

lated, "pure nard" or "liquid nard". Nard was an East Indian plant, the juice of which had a delicious scent. The ointment made from it was sold in sealed flasks, and was very costly. *Anointed the feet of Jesus.* To anoint the head (see Matt. 26 : 7 ; Mark 14 : 3), and especially the feet, of a guest was a mark of high esteem (compare Luke 7 : 46). *Wiped his feet with her hair.* An altogether extraordinary service, revealing the depth of her reverent devotion. It was contrary to Eastern etiquette for a woman to appear with unloosed hair (compare Luke 7 : 38, 44). *House filled with the odour.* So, Jesus said, would the fragrance of this loving deed be diffused throughout the world, Matt. 26 : 13.

II. A False Disciple, 4-8.

Vs. 4-6. *Judas Iscariot*; that is "Judas, a man of Kerioth", a place in Judah. *Should betray him.* See Matt. 26 : 14-16. Judas is true to his overmastering instinct of mean, niggardly selfishness. The very spirit which was an element in the betrayal of his Master reveals itself here. He could not understand lavish, self-forgetting, uncalculating generosity. *Why . . . not . . . sold for three hundred pence ?* A Roman "penny" denarius (about 16 cents) was a laborer's ordinary daily wage. Hence the ointment would be worth at least \$300 in our money. The greedy soul of Judas was horrified at such a waste of money. *Given to the poor ?* The writer of the Gospel knew Judas too well to believe in this professed sympathy for the poor. How often the needs of these at home are put forward by those who want an excuse for not helping foreign missions ! *He was a thief* ; explained by the last clause of the verse. *Had the bag* ; literally, "had (or took charge of) the box", in which Jesus and His disciples kept their scanty funds. *Bare what was put therein.* A better translation is, "was in the habit of taking away that was put therein". John had discovered that he was accustomed to pilfer. Perhaps several may have suspected him.

Vs. 7, 8. *Said Jesus, Let her alone.* Our Lord defends the generous deed of Mary against Judas' carping criticism. *Against . . . my burying* ; that is, "the day of My preparation for burial". Jesus refers to the com-

mon Jewish custom of laying fragrant spices on a body which is being embalmed before burial. He knows that the day of His death is near. This act of generous lavish affection He regards as His real embalming. *Poor always . . . with you . . . me . . . not always.* Jesus was the last Person in the world to neglect the poor. But He saw through the flagrant hypocrisy which found fault with Mary's act. A love which spares no cost is dear in His sight. It is the answer to His own boundless love.

III. Bitter Foes, 9-11.

Vs. 9-11. *Much people* ; Rev. Ver., "The common people", as contrasted with "the chief priests" of v. 10. Jesus and Lazarus became objects of eager curiosity. *Chief priests consulted*, etc. ; alarmed for their own authority, since the mighty work wrought upon Lazarus had created a new movement of belief in Jesus. (Compare ch. 11 : 45.) *Went away* : that is, separated themselves from their religious leaders to become followers of Jesus.

Light from the East

SPIKENARD—Was an essential oil obtained from a plant which grows in India, and was called by the natives the Indian Spike. The stems, which branch out from the root, are rough and shaggy, and resemble the tail of an ermine. The distance it was brought, the defective means of travel in ancient times, and the labor of preparing it from the plant, made it a costly perfume. Yet it was much sought after as a hair oil and general cosmetic by the wealthier Romans. The difficulty of supplying the demand led to various adulterations. Pliny mentions as tests of genuineness, lightness, red color, sweet smell, and a taste which left a dry sensation, but a pleasant flavor, in the mouth.

SUPPER—There are usually only two regular meals in an Eastern home, dinner and supper. Breakfast is only an informal lunch, consisting, in the desert, of a piece of the coarse bread baked the night before. Dinner was eaten at noon, and abstinence from it was called fasting. But supper, when the work of the day was over, was the principal meal, the one at which on special occasions flesh was eaten, and at which the