

St. John's narrative answers so truthfully to their characters in the other gospels that we have a most striking, because obviously undesigned, testimony to the historicity of the evangelistic account. The exclamation with which the sisters greet Jesus is all but identical in each case, and has evidently been repeated many times by them during those four days of anguish. There is, of course, no shade of complaint in the words; they have a perfect faith that his absence was due to some sufficient reason.

**22.** She knew of the lives which the Lord had given to other mourners, but she does not dare to ask directly that he should do for his friends what he had done for strangers. He knows best what gift to grant, and has he not assured them (verse 4) that some unknown but glorious issue was to come out of this dark cloud? **Shall have asked.** So literally. The word is one which our Lord never uses of his own prayers; it befits the humble petition of man to God, but not the serene communion of the divine Son with the Father. Not even those loved friends at Bethany could grasp the stupendous fact that God himself was gazing on them with human eyes.

**23.** The ambiguous words are meant to try her faith; how much did her "whatsoever" include?

**24.** The words the Lord had just used probably had fallen on Martha's ears many times in those days from the lips of sympathizers, formal or real, who had no other consolation to offer. She cannot think that they have any higher meaning now. Since the captivity the belief in the resurrection had become general among the Jews, for the free-thinking sect of the Sadducees, though influential from social and ecclesiastical position, was never very numerous.

**25. I am.** The declarations of Jesus beginning with this phrase will abundantly repay study side by side. Note that he does not say he brings or gives resurrection; he is all that the word can convey. The double description is climactic, rising from the triumph with which life's reign begins to the deeper thought of the divine principle which existed an eternity before death was born into God's world, and will exist after it has cast death forever into the lake of fire. **He that.** This clause is the amplification of "resurrection," just as the next verse is of "life."

**26. Liveth.** In the highest sense. For him who enjoys living union with Christ physical death is no interruption of life; death in the true sense he never shall taste. **Never.** Literally, "Shall in no wise die, unto eternity."

**27. I have believed.** The word, of course, does not suggest that the belief had ceased or faded in any way. It indicates simply that the conviction was deep-seated and long formed. **The Son.** Not by any means a corollary of the first title. The Jews did not expect a divine Mes-

siah. We have just seen that Martha's idea of the divinity of Jesus was very limited; she believed him divine, but could not conceive him as actually God. **He that cometh.** As often observed, this is the common title of Messiah—Hebrew, *Habbi*.

**28.** Of course, the conversation has been only partially recorded, our Lord's wish for Mary's presence being only indicated in Martha's words here. We may suppose that Martha, characteristically unable to remain inactive even in her grief, had met the messenger and hurried out, while Mary, after her manner, sat still in the house and heard nothing of the news.

**30.** Jesus probably waited outside Bethany in order to avoid meeting a crowd; he would meet the bereaved family alone.

**31. Jews.** Still in the sense general in St. John, the members of the hostile hierarchy. That the family had friends among these "Jews," as a body so prejudiced against the Lord and his friends, was probably due to their wealth and social position. For much the same reason St. John himself was acquainted with Caiaphas.

**Comforting.** Such consolatory visits were customary; we may well imagine how far such ministrations strengthened the heavy of soul! **Followed.** The miracle was to be abundantly witnessed. It was the custom to visit the tomb, especially during the first three days.

**32.** The more demonstrative grief is characteristic. Mary's words differ from her sister's only in a transposition of the word "my," marking the affection of the deeper nature.

**33. Wailing** (margin). As in verse 31, the literal rendering is better kept, because the word contrasts with that used in verse 35 of Jesus, who "shed tears" but did not join in the loud and passionate lamentation of Mary and her friends. It is quite gratuitous to accuse the "Jews" of insincere sympathy, as some have done, in a very unfortunate attempt to explain the conclusion of this verse. **Was moved with indignation.** This marginal rendering would have been accepted without hesitation on the testimony of usage elsewhere, but it was difficult to explain this anger. The difficulty is not serious. Nothing is more prominent in the Lord's character than the intense emotion roused in him by the sight of human sorrow. And here is a picture of desolation wrought by death's ruthless hand in a peaceful, loving home. What wonder that He who created a tearless world should be filled with wrath at the marring of his handiwork by the prince of evil? **In the spirit.** The human person of Jesus included "spirit" and "soul." Comp. chap. 12. **27.** The former is the deeper word, as denoting the part of man in which he can hold communion with God. **Troubled himself** (margin). Augustine observes well, "You are troubled against