought into prominence in the narrative' is surprising. One has only to note the number of times the word πιστεύω occurs to see that it is all about faith (vv. 15. 25. 26. 27. 40. 42. 45. 48). Why so, if not to meet unbelief?² Read with this in view, the whole narrative acquires fresh interest; the opening verses of the story becoming a reverent revelation of the trial and the strength of our Lord's own faith. The questions spring naturally in the heart of every reader, Why did He, who was so 'ready to save,' deliberately delay for two days to go to Bethany? Why, if He could not go, did He not 'speak the word' as He healed the centurion's servant or the nobleman's son, fever-smitten in the distant Capernaum? No doubt it was well for the sorrowing sisters in the end, as, indeed, is hinted at when, after telling of the Lord's delay, the evangelist adds, 'But Jesus loved (ἠγάπα) Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.'

¹ So we say, of one troubled about a matter, that he spared himself no end of trouble regarding it.

² Our Lord's words (v. 40), which clearly refer to v. 4—the reply, which He returned, by their messenger, to the sisters' appeal—were, if not a rebuke of unbelief, a reminder that these 'daughters of Abraham' should have glorified God by their faith (Ro 4²⁰, He 11¹⁹), and not have assumed that death limited His power to make good His word.

The word is emphatic. 'The sisters' message ran, 'He whom thou lovest'—ὃν φιλεῖς—whom thou hast called 'friend.' They were to learn that Christ was a brother, better than a friend. The words are here contrasted as in chap. 21^{15-17. 20}.

When we look more closely into these verses a deeper and more significant question presses for answer. What is the significance of the Lord's answer to the remonstrance of the disciples against His going back to Judea, where, so recently, He had scarce escaped stoning to death? 'Are there not,' He said, 'twelve hours in the day? If one walk in the day he does not stumble because he sees the light of the world; but if one walks in the night he stumbles because there is no light in it.' He was waiting for light. It was not that He made up His mind not to go to Bethany for two days; but that for those days He waited for light, which He was sure would come, as to His Father's will (see chap. 8²⁹). When it came He set out, doubting and fearing nothing. As to what His feelings were these days of waiting the evangelist says nothing. The words of v. 4 were evidently spoken when the message from Bethany first reached Him, and were taken by the sisters to mean that Lazarus would recover. But Jesus said not that Lazarus would not die, but that the event—whatever it was—would not only be to the glory of God, but 'that the Son of God would be glorified thereby.' His faith in His Father's love to Him was untroubled by the nearing prospect of His last journey to Jerusalem. Waiting for the guidance of His Father's will, He knew that whatever happened, sufficiency for it would be His even if Lazarus should die e'er He might go to him. The faith He declared a year ago in the wonderful words of chap. 5¹⁹⁻²³ was steadfast. Yet we cannot doubt that these two days of waiting were days of trial for Him who loved these sisters and their brother. There is a note of relief in the words, 'let us go into Judea again.' It was not to be His 'going to Jerusalem,' where His death must be (Lk 13³³), He could assure His disciples that He was going to Bethany to awake Lazarus from sleep—He spoke thus of death, so that His disciples learned to do so also. There is nothing in the narrative to suggest that the indignant emotion He felt was a horror of death and its triumphs. He spoke it so calmly that the disciples answered, 'Lord, if he sleep, he will recover.' He had to tell them

plainly that Lazarus was dead, adding that He was glad He was not at Bethany, so that they would have in their coming experience a great strengthening of their faith in Him. He was not terror-struck by death, for its happening would be to His gladness and His glorifying and to their gladdening too. Surely He did not speak thus of Lazarus' death alone.

However alarming to the disciples the return to the very gate of Jerusalem seemed, there was that note of calm confidence in the Master's words which made even Thomas ready to go with Him, were it unto death.

Then in vv.²⁰⁻²⁷ we have the Lord's interview with Martha, and it is all about her faith in Him—an appeal to believe in His power of life—even life eternal. Yes; she has believed, and does believe, that He is the Son of God, the coming One who is all Israel's hope; but, as the sequence shows, she has to experience a proving of her faith which shall be to the praise and honour and glory of her Lord, and her own joy unspeakable (1 P 17.⁸).

Vv.²⁸⁻³⁴ next relate the deeply affecting story of Mary's sorrow as she poured it out at Jesus' feet—using the very words of her sister, 'Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died'—not as at all meaning to blame or upbraid Him, but as those sorrowing for their beloved so often do, thinking of how death would not have come had this or that not happened. It is noticeable that our Lord did not speak to Mary as He did to Martha. She was prostrate with grief. Accompanying her were 'many' who had come from Jerusalem to lament with the sisters, and though they may not be classed with the 'wailers' in the house of Jairus, they cannot be regarded as sharing Mary's faith in and love for her Lord (vv.^{37, 46}). There was thus present an element not only of unbelief but of hostility to Jesus, an evil influence which would—if it could—persuade Mary and her sister that if He had cared to do so He might have caused that Lazarus should not have died. Unbelief ever roused the holy indignation of Jesus. He found it hard to bear (Mk 9¹⁹), and now He saw that 'it was time to work,' lest these unbelieving wailers should make void faith in His Word (Ps 119¹²⁰). In vv.³³⁻³⁵ we have the notes of a spectator. The Lord's displeasure was manifest, and His resolve to act, to answer the challenge of His enemies, and to

satisfy the desire of those that hoped in Him.

Visibly He roused Himself to act. As Luther well renders Is 64⁷, 'Macht sich auf.' Then He said, 'Where have ye laid him?' and followed Martha to the tomb. There the disciples saw and were amazed as the silent tears fell from His eyes. How near to them He was—how far off from those miserable wailing comforters!

His command to take away the stone from the cave's mouth caused the realistic Martha to ask, 'Why are they taking away the stone?'¹ and to suggest that it was more than too late to do so. Our Lord's reply shows what was in His mind—'Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believedst, thou shouldst see the glory of God.'

The Lord's prayer in vv.^{41, 42} reveals the same spirit of faith, and the same need of faith as His one requirement of those for whom He wrought. As He believed, He would have all the bystanders to believe also. He says He had prayed for this. Does He not here refer to His waiting on His Father before He came from beyond the Jordan to Bethany with the assurance that He would wake Lazarus from sleep?² He told of this answer to His prayer—as His prayers were always heard—that all should believe that He was sent from the Father, and had not come of Himself. Then, in the faith that the Father would 'do the work,' he summoned the dead to come forth; and he came forth. Vivid as has been the detailed narrative hitherto as only a spectator could have told it, it closes abruptly. We are left to imagine the scene of the restored household, and to wonder what, if anything, Lazarus told.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!
The rest remaineth unrevealed;
He told it not; or something seal'd
The lips of that evangelist.

Such witness would not have helped faith (vv.^{25, 27}).

It is impossible to think that this manifestation of Christ's power over death had no purpose of strengthening the hearts of those that believed in

¹ So in Sinaitic Syrian Text.

² Our Lord's 'thanksgiving' not only reveals that power to raise the dead had been asked in prayer for the glory of God in the faith of 'many'—not spectators of the miracle only (vv.^{40, 46}); it reveals also that His own faith had passed through conflict and had triumphed—'Father, I thank thee that thou hearest me—but I knew that thou hearest me always.'

Him, as they had to hear with growing perplexity His now constant insistence on the nearness of His death. Ought it not to have confirmed their faith in His assurance that He had power to fulfil His Father's commandment 'to lay down his life, and to take it again' (Jn 10¹⁸)? Ought it not also to have warned His enemies that there was nothing they could do against Him though they put Lazarus to death, and Himself also? And still a question haunts us which must be reverently considered—had this incident not some relation to our Lord's own faith in the prospect of death? Was it a light on His way to the Cross? Was it for His strengthening (Lk 22⁴⁹) to hold fast as the Father's pledge to Him the words of Ps 16⁷⁻¹¹:

I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel ;
 Yea, my reins instruct me in the night seasons.
 I have set the LORD always before me :
 Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth :
 My flesh also shall dwell confidently.
 For thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol ;
 Neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption.
 Thou wilt make me to know the path of life ;
 Fulness of joy is in thy presence ;
 Pleasures are in thy right hand for evermore.

Surely it was from Himself the apostles learned the meaning of that Psalm (Ac 2²⁵⁻²⁸) as the assurance of His rising again the third day. Does not this constitute the chapter a narrative of our Lord's own faith—its trial, and its source of strengthening to victory?

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

God's Star.

'We have seen his star.'—Mt 2².

WHEN Christmas comes we love to remember the Christ-child who came to dwell among us. We think of what it cost Him to leave His heavenly home and His loving Father. I wonder if we sometimes think what it cost God to send Him? Perhaps a story which I heard the other day may help us to understand it.

During the War those families in America which had sent a son to fight were allowed to put a star in their window. When the light shone inside the room the star showed up.

One evening, just at twilight, a small boy was walking with his father along the streets of New York; and as they walked they were counting the stars in the windows. 'See, Father,' said the boy, 'here's a window with one star, and here's another with two—they must have sent two sons—and here's another with none at all.' They came at last to a break in the houses where the evening star twinkled in the western sky, and the boy whispered, 'Look, Father, God has a star in His window. God must have sent a son too.'

Yes, God has sent His Son too. 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.'

He gave the very best He had, and He gave it because He loved so much.

Once a famous preacher asked the scholars of a certain Sunday school whether God loved boys and girls when they were wicked. Some answered 'Yes,' but most of them said 'No.' And then the minister told them that if God didn't love them when they were wicked, He could never love any of them at all, because 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.' It was just because God loved boys and girls and men and women when they were wicked, that He sent His Son to save them, that He gave the gift that cost Him so dearly.

That story reminds me of a tale that is told of another famous preacher, the Rev. Mark Guy Pearse. One day he overheard one of his children say to another, 'You must be good or Father won't love you.' He called the boy to him and said, 'Do you know what you are saying, my boy? That is not true; it is not a bit true.' The boy was astonished and asked, 'But you won't love us if we are not good, will you?' And the minister replied, 'Yes, I will love you when you are not good. I love you when you are good with a love that makes me glad, and I love you when you are not good with a love that hurts me; but I cannot help loving you, because I am your father, you know.'