

accused of rudeness. They intended simply to wait upon the bereaved and join them in lamentations over their dead.

**31. The Jews . . . were comforting her.** They performed the usual ceremonies of consolation, loud wailing and a mock frenzy of grief. **Mary . . . rose up quickly**, when quietly called by Martha (verse 28). Probably Jesus asked for Mary. Alford thinks Martha went of her own accord, knowing how much Mary appreciated the words of Jesus.

**32. Mary . . . fell down at his feet.** Not in adoration, but in an outburst of grief. **Lord, if thou hadst been here.** In their actions the sisters show a difference in temperament, but they use the same salutation of Jesus, "Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died." Evidently, before the death of Lazarus, they had talked much together about Jesus coming, and after his death they repeatedly referred to the calamity of the Master's absence. In our day the bereaved cannot hope for the Christ to come and call their dead back to their homes, but they can believe that through his power they shall see them in a glorification far more desirable than a restoration.

**33. When Jesus saw her weeping . . . he groaned in the spirit.** The margin reads, "was moved with indignation." This expression has given rise to a great variety of opinions: It was a reaction to throw off overpowering emotions (Godet). He was indignant at himself on account of his agitation (Origen, Chrysostom, Alford). He was vexed over the ravages of death in despoiling a home he loved (Augustine, Melancthon, Keil, Olshausen, Hengstenberg). He was provoked over the unbelief (Erasmus) or the hypocrisy (Weiss, Meyer) of the Jews. The classic use of the Greek word rendered "indignation" suggests other meanings, and Liddell and Scott are probably correct in stating that in this passage it means "deeply moved." Jesus was agitated with sympathy with the sisters, and on account of his great responsibility in the purpose to call Lazarus back to life.

**35. Jesus wept.** The Greek means not an audible cry, but the silent shedding of tears. A manly emotion. Twice again Jesus was in tears: when he looked upon unbelieving Jerusalem (Luke 19. 41), and in the agony of Gethsemane (Luke 22. 44; Heb. 5. 7). All this emotion indicated the greatness of the spirit of our Lord, and the importance of the events which so excited him.

**36. Behold how he loved him!** A spontaneous tribute to the depth and sincerity of Christ's affection for his friends. It reflected also upon their own loud and ostentatious mourning. Deep-hearted devotion can be recognized and appreciated by those who do not possess it.

**37. Could not this man?** There were two classes of Jews present. Some friendly to Jesus on account of his having healed the blind man, and on account of his sympathy with the sorrowing family. Others were too blind and bitter in their prejudices to admit any truth and goodness in him. The latter class may have spoken the words of this verse in jest or disdain, or the former may have used them to express a candid question.

**39. Take ye away the stone.** Strange blending of the human and the divine! The question, "Where have ye laid him?" the deep emotion, the being troubled, the tears and groans, and this command, are all suggestive of the weakness of the flesh. But they are all preparatory to the revealing of divine power. An orderly attention to such details as human strength can accomplish is a prayer in action for the presence and work of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3. 10; Mark 6. 39, 40; 1 Cor. 14. 37). **Martha saith, By this time he stinketh: he hath been dead four days.** This statement is important. The death was real. It was not an hypnotic or comatose condition. In later times the spirit of unbelief would have insisted that Lazarus had been an example of "suspended animation," and that Jesus simply restored him to consciousness. But the plain, straightforward assertion of Martha shows that it was a real death.

**40. Said I not unto thee.** Said in the presence of his disciples to the messenger bringing him word of the sickness of Lazarus (verse 4). Possibly Jesus did not at first decide to bring Lazarus back to an earthly life. He may have purposed to present him to his sisters in a transfigured state like unto his own appearance to Peter, James, and John on "the holy mount." His agitation on reaching Bethany may have been, in part, on account of his indecision as to the best method of revealing divine glory through Lazarus; whether by a transfiguration, a resurrection, or a beatific ascension. On account of the great grief of the sisters, he decides to restore Lazarus to them. While at the beginning he may have been uncertain as to the method, this verse indicates that he was fully decided as to the fact that the death of Lazarus should become the occasion for the display of the glory of God.

**41. So they took away the stone.** Martha's protest was probably followed by derisive and indignant remarks by the unbelieving Jews. The answer Jesus gave to Martha silenced and comforted her, but did not affect them. The stone was rolled away by the disciples, and after Lazarus came forth they forgot the derision of the hostile Jews when they began to comply with the Master's direction. In later years they could emphasize their testimony as to the reality and manner of this miracle by the assertion, "I helped to roll the stone away from the door of the tomb." I