

CHAPTER 11

INTRODUCTION TO JOHN 11

Ver. 1. *Now a certain man was sick*, etc.] Very likely of a fever; Nonnus calls it a morbid fire, a hot and burning disease:

[*named*] *Lazarus of Bethany*; for his name, which the Ethiopic version reads “Eleazar”, and the Persic version “Gazarus”, (see Gill on “^{<4164>}Luke 16:24”); and for the place Bethany, (see Gill on “^{<4101>}Matthew 21:1”), (see Gill on “^{<4217>}Matthew 21:17”).

The town of Mary and her sister Martha; where they were both born, as well as Lazarus, or at least where they dwelt; of the former, some account is, given in the next verse, and of the latter, (see Gill on “^{<4238>}Luke 10:38”).

Ver. 2. *It was [that] Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment*, etc.] Not the woman in (^{<4075>}Luke 7:37), as some have thought, whose name is not mentioned, and which history is not related by John at all: but Mary in (^{<4118>}John 12:3), who is both mentioned by name, and along with Lazarus her brother, and with whom all the circumstances of the affair suit; and though the fact was not yet done, yet John writing many years after it was done, and when it was well known, proleptically, and in a parenthesis, takes notice of it here:

and wiped his feet with her hair; instead of a napkin, after she had anointed them with oil; (see Gill on “^{<4075>}Luke 7:37”), (see Gill on “^{<4118>}John 12:3”).

Whose brother Lazarus was sick; this is observed, to show how well they were all acquainted with Christ, and affected to him.

Ver. 3. *Therefore his sisters sent unto him*, etc.] Both the sisters of Lazarus, Mary and Martha, sent to Jesus; they did not go themselves, being women, and the place where Jesus was, was at some distance; and besides, it was necessary they should abide at home, to attend their brother in his sickness, and therefore they sent a messenger, or messengers to Christ,

saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick; for it seems that Lazarus was in a very singular manner loved by Christ, as man, as John the

beloved disciple was; and this is the rather put into the message by the sisters, to engage Jesus to come to his assistance; and they were very right in applying to Christ in this time of need, who is the physician, both of the bodies and souls of men; and are greatly to be commended both for their modesty and piety, in not prescribing to Christ what should be done in this case: and it may be further observed, that such who are the peculiar objects of Christ's love, are attended in this life with bodily sickness, disorders, and diseases, which are sent unto them, not in a way of vindictive wrath, but in love, and as fatherly chastisements; which, as they are designed, so they are overruled for their good; and are to be considered, not as instances of wrath, but as tokens of love.

Ver. 4. *When Jesus heard that*, etc.] That his friend Lazarus was sick,

he said; either to his disciples, or to the messenger or messengers that brought the account to him, and that on purpose to yield some relief to the afflicted family when it should be reported to them:

this sickness is not unto death; it was to issue in death, but not in death which was to continue, or under which Lazarus was to continue till the general resurrection; for though he should die, yet he should be so quickly restored again to life, that it scarcely deserved the name of death. The Jews distinguish between sickness and sickness; there are some that are sick, the greater part of whom are, μϣϣ I , “for life”; and there are others that are “sick”, the greater part of whom are, htyml , “for death”^{f483} , or are sick unto death, whose sickness issues in death; but this of Lazarus's was not to be unto death, at least not finally:

but for the glory of God; of his power and goodness in raising him again:

that the Son of God might be glorified thereby; that is, that his glory, as the Son of God, might be made manifest in the resurrection of him from the dead; (see ^{<R211>}John 2:11).

Ver. 5. *Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.*] Not only with an everlasting love, a love of complacency and delight, an unchangeable one, and which never varies, nor will ever end, with which he loves all his people alike; but with a very great human affection, and which was very singular and peculiar to them: these were the intimate friends, and familiar acquaintance of Christ, whom he often visited, at whose house he frequently was when in those parts; they were very hospitable to him; they

kindly received him into their houses, and generously entertained him, and which he returned in love to them: hence Nonnus paraphrases the words,

“Jesus loved the women, φιλοξεινους, “who were lovers of hospitality”, by the law of kindness.”

Ver. 6. *When he had heard therefore that he was sick*, etc.] Though Christ had heard that Lazarus was sick, and by such good hands, a message being sent him by his sisters, to acquaint him with it; and though he had such a very great love for him, and the whole family, yet he did not go directly to him, and to his assistance:

but he abode two days still in the same place where he was; at Bethabara, beyond Jordan; this he did to try the faith and patience of the sisters of Lazarus, and that the miracle of raising him from the dead might be the more manifest, and his own glory might be the more illustrious, and yet equal, if not greater tenderness and love be shown to his friends.

Ver. 7. *Then after that*, etc.] The next day, the third day after he had heard of Lazarus’s sickness:

saith he to [his] disciples, let us go into Judea again; for the country beyond Jordan was distinguished from Judea; (see Gill on “⁴⁰²⁵Matthew 4:25”).

Ver. 8. *[His] disciples said unto him, master*, etc.] Addressing him very reverently, and with great concern for his safety, as well as their own:

the Jews of late, or but now,

sought to stone thee; as they had attempted to do twice in a very little time; (see ⁴¹⁸⁹John 8:59 10:31);

and goest thou thither again? where there are so many enemies; and so much danger, and but little hope of doing much good; whereas here he was among his friends, and in safety, and very useful.

Ver. 9. *Jesus answered, are there not twelve hours in the day?* etc.] So the Jews reckoned, and so they commonly say ^{f484}, μωυη γωη τω[ς ηρς[μϋτς, “twelve hours are a day”, or a day consists of twelve hours, which they divided into four parts, each part consisting of three hours this was a matter well known, and Christ puts the question as such, it being what might be easily answered, and at once assented to:

if any man walk in the day: within any of the twelve hours, even in the last of them,

he stumbleth not, at any stone or stumbling block in the way,

because he seeth the light of this world; the sun in the horizon not being as yet set, by the light of which he sees what is before him, and avoids it; (see Gill on “^{418D}John 8:12”). So our Lord intimates, that as yet it was day with him, his time of life was not expired; and so, as yet, it was a time of walking and working; nor did he fear any danger he was exposed to, or any snares that were laid for him, since he could not be hurt by any, nor his life taken from him before his time.

Ver. 10. *But if a man walk in the night*, etc.] After the sun is set, and there is no light in the air and heavens to direct him:

he stumbleth; at everything that lies in the way,

because there is no light in him; there being none from above communicated to him. So our Lord suggests, that when the time of his death was come, he should then fall a prey into the hands of his enemies, but till then he should walk safe and secure; nor had he anything to fear from them, and therefore could go into Judea again, with intrepidity and unconcern.

Ver. 11. *These things said he*, etc.] In answer to his disciples, and made a pause.

And after that he saith unto them, our friend Lazarus sleepeth; meaning, that he was dead; in which sense the word is often used in the Old Testament, and in the common dialect of the Jews, and frequently in their writings; and especially it is so used of good men: and it is an observation of theirs^{f485}, that

“it is usual to say of the righteous, that there is no death in them, **hnyç al a**, “but sleep”;

(see Gill on “^{402B}Matthew 9:24”), (see Gill on “^{465B}1 Corinthians 15:18”), (see Gill on “^{465D}1 Corinthians 15:20”), (see Gill on “^{504B}1 Thessalonians 4:13”), (see Gill on “^{504D}1 Thessalonians 4:14”);

but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep; that is, to raise him from the dead, for, the resurrection of the dead is expressed by awaking; (see

^{<9175>}Psalm 17:15 ^{<2369>}Isaiah 26:19 ^{<2112>}Daniel 12:2); which for Christ to do, was as easy as to awake a man out of natural sleep: these words respecting Lazarus's sleeping and awaking, express both the omniscience and omnipotence of Christ; his omniscience, that he should know that Lazarus was dead; when at such a distance from him; and his omnipotence, that he could raise him from the dead; and yet his great modesty to signify it in, such covert language, though not difficult to be understood.

Ver. 12. *Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep,* etc.] Soundly, quietly, and comfortably, and takes rest in it:

he shall do well; or “be saved” from the disease; he will be delivered from it; he will recover out of it; it is a sign the distemper is leaving him, and he is growing better, and will be restored to his health again: the Ethiopic version renders it by many words, “he will be well”, and “will awake”, and “will live”. Sound sleep is a sign of health. This they said to, put off their master from going into Judea, fearing the danger he would be exposed unto.

Ver. 13. *Howbeit Jesus spake of his death,* etc.] Under the figurative phrase of sleeping:

but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep; in a literal and natural sense.

Ver. 14. *Then said Jesus unto them plainly,* etc.] Without a figure, when he perceived they did not understand him, and yet it was a very easy and usual metaphor which he had made use of; but such was the present stupidity of their minds, that they did not take in his meaning: wherefore, without reproaching them with it, he said to them in so many words,

Lazarus is dead. The Persic version reads, “Lazarus is dead indeed”, as he really was.

Ver. 15. *And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there,* etc.] At Bethany, before he died, or when he died; because he might have been prevailed upon through the solicitations of his dear friends, Mary and Martha, and through tender affection to Lazarus, to have prevented his death, by rebuking the distemper, and restoring him to health, or to have raised him immediately as soon as he was dead; and in either case the miracle would not have been so illustrious, nor have been such a means of confirming the faith of his disciples, as now it would be:

to the intent ye may believe; more strongly, that he was the Son of God, and true Messiah:

nevertheless, let us go unto him; to Lazarus, to the grave where he lies: the Syriac version reads, “let us go there”; to Bethany, where he lived, and died, and now lay interred.

Ver. 16. *Then said Thomas, who is called Didymous*, etc.] The former was his Hebrew name, and the latter his Greek name, and both signify a twin; and perhaps he may be so called because he was one:

the same said unto his fellow disciples; the other eleven; though the Ethiopic version reads, “to the next of the disciples”; as if he addressed himself only to one of them, to him that was nearest to him:

let us also go, that we may die with him; either with Lazarus, as some think, or rather with Christ; for he, and the rest of the disciples, imagined that Christ, by returning to Judea, would be in great danger of losing his life; yea, by this expression they seem to be positive in it, that it was a matter out of question with them, that he would die, should be venture there again: and therefore Thomas stirs up his fellow disciples to go along with him, and die altogether; signifying, that they should have but little comfort when he was taken from them: but both Thomas, and the rest, were differently minded, when Christ was apprehended, for they all forsook him and fled, and provided for their own safety, and left him to die alone, (~~4116~~ Matthew 26:56).

Ver. 17. *Then when Jesus came*, etc.] The Alexandrian copy, and all the Oriental versions add, “to Bethany”; though it seems by what follows, that he was not come to the town itself, but near it; and it looks as if it was not far from Lazarus’s grave; and it was usual to bury without the city; and here he had intelligence of his, Lazarus’s, death, and how long he had been dead:

for he found he had lain in the grave four days already; it is very likely that he died the same day that Mary and Martha sent to Christ to acquaint him with his sickness, and the same day he was buried; for the Jews used to bury the same day a person died, and so they do now: and after Christ had this account, he stayed two days where he was, and on the third day, he proposed to his disciples to go into Judea; and very probably on that, or on the next day, which was the fourth, they set out and came to Bethany; (see Gill on “~~4113~~ John 11:39”).

Ver. 18. *Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem*, etc.] Which was a reason why them were so many of the Jews come there to condole the two sisters upon the death of their brother; and by this means the following miracle became more known there: it was

about fifteen furlongs off; that is, about two miles, for seven furlongs and a half made a Jewish mile, as appears from one of their canons^{f486}, which runs thus:

“they do not spread nets for doves, except it be distant from an habitable place, *syr* *μϣϫ* *ϙ*, “thirty furlongs”;

which the commentators say^{f487} are “four miles”: and still more expressly it is said^{f488}, that

“between Jerusalem and Zuck, (the place where the scape goat was had,) there were ten tents, and ninety furlongs, *l ym l kl h xj mw h [bϙ* “seven and a half to every mile”.”

Hence a furlong was called one seventh and a half of a mile^{f489}, which was 266 cubits, and two thirds of one.

Ver. 19. *And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary*, etc.] Or “to those that were about Martha and Mary”; in order to have access to them, they came to them, and to the rest of the family; though the phrase may design them only, as the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions read: these Jews, as appears from the context, (~~<BIB>~~John 11:18,45,46), came from Jerusalem, and might be some of the principal inhabitants; and it may be concluded, that these persons, Lazarus, Martha, and Mary, were people of note and figure; and indeed all the accounts of them here, and elsewhere, show the same; (see ~~<DIB>~~Luke 10:38 ~~<BIB>~~John 12:1-3). The end of their coming to them was

to comfort them concerning their brother; by reason of his death, as was usual with the Jews to do, after the dead was buried; for they did not allow of it before: hence that saying^{f490} of R. Simeon ben Eleazar,

“do not comfort him (thy friend) in the time his dead lies before him.”

The first office of this kind was done when they returned from the grave; for it is said^{f491}, when they return

“from the grave they make rows round about the mourner, **wmj nl** , “to comfort him”, and they make him to sit, and they stand, and there never were less than ten in a row.”

It was an ancient custom for the mourners to stand in their place in a row, and all the people passed by, and every man as he came to the mourner comforted him, and passed on ^{f492}. But besides these consolations, there were others administered at their own houses, which were usually done the first week, for it is said ^{f493},

“the mourner the first week does not go out of the door of his house; the second he goes out, but does not sit, or continue in his place; the third he continues in his place, but does not speak; the fourth, lo, he is as every other man. R. Judah says, there is no need to say, the first week he does not go out of the door of his house, for behold, all come to his house, **wmj nl** , “to comfort him”.”

And it was on the third day more particularly on which these consolatory visits were paid ^{f494}:

“on the first day he (the mourner) did not wear his phylacteries; on the second, he put them on; on the third day, others come to comfort him.”

This rule the Jews here seem to have observed, since Lazarus had been dead four days; and they were come from Jerusalem hither to comfort his sisters on account of his death. The whole of this ceremony is thus related by Maimonides ^{f495},

“how do they comfort mourners? after they have buried the dead, the mourners gather together, and stand on the side of the grave; and all that accompany the dead stand round about them, one row within another: and there is no row less than ten; and the mourners are not of the number; the mourners stand on the left hand of the comforters; and all the comforters go to the mourners, one by one, and say to them, **µymçh ʿm wmj wnt**, “may ye be comforted from heaven”: after that the mourner goes to his house, and every day of the seven days of mourning, men come to comfort him; whether new faces come, or do not, the mourner sits down at the head, (or in the chief place,) and no comforters may sit but upon the floor, as it is said, (^{<RB13>}Job 2:13), “and they sat with him on the ground”: nor

may they say any thing until the mourner has opened his mouth first, as it is said, (^{<KRI>}Job 2:13), “and none spake a word unto him”: and it is written afterwards, (^{<KRI>}Job 3:1), “so opened Job his mouth”, etc. and Eliphaz answered, (^{<KRI>}Job 4:1), and when he nods with his head, the comforters may not sit with him any longer, that they may not trouble him more than is necessary. If a man dies, and there are no mourners to be comforted, ten worthy men go and sit in his place all the seven days of mourning; and the rest of the people gather to them; and if there are not ten fixed every day, ten of the rest of the people gather together, and sit in his place:”

for this business of comforting mourners was reckoned an act of great piety and mercy^{f496}; and these Jews here might come, not so much out of respect to the dead, or to his sisters, as because it was thought to be a meritorious act.

Ver. 20. *Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming*, etc.] Which she might hear of, either by a messenger sent by Christ to her, to acquaint her of it; or rather by some of the people of the town, who knew him, and ran and told her of it; and she being an active person, and stirring about house, might receive the report unknown to her sister, as it seems she did; and as soon as she had the hint, without staying to communicate it to her sister,

went and met him; either through her great affection to him, and eager desire of seeing him; or to consult his safety, and let him know what number of Jews were in their house, that he might consider whether it would be safe for him to be at their house or not.

But Mary sat [still] in the house; not out of disrespect to Jesus, or through want of affection to him, or through any indifference and sloth, but because she knew not that Jesus was coming; (see ^{<KRI>}John 11:28,29).

Ver. 21. *When said Martha unto Jesus*, etc.] When she was come to him,

Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died: which expresses much faith, but with a mixture of weakness, as if the presence of Christ was necessary for the working a cure; whereas he could as well have restored her brother to health absent, as present, had it been his will, as he did the centurion’s servant, and the nobleman’s son of Capernaum.

Ver. 22. *But I know that even now*, etc.] At this distance of time, though her brother had been in the grave four days:

whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give [it] thee; whether Martha had such a clear notion of the deity of Christ, as yet, as she afterwards had, is not so certain: however, she was persuaded that he had great interest with God, and that whatever he desired of him was granted to him; and though she does not mention the resurrection of her brother, yet it seems to be what she had in view.

Ver. 23. *Jesus saith unto her, thy brother shall rise again.*] Christ knew what she meant, and accordingly gave her an answer, and yet in such general terms, that she could not tell whether his meaning was, that he should rise now, or at the general resurrection.

Ver. 24. *Martha saith unto him*, etc.] Being desirous of knowing the sense and meaning of Christ, as well as to express her own faith;

I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection, at the last day. The Jews were divided about the doctrine of the resurrection, the Sadducees denied it, the Pharisees asserted it; and on this latter side was Martha; she believed there would be a resurrection of the dead; that this would be at the last day, or at the end of the world; and that her brother would rise at that general resurrection: wherefore, if Christ meant no more than that, this was what she always believed. The Syriac version renders it, “in the consolation at the last day”; and so the time of the resurrection is, by the Jews, called “the days of consolation”^{f497}. And good reason there is for it in those who shall have part in the first resurrection, or come forth to the resurrection of life; their bodies will rise glorious, powerful, spiritual, and incorruptible, fashioned like to the glorious body of Christ; they will no more be attended with infirmities, disorders, and diseases; they will feel no more pain, nor die any more; being reunited to their souls they will meet the Lord in the air, and in the judgment they will stand at his right hand; they will enter into his joy, and be for ever with him; with their bodily eyes they will behold Christ, and see him for themselves, and not another; they will meet their spiritual friends and acquaintance, and enjoy their company for ever; they will have uninterrupted communion with angels and saints, and with God, Father, Son, and Spirit; their consolation will be inconceivable and inexpressible.

Ver. 25. *Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life,* etc.]

Signifying, that he was able of himself to raise men from death to life, without asking it of his Father; and that he could do it now, as well as at the general resurrection; at which time Christ will be the efficient cause of it; and which will display both his omniscience and his omnipotence; as his resurrection is the earnest and pledge, and will be the model and exemplar of it. This is true of Christ, with regard to a spiritual resurrection, from a death of sin, to a life of grace; he is concerned both in the life itself, and in the resurrection to it: he is the meritorious and procuring cause of it; he died for his people, that they, being dead to sin, might live unto God, and unto righteousness: he is the author of it; he says unto them, when dead in sin, live; he speaks life into them: he commands it in them, and by his Spirit breathes into them the breath of spiritual life, and implants the principle of it in their souls; and he supports and maintains it by giving himself to them as the bread of life to feed upon, and by supplying them with grace continually; yea, he himself is their life; he lives in them, and their life is hid with him. It is owing to his resurrection, that they are begotten again to a lively hope, or are quickened, that has a virtual influence upon it; and it is not only the cause, but the exemplar of it. Saints, as they are planted together in the likeness of his death, so in the likeness of his resurrection: to which may be added, that it is his voice in the Gospel, attended with an almighty power, which is the means of quickening them, which they hear, and so live; and it is his image that is stamped upon them; and by his Spirit they are made to live, and to walk in newness of life.

He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: believers in Christ die as well as others, though death is not a penal evil to them; its curse is removed, its sting is taken away, being satisfied for by Christ, and so becomes a blessing and privilege to them, and is desirable by them; but though they die, they shall live again; their dust is under the peculiar care of Christ; and they shall rise by virtue of union to him, and shall rise, first in the morning of the resurrection, and with peculiar privileges, or to the resurrection of life, and with the peculiar properties of incorruption, power, glory, and spirituality. So likewise such that have been dead in sin, and dead in law, under a sentence of condemnation, as all mankind are in Adam, and being in a natural and sinful estate, and as the chosen of God themselves are; yet being brought to believe in Christ, that is, to see the excellency and suitableness of him as a Saviour, and the necessity of salvation by him; to go out of themselves to him, disclaiming their own

righteousness; venture their souls upon him, give up themselves to him, trust in him, and depend upon him for eternal life and salvation; these live spiritually; they appear to have a principle of life in them; they breathe after spiritual things; they see the Son of God, and behold his glory; they handle the word of life; they speak the language of Canaan, and walk by faith on Christ, as they have received him; they live a life of sanctification and justification; they are manifestly in Christ, and have him, an interest in him, and so must have life; they live comfortably; they live by faith on Christ, and his righteousness, and have communion with him here, and expect to have, and shall have eternal life hereafter.

Ver. 26. *And whosoever liveth and believeth in me*, etc.]. Whoever will be found alive at Christ's second coming, and is a believer in him,

shall never die, but shall be changed, and shall be for ever with Christ; and such as shall be raised to life by him, shall never die any more, not even a bodily death, and much less an eternal one, or the second death: and though believers die a corporeal death as others do, yet their souls live, and live in happiness, whilst their bodies are under the power of death; nor shall they always continue so, but being raised, shall become immortal, and die no more. So living believers in Christ shall never die more a spiritual death; they are passed from death to life, and shall never return to death more; their spiritual life cannot be lost; grace in them is an immortal seed, a well of living water springing up into everlasting life: grace may be very low in its exercise, and may seem to be ready to die; they may be in lifeless frames, and without the comforts of a spiritual life, and be under the hidings of God's face, which is as death unto them, and may reckon themselves as free among the dead; yet the principle of life will never be extinct in them; nor shall they die the second death, which lies in an eternal separation from God, and in an everlasting sense of his wrath; that shall have no power on them, nor shall they be in the least hurt by it; for they are ordained to eternal life, and have the promise of it; they are united to Christ, and their life is secured in him; and he has redeemed them from death; and they have the Spirit of life dwelling in them, as the pledge and earnest of eternal glory.

Believest thou this? the whole of this concerning the power of Christ, and privilege of believers; every tittle of it is to be believed. And as with respect to a corporeal resurrection, so with regard to a spiritual one; that men by nature are dead in sins; that Christ is the author of the resurrection from

such a state, to a spiritual life; that this life is only by Christ, and can never be lost: this is a doctrine to be believed; it is the doctrine of the Scriptures; it is according to godliness; it makes for the comfort of the people of God, and glorifies the divine perfections.

Ver. 27. *She saith unto him, yea, Lord,* etc.] That is, she firmly believed all that he said concerning himself, and the happiness of those that believed in him: and for the confirmation of it adds,

I believe: or “I have believed”, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; that is, long ago, ever since she knew him:

that thou art the Christ the Son of God, which should come into the world; that he was the true Messiah, and the proper and natural Son of God, of the same nature with God, equal to him, having the same perfections with him; and who was long promised, much prophesied of, and greatly expected to come into the world; and was now come into the world by the assumption of human nature, to work out salvation for his people, and therefore, since she believed all this of him, she must believe that he was able to raise the dead to life, and to secure those that believe in him from dying eternally.

Ver. 28. *And when she had so said,* etc.] Had expressed her faith in Christ in such terms, as the apostles themselves did, (⁴¹⁶⁶Matthew 16:16) (⁴⁰⁴⁴John 1:49 6:69).

She went her way; from Christ, being ordered by him to go to her sister Mary, and fetch her to him:

and called Mary her sister secretly; either beckoned her to come to her, or whispered her in the ear privately, as Nonnus paraphrases it, that the Jews, who were enemies to Christ, might not hear:

saying, the master is come; near the town; is not a great way off: she might use the phrase, “the master”, for greater privacy, that should she be overheard, it would not be who she meant; and because it was an usual appellation by which Christ was called in that family, and by which he was well known; and was expressive of honour to him, and subjection in them as his disciples:

and calleth for thee; to come to him; Christ asked after her, desired to see her, and ordered her to come to him; which was an instance of his respect for her.

Ver. 29. *As soon as she heard that*, etc.] That Christ was come, and inquired for her, and wanted to see her:

she arose quickly, and came unto him; having an equal affection for him as her sister Martha; and which she showed, by leaving her comforters at once, and by making the haste she did, to another and better comforter: both Martha and Mary, out of their great love to Christ, break through the rule for mourners mentioned in note, (see Gill on “~~6119~~John 11:19”), of not going out of the door of the house the first week of mourning.

Ver. 30. *Now Jesus was not yet come into the town*, etc.] Of Bethany, but stayed without, being nearer to Lazarus’s grave, which he intended to go to, in order to raise him to life, it being usual to bury the without the towns and cities; (see Gill on “~~4183~~Matthew 8:28”), (see Gill on “~~4172~~Luke 7:12”).

but was in that place where Martha met him; here he stopped, and here he continued: the Persic version reads, “but was sitting in the same place”, etc. waiting for the coming of Mary along with Martha; judging this to be a more suitable place to converse together in, than their own house, which was thronged with Jews; and especially he chose it for the reason above given.

Ver. 31. *The Jews then which were with her in the house*, etc.] Who came from Jerusalem to visit this afflicted family, and continued in the house with them

and comforted her; which was the end of their coming, (~~6119~~John 11:19). This they endeavoured to do, though they did not succeed:

when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily, and went out, followed her; they did not know what Martha whispered to her, but observed that she rose off her seat in great haste, and went out of the house at once; and therefore they went after to see where she went, and to persuade her to return;

saying, within themselves; “thinking”, as all the Oriental versions seem to read,

she goeth unto the grave to weep there: the Jews were wont to go to the graves on different accounts; one was to see whether the persons were dead or not: for so it is said ^{f498},

“they go to the graves and visit until three days.”

It happened that they visited one, and he lived five and twenty years, and after that died: and another was on a religious account; such went to the graves of the prophets, wise men, and righteous, and prostrated themselves upon them, to pray with weeping and supplication, and seek mercy for themselves, and for their brethren, expressing their faith in the resurrection ^{f499}. Dr. Pocock ^{f500} has given a large form of prayer used by them at such times, from Solomon bar Nathan; and is as follows:

“let it be the will of the Lord our God, our Creator, our Holy One, the Holy One of Jacob, who hath created all the children of his covenant in judgment, and causes them to die in judgment, and will raise them again to the life of the world to come, who knows the number of them all; that he would hasten to awake our master and doctor, (such an one,) that holy, (or that righteous, or that wise doctor,) whose body dwells in this sepulchre, whose bones rest in the midst of these stones; and that he would quicken him with that eternal life which no death follows; with that life which swallows up all death, and which wipes away all tears, and takes away all reproach; together with all those who are written unto life in Jerusalem; with the seven shepherds, and eight principal men, who are spoken of in (^{<3185>}Micah 5:5), and give him a part with them that understand, and with them that justify many, who will be like the stars for ever and ever; and the whole residue of the people of the Lord, the house of Israel, who keep the covenant of our God, and do his pleasure, may the Lord our God shake all these out of their dust, and let their lot, and our lot, be in life, in everlasting life, that in it he may establish all, both great and small, according to what is written, (^{<497216>}Psalm 72:16): “there shall be an handful of corn”, etc. and confirm the assurance he gave by Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amos, (^{<23369>}Isaiah 26:19): “thy dead men shall live”, etc. and as he promised to Daniel, a man of desires, (^{<271213>}Daniel 12:13): “but go thou thy way till the end be”, etc. and as he promised to all the congregations of Israel, by his servant Ezekiel, the son of Buzi the priest, (^{<45712>}Ezekiel 37:12): “therefore prophesy and say to them”,

etc. that the saints may rejoice with glory, and sing upon their beds, and that the righteous may rejoice, and exult before God, and be glad in his salvation, and say in that day, “behold this is our God, we have waited for him”, etc. (²³⁵⁰Isaiah 25:9); and we will bless the Lord from this time forth, and for ever, Hallelujah.”

A shorter one, which is in their liturgies, and is used as they pass by the sepulchres of the Israelites, is this:

“blessed art thou, O Lord our God, who has formed you in judgment, and has quickened you in judgment, and has fed you in judgment, and knows the number of all of you, and he will quicken you, and restore you; blessed art thou, O Lord, that quickens the dead.”

But sometimes they went only to vent their grief, and lament the loss of their deceased friends, which the Jews imagined was the case of Mary. And such a custom as this is used by the Turks, whose women on Friday, which is their day of worship, go before sun rising to the graves of the deceased, which are without the city, where they mourn over the death of their friends, and sprinkle their monuments with water and flowers; and even such as are not at the funeral or interment of the dead, after some days, will go to the graves, and make their lamentations there, and inquire of the dead the reason of their departure, and, as it were, expostulate with them, and to their lamentations add oblations of loaves, cheeses, eggs, and flesh ^{f501}. The Persians also visit the sepulchres of their principal “Imams”, or prelates ^{f502}; and the Jews were wont to visit the graves of their great men, in honour to them; yea, the disciples of the wise men used to meet there to study the law, thereby showing respect, and doing honour to the deceased. It is said of Hezekiah, (⁴⁴²³2 Chronicles 32:33): “that all Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, did him honour at his death”; from whence say the Talmudists ^{f503} we learn, that they fixed a sitting or a school at his grave; the gloss is, a session (or school) of the wise men to study in the law there. So says Maimonides ^{f504}, when a king dies they make a sitting at his grave seven days, as it is said, (⁴⁴²³2 Chronicles 32:33): “they did him honour at his death”; that is, they made a sitting at his grave.

Ver. 32. *Then when Mary was come where Jesus was,* etc.] Where Martha met him, and where she left him. Travellers tell us, that close by a well, about a stone’s cast out of the town of Bethany, is showed the place where Martha met our Lord when he came to raise Lazarus, and where Mary,

being called also, met him; but this is not to be depended on, nor is it of any moment to know it. It is blessed meeting Christ any where; and where he is preached, and his ordinances administered, let it be in what place it will, there may the presence of Christ be expected; and it is an encouragement to go there where others have met with him: Martha had been here before, and had had some conversation with Christ to her great satisfaction, and she goes and calls her sister, that she might enjoy the same: so souls that have met with Jesus under such a ministry, in such a place, invite others to go thither also; and often it is that this is a means, in providence, of finding Christ, and enjoying communion with him.

And saw him, she fell down at his feet; in great respect to him, and reverence of him, worshipping him as her Lord and God.

Saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died; which were the same words Martha uttered upon her first meeting Jesus, (⁴¹²John 11:21); and it is very likely that they had often expressed themselves in such language one to another, saying to each other, if our Lord Jesus had been but here, our dear brother Lazarus would not have died.

Ver. 33. *When Jesus therefore saw her weeping*, etc.] At his feet, who, for sorrow and grief of heart, could say no more to him; but having expressed these words, burst out into floods of tears:

and the Jews also weeping, which came with her; either through sympathy with her, or hypocritically:

he groaned in the spirit; in his human soul; and which shows, that he had a real human soul, subject to passions, though sinless ones. The word signifies an inward motion of the mind, through indignation and anger; and it may be partly at the weakness of Mary's faith, and at her immoderate sorrow; and partly at the hypocrisy of the Jews: or else this inward groaning was through grief, sympathizing with Mary, and her friends, his human soul being touched with a fellow feeling of their griefs and sorrows:

and was troubled; or troubled himself; threw himself into some forms and gestures of sorrow, and mourning, as lifting up his eyes, wringing his hands, and changing the form of his countenance.

Ver. 34. *And said, where have ye laid him?* etc.] This he might say as man, though he, as the omniscient God, knew where he was laid; and that it

might appear there was no juggle and contrivance between him, and the relations of the deceased; and to raise some expectation of what he intended to do; and to draw the Jews thither, that they might be witnesses of the miracle he was about to work.

They say unto him; That is, Martha and Mary,

Lord, come and see; it being but a little way off.

Ver. 35. *Jesus wept.*] As he was going along to the grave, (see ~~EBDS~~ John 11:28); as he was meditating upon the state of his friend Lazarus, the distress his two sisters were in, and the greater damnation that would befall the Jews then present, who, notwithstanding the miracle, would not believe in him. This shows him to be truly and really man, subject to like passions, only without sin.

Ver. 36. *Then said the Jews, behold, how he loved him!*] Lazarus; for they supposed that these tears were shed purely on his account; and by all circumstances they could not but judge, that they proceeded from an hearty and sincere affection to him; and it was amazing to them, that his love to him should be so strong, when he was no relation, only, as they imagined, a common friend. Christ's love to all his people, even when they are dead in trespasses and sins, is wonderful, and passes knowledge. And it is amazing indeed, if it be considered who the lover is, the eternal Son of God, who is God over all, blessed for ever, the Creator of all things, the King of kings, and Lord of lords: and also, who they are that are loved by him, not only creatures, but sinful ones, exceeding mean and abject; the base things of this world, bankrupts, beggars, yea, comparable to the beasts that perish; who had nothing external, nor internal, to recommend them to him, and engage his affections; yea, everything to give him an aversion to them, and render them odious in his sight, being enemies in their minds by wicked works, and children of wrath, as others: and likewise, if it be considered what he has done for these, in which his love appears to them; as before time, in espousing their persons, becoming their surety, engaging in covenant with his Father for them, agreeing to all he proposed, taking the care of their persons, and of all blessings and promises, grace and glory for them; and in time here on earth, by assuming their nature, fulfilling the law for them, dying in their room and stead, paying their debts, procuring all blessings for them, peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal redemption; and now in heaven, by preparing a place for them, being their intercessor and advocate there, supplying their wants, frequently visiting them, and

indulging them with communion with himself, preserving them safe to his kingdom and glory, into which he will introduce them, presenting them to his Father with exceeding joy; all which are marvellous acts of love and grace: to which may be added, the consideration of the nature of his love, that it should be from everlasting, before these persons were born; that it should be a love of complacency and delight in them; that it should be free, and unmerited, without any reason, or motive on their part; that it should be distinguishing, that they, and not others, should be the objects of it; and that it should continue unchangeably the same, notwithstanding their manifold transgressions, and provocations; wherefore it may be justly said, behold, how he loved them!

Ver. 37. *And some of them said*, etc.] Who were averse to him, and bore him a secret grudge, and were willing to put the worst construction on every action of his:

could not this man which opened the eyes of the blind; as it is said, at least pretended, that he did, (⁴⁰⁶John 9:6,7), for this must be understood as calling the miracle into question, and as a sneer upon it, and not as taking it for granted that so it was; and even supposing that, it is mentioned to his reproach, since if so, he might

have caused that, even this man should not die: for either the above cure was a sham, or, if it was a real thing, he who did that could have prevented Lazarus's death; and if he could, and would not, where is his friendship? and what must be thought of all this show of affection to him? and what are these tears, but crocodile ones? but this reasoning, as specious as it may seem, was very fallacious; for he that cured the man born blind could raise Lazarus from the dead, which he intended; and therefore did not prevent his death, that he might still give more joy to the family, bring more glory to God, and himself, and more shame and confusion to his enemies.

Ver. 38. *Jesus therefore groaning in himself*, etc.] Not only through grief, just coming up to the grave, where his dear friend lay, but through an holy anger and indignation at the malice and wickedness of the Jews;

cometh to the grave of Lazarus,

it was a cave; either a natural one, such as were in rocks and mountains, of which sort there were many in Judea, and near Jerusalem being a rocky and mountainous country, of which Josephus^{f505} makes mention; where thieves

and robbers sheltered themselves, and could not easily be come at and where persons in danger fled to for safety, and hid themselves; and the reason why such places were chose to bury in, was because here the bodies were safe from beasts of prey: or this was an artificial cave made out of a rock, in form of one, as was the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea; and it was the common custom of the Jews to make caves and bury in; yea, they were obliged to it by their traditions: thus says Maimonides ^{f506},

“he that sells a place to his friend to make in it a grave or that receives from his friend a place to make in it a grave, **hr [m hçw[**, “must make a cave”, and open in it eight graves, three on one side and three on another, and two over against the entrance “into the cave”: the measure of “the cave” is four cubits by six, and every grave is four cubits long, and six hands broad, and seven high; and there is a space between every grave, on the sides a cubit and a half, and between the two in the middle two cubits.”

And elsewhere ^{f507} he observes, that

“they dig **twr [m**, “caves” in the earth, and make a grave in the side “of the cave”, and bury him (the dead) in it.”

And such caves for burying the dead, were at and near the Mount of Olives; and near the same must be this cave where Lazarus was buried; for Bethany was not far from thence: so in the Cippi Hebraici we read ^{f508}, that at the bottom of the Mount (of Olives) is a very great “cave”, said to be Haggai the prophet’s; and in it are many caves. — And near it is the grave of Zachariah the prophet, in a “cave” shut up; and frequent mention is made there of caves in which persons were buried; (see Gill on ⁴⁰³⁹ Matthew 23:29”); perhaps the custom of burying in them might take its rise from the cave of Machpelah, which Abraham, their father, bought for a buryingplace for his dead. The sepulchre of Lazarus is pretended ^{f509} to be shown to travellers to this day, over which is built a chapel of marble, very decent, and comely, and stands close by a church built in honour of Martha and Mary, the two sisters of Lazarus, in the place where their house stood; but certain it is, that the grave of Lazarus was out of the town:

and a stone lay upon it. Our version is not so accurate, nor so agreeable to the form of graves with the Jews, nor to this of Lazarus’s; their graves were not as ours, dug in the earth and open above, so as to have a stone

laid over them, for they often were, as this, caves in rocks, either natural, or hewn out of them by art; and there was a door at the side of them, by which there was an entrance into them; and at this door a stone was laid it would be better rendered here, and “a stone was laid to it”; not “upon it”, for it had no opening above, but to it, at the side of it; and accordingly the Syriac and Persic versions read, “a stone was laid at the door of it”; and the Arabic version, “and there was a great stone at the door of it”, as was at the door of Christ’s sepulchre. In the Jewish sepulchres there was **rxj**, “a court”^{f510} which was before the entrance into the cave; this was four square; it was six cubits long, and six broad; and here the bearers put down the corpse, and from hence it was carried into the cave, at which there was an entrance, sometimes called **hr [mh yp]**, “the mouth of the cave”^{f511}; and sometimes, **rbqh j tp**, “the door of the grave”^{f512}; of its form, measure, and place, there is no express mention in the Jewish writings: it is thought to be about a cubit’s breadth, and was on the side of the cave; so that at it, it might be looked into; and at the mouth of the cave was a stone put to stop it up, which was called **l l wg**, from its being rolled there; though that with which the mouth of the cave was shut up, was not always a stone, nor made of stone; Maimonides^{f513} says, it was made of stone, or wood, or the like matter; and so in the Misna^{f514} it is said,

“**rbql l l wg**, “the covering for a grave”, (or that with which it is stopped up,) if it be made of a piece of timber, whether it stands, or whether it inclines to the side, does not defile, but over against the door only;”

(see Gill on “⁴²⁶Matthew 27:60”).

Ver. 39. *Jesus said, take ye away the stone*, etc.] This was said either to the Jews, or rather to the servants that came along with Martha and Mary; and this he ordered, not to facilitate the resurrection, or merely in order to make way for Lazarus: he that could command him to come forth, could have commanded away the stone, but he chose to have it removed this way, that the corpse might be seen, and even smelt; and that it might be manifest, there was no fallacy, nor any intrigue between him, and the sisters of the deceased in this matter: this order was contrary to a rule of the Jews, which forbid the opening of a grave after it was stopped up^{f515}; but a greater than the fathers of the traditions was here, even he who has the

keys of hell, or the grave, and can open, or order it to be opened, when he pleases:

Martha the sister of him that was dead: that is, of Lazarus, as the Persic version expresses it, calling him, “Gazarus”,

saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh; or smells; not that she perceived this upon their moving the stone, but she concluded it from the time he had been dead, and had lain in the grave, in which dead bodies usually putrefy and smell: whether she said this out of respect to her brother, being unwilling he should be exposed to the view of persons, in such a state of corruption, she knew he must now be; or whether out of respect to Christ, lest he should be disordered with the offensive smell, is not certain: however, it seems as if she had no notion that Christ was about to raise her brother from the dead; and that the stone was commanded to be removed for that purpose, not merely for a sight of the dead, but that the dead might be seen to come forth alive: she imagined that Christ only wanted to have the stone removed, that he might have a sight of his deceased friend, which she thought would be very disagreeable and nauseous; so soon had she forgot what Christ had said to her, and lost that little exercise she had of faith and hope, with respect to the resurrection of her brother. Frames of soul, and acts of grace, are very changeable, and uncertain things; and especially when carnal reasoning is indulged.

For he hath been [dead] four days; he had been so long in the grave, (^{<48117>}John 11:17). The word “dead” is not in the text; he might have been dead longer; though the Jews usually buried on the same day a person died: however, the sense is here, he had been so long in the grave; and so the Persic version renders it, “for it is the fourth day that he has been in the grave”; in the original text it is, “he is one of four days”; so many days he had been in the house appointed for all living; so long he had been removed from the sight of men, and had been in another world, and had begun another era, and four days had passed in it; he was so many days old according to that: so that his countenance was changed, he was not fit to be seen, nor approached unto; nor was there any hope of his returning to life. The Jews ^{f516} say, that

“for three days the soul goes to the grave, thinking the body may return; but when it sees the figure of the face changed, it goes away, and leaves it, as it is said, (^{<48122>}Job 14:22).”

So of Jonah's being three days and three nights in the whale's belly, they say^{f517},

“these are the three days a man is in the grave, and his bowels burst; and after three days that defilement is turned upon his face.”

Hence, they do not allow anyone to bear witness of one that is dead or killed, that he is such an one, after three days, because then his countenance is changed^{f518}, and he cannot be well known.

Ver. 40. *Jesus saith unto her, said I not unto thee*, etc.] Not in so many words, but what might be concluded from what he said; yea, the following express words might be delivered by Christ, in his conversation with Martha, though they are not before recorded by the evangelist:

that if thou wouldst believe thou shouldst see the glory of God; a glorious work of God, wherein the glory of his power and goodness would be displayed, and the Son of God be glorified, or should see such a miracle wrought, which should engage her to glorify God; and on account of which, she would see just reason to do it, and would be concerned in it: and when it would appear that the sickness and death of her brother, which had given her and her sister so much distress and uneasiness, were for the glory of God, and the honour of Christ; (see ^{<B10>}John 11:4). Moreover, to “see the glory of God”, is to see Christ, who is the brightness of his father's glory; and though she had a sight of him now, and before this time, with her bodily eyes, and also with the eyes of her understanding, and knew that he was the Son of God, and the true Messiah; yet it is suggested, that upon a fresh and strong exercise of faith on Christ, with respect to the resurrection of her brother, and by means of that, she should have a clearer view of his glory, as the only begotten of the Father; for as he was declared to be the Son of God, by his own resurrection from the dead afterwards, so he was more fully manifested to be that glorious and divine person, by his raising others from the dead, than by any other miracle; and to be indulged with such a sight of him, is a very high favour; (see ^{<B11>}Psalms 63:2); and such who have their faith most in exercise, see much of the glory of God, both in the face of Christ, and in his providences, and the performance of his promises.

Ver. 41. *Then they took away the stone*, etc.] “From the door of the sepulchre”, as the Arabic version adds;

from the place where the dead was laid: this clause is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions:

and Jesus lift up his eyes; to heaven; this is a praying gesture, as in (~~4870~~John 17:1),

and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me; which cannot refer to the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead, or to any assistance given him in performing that miracle, because that as yet was not done; and when it was done, was done by his own power, as all the circumstances of it show; but it relates to everything in which he had before heard him, and was a foundation for him, as man, to believe he still would, in whatever was to come; and particularly to the present opportunity of showing his power in so remarkable a manner, and before so many witnesses.

Ver. 42. *And I knew that thou hearest me always*, etc.] Which was not only a support to the faith of Christ, as man, but is also to his people, whose advocate, intercessor, and mediator he is.

But because of the people which stand by, I said [it]; that he was heard, and always heard by God; and, therefore must have great interest in his affection, and knowledge of his will; yea, their wills must be the same:

that they may believe that thou hast sent me: for if he had not sent him, he would never have heard him in anything, and much less in everything; wherefore this was a full proof, and clear evidence of his divine mission.

Ver. 43. *And when he had thus spoken*, etc.] To God his Father, in the presence and hearing of the people;

he cried with a loud voice; not on account of the dead, but for the sake of those around him, that all might hear and observe; and chiefly to show his majesty, power and authority, and that what he did was open and above board, and not done by any secret, superstitious, and magical whisper; and as an emblem of the voice and power of his Gospel in quickening dead sinners, and of the voice of the arcangel and trumpet of God, at the general resurrection;

Lazarus come forth; he calls him by his name, not only as being his friend, and known by him, but to distinguish him from any other corpse that might lie interred in the same cave; and he bids him come forth out of the cave, he being quickened and raised immediately by the power which went forth

from Christ as soon as ever he lifted up his voice; which showed him to be truly and properly God, and to have an absolute dominion over death and the grave.

Ver. 44. *And he that was dead came forth*, etc.] That is, he who had been dead, being now made alive, and raised up, and set on his feet, came out of the cave:

bound hand and foot with grave clothes; not that his hands were bound together, and much less his hands and feet together, with any bands or lists of cloth; but his whole body, as Nonnus expresses it, was bound with grave clothes from head to foot, according to the manner of the eastern countries, Jews, Egyptians, and others, who used to wrap up their dead in many folds of linen cloth, as infants are wrapped in swaddling bands: and their manner was to let down their arms and hands close by their sides, and wind up altogether from head to foot: so that there was another miracle besides that of raising him from the dead; that in such a situation, in which he could have no natural use of his hands and feet, he should rise up, stand on his feet, walk, and come forth thus bound, out of the cave:

and his face was bound about with a napkin; the use of which was not only to tie up the chin and jaws, but to hide the grim and ghastly looks of a dead corpse; and one of the same price and value was used by rich and poor: for it is said ^{f519},

“the wise men introduced a custom of using *rdws*, “a napkin”, (the very word here used, which Nonnus says is Syriac,) of the same value, not exceeding a penny, that he might not be ashamed who had not one so good as another; and they cover the faces of the dead, that they might not shame the poor, whose faces were black with famine.”

For it seems ^{f520},

“formerly they used to uncover the faces of the rich, and cover the faces of the poor, because their faces were black through want, and the poor were ashamed; wherefore they ordered, that they should cover the faces of all, for the honour of the poor.”

Jesus saith unto them; to the servants that stood by:

loose him, and let him go; unwind the linen rolls about him, and set his hands and feet at liberty, and let him go to his own house.

Ver. 45. *Then many of the Jews which came to Mary*, etc.] To her house, to comfort her, and that came along with her to the grave:

and had seen the things which Jesus did; in raising the dead body of Lazarus, and causing him to walk, though bound in grave clothes:

believed on him; that he was the true Messiah: such an effect the miracle had on them; so that it was a happy day for them, that they came from Jerusalem to Bethany to pay this visit.

Ver. 46. *But some of them went their way to the Pharisees*, etc.] At Jerusalem, who were members of the sanhedrim; so far were some of them from receiving any advantage by this miracle, that they were the more hardened, and filled with malice and envy to Christ, and made the best of their way to acquaint his most inveterate enemies:

and told them what things Jesus had done; at Bethany; not to soften their minds, and bring them to entertain a good opinion of him, but to irritate them, and put them upon schemes to destroy him; thus even miracles, as well as the doctrines of the Gospel, are to some the savour of death unto death, whilst to others the savour of life unto life.

Ver. 47. *Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council*, etc.] They convened the sanhedrim, the great council of the nation together, of which they were some of the principal members:

and said, what do we? that is, why is nothing done? why are we so dilatory? why do we sit still, and do nothing? or what is to be done? this now lies before us, this is to be considered and deliberated on:

for this man doth many miracles; this is owned, and could not be denied by them; and should have been a reason why they should have acknowledged him to have been the Messiah, and embraced him; whereas they used it as a reason, why they should think of, and concert some measures, to hinder and put a stop to the belief of him as such.

Ver. 48. *If we let him thus alone*, etc.] Going about from place to place, teaching the people, and doing such miracles:

all men will believe on him; the whole nation will receive him as the Messiah, and proclaim him their king, and yield a cheerful obedience to all his commands:

the Romans will come; against us, with their powerful armies; interpreting the setting him up as Messiah, to be an instance of rebellion against Caesar, and his government:

and take away both our place and nation; that is, will destroy the temple, their holy place, the place of their religion and worship; and their city, the place of their habitation, and lay waste their country; and take away from them that little share of power and government they had, and strip them both of their civil and religious privileges: the Persic version renders it, “they will take away our place, and make a decree against our religion”.

Ver. 49. *And one of them, [named] Caiaphas*, etc.] (See Gill on “^{<40B>}Matthew 26:3”), (See Gill on “^{<40D>}Luke 3:2”), (See Gill on “^{<6B>}John 18:13”).

being the high priest that same year; the high priesthood originally was not annual, but for life; but towards the close of the second temple, it came into the hands of the king, to appoint who would to be high priest ^{f521}; and it became venal; it was purchased with money; insomuch that they changed the priesthood once a twelve month, and every year a new high priest was made ^{f522} now this man being in such an high office, and a man of no conscience, and of bad principles, being a Sadducee, as seems from (^{<40F>}Acts 4:6 5:17), who denied the resurrection of the dead, and was unconcerned about a future state; and having no restraint upon him, in a bold, haughty, and blustering manner,

said unto them, ye know nothing at all; ye are a parcel of ignorant and stupid creatures, mere fools and idiots, to sit disputing and arguing, pro and con about such a fellow as this; what is to be done is obvious enough, and that is to take away this man’s life, without any more ado; it matters not what he is, nor what he does; these are things that are not to be considered, they are out of the question; would you save the nation, destroy the man; things are come to this crisis, that either his life must go, or the nation perish; and which is most expedient, requires no time to debate about.

Ver. 50. *Nor consider that it is expedient for us*, etc.] Priests, Levites, Pharisees, the sanhedrim, and ecclesiastical rulers of the people; who, as

Caiaphas apprehended, must suffer in their characters and revenues, must quit their honourable and gainful posts and places, if Jesus went on and succeeded at this rate: wherefore it was most expedient and advantageous for them, which was the main thing to be considered in such a council, so he thought it was,

that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not; he proceeded entirely upon this political principle, that a public good ought to be preferred to a private one; that it was no matter what the man was, whether innocent or not; common prudence, and the public safety of the nation, required him to fall a sacrifice, rather than the Romans should be exasperated and provoked to such a degree, as to threaten the utter ruin and destruction of the whole nation.

Ver. 51. *And this spake he not of himself*, etc.] Not of his own devising and dictating, but by the Spirit of God; as a wicked man sometimes may, and as Balaam did; the Spirit of God dictated the words unto him, and put them into his mouth; nor did he use them in the sense, in which the Holy Ghost designed them:

but being high priest that year; by his office he was the oracle of God, and was so esteemed by the people, and therefore a proper person to be made use of in this way; and especially being high priest that year, in which the priesthood was to be changed, and vision and prophecy to be sealed up:

he prophesied; though he did not know he did, as did Pharaoh, (^{<1208>}Exodus 10:28), and the people of the Jews, (^{<1275>}Matthew 27:25).

That Jesus should die for that nation; these words, with what follows in the next verse, are the words of the evangelist, interpreting the prophecy of Caiaphas, according to the sense of the Holy Ghost that Jesus should die, which was contrary to a notion the Jews had imbibed, concerning the Messiah; (see ^{<8124>}John 12:34). But Jesus the true Messiah must die; this was determined in the counsel of God, agreed to by Christ in the covenant of grace, foretold by the prophets from the beginning of the world, typified by sacrifices and other things, under the former dispensation, predicted by Christ himself, and accordingly came to pass; and upon the above accounts was necessary, as well as for the salvation of his people, who otherwise must have perished; and yet was free and voluntary in him, and a strong expression, and a demonstrative proof of his love to them: and not only this prophecy declared, that Jesus should die, but that he should die for that

nation, for the nation of the Jews; not for every individual in it, for all of them were not saved by him; some received him not; they rejected him as the Messiah, Saviour, and Redeemer, and died in their sins; but for all the elect of God among them, the sheep of the house of Israel, to whom he was sent, and whom he came to seek and save; and whom he blessed, by turning them away from their iniquities, and by taking away their iniquities from them: and moreover, this prophecy suggests, that Jesus was to die, not merely as a martyr, to confirm with his blood the doctrine he preached, nor only as an example of courage, meekness, patience, and love, but for, or in the room and stead of his people, as their surety; giving his life a ransom and himself a sacrifice to the justice of God, for them; there by fulfilling the law and satisfying it, and appeasing the wrath of God on their account.

Ver. 52. *And not for that nation only*, etc.] For though Christ, as prophet, was sent to the Jews only, and was the minister of the circumcision, yet as a priest he did not die for them only, but for the Gentiles also; even for the whole mystical Israel of God all the world over, whether among Jews or Gentiles; (see ^{<340>}1 John 2:2).

But that also he should gather together in one, the children of God that were scattered abroad; by which may be meant, not only the elect of God among the Jews, who were scattered amidst the nations of the world, for whom Christ died, and to whom the Gospel was in the first place sent, and who were gathered together into a Gospel church state; (see ^{<340>}John 7:35 ^{<340>}1 Peter 1:1,2 ^{<340>}James 1:1); but rather the elect of God among the Gentiles, called “the children of God”, in opposition to a notion of the Jews, who took this character to themselves, on account of their national adoption, and denied it to the Gentiles, reckoning them no other than as dogs; and because they were the children of God by special adoption, in divine, predestination, and in the covenant of grace; and were so considered, when given to Christ, who looked upon them as in this relation, when he assumed their nature, and died in their room and stead; and not merely because they would hereafter appear to be the children of God in regeneration, and by faith in Christ Jesus, and have the witnessings of the Spirit that they were so; and much less because they had a fitness and disposition to be the children of God, since they were by nature as others, children of wrath: and these are said to be “scattered abroad”, both from God, as they were by the fall, and by their own transgressions; which separated between God and them, and set them at a distance from him; for

in their nature head, and nature state, they are afar off from him, and from one another; which may regard not only distance of place, being scattered about in the several parts of the world, but their disagreement in mind and judgment, in religion and manners; every one pursuing his own way, going astray like lost sheep: now Christ died for them, in order to bring them nigh to God, to the one true and living God; and to gather them together under one head, himself, their common head; by whom they were represented in his crucifixion, burial, and resurrection; and to make them one body, and bring them into one fold, into one church state here, and at last to one place, to heaven, there to be for ever with him; and so the Persic version renders it, “that he might gather them into one place”: and in this, the red heifer was a type of Christ; whose blood was sprinkled directly before the tabernacle of the congregation, and without the camp; and which was done, as a Jewish writer says ^{f523},

“to call to mind the design of the heifer, which was to bring **μϋϩϫ ρϣμϩ**, “those that were afar off”, from the camp of the Shekinah, to be near unto it.”

Ver. 53. *Then from that day forth*, etc.] Caiaphas’s reasoning appeared so good, and his advice so agreeable, that it was at once, and generally assented to, except by one or two, as Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea; that ever after this,

they took counsel together; at certain times, and that very often, and agreed in their counsel,

for to put him to death; this they resolved upon, before there was any legal process, before any crime was charged upon him, or any proof given, or he was heard what he had to say for himself; so highly approved of was Caiaphas’s motion, to put him to death, right or wrong, whether he was innocent or not; that they had nothing to do, but to consult of ways and means of getting him into their hands, and of taking away his life in a manner, as would be most for their own credit among the people, and to his shame and disgrace, and at the most proper and suitable time.

Ver. 54. *Jesus therefore*, etc.] Knowing the resolution the sanhedrim had taken to put him to death, and the schemes they were forming to apprehend him:

walked no more openly among the Jews; at, or near Jerusalem; he did not teach in their streets, nor work miracles, nor appear in public company:

but went thence, from Bethany:

unto a country near to the wilderness: whether this was the wilderness of Judea, where John came preaching, and near to which our Lord was before he came to Bethany, or the wilderness of Bethaven, (^{f1882}Joshua 18:12), is not certain:

into a city called Ephraim; the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, call it Ephren, and so some copies; it seems to be the same with the Ephraim of the Misnic and Talmudic doctors; concerning which they say ^{f524},

“Micmas and Mezonicha are the first for fine flour, and the next to them is Ephraim in the valley.”

For it seems there were two Ephraims, one in the valley, and another in the mount ^{f525} it was a place very fruitful for wheat; hence that saying of Jannes and Jambres, the magicians of Egypt, to Moses ^{f526};

“do you bring straw to Ephraim?”

which was a proverbial expression, the same with ours of carrying coals to Newcastle: they seeing Moses do signs and wonders, supposed he did them by enchantment; and the sense of their proverb is, do you bring enchantments into Egypt, where there are so many already? This Ephraim, the Jews say ^{f527}, is the same with that in (^{f439}2 Chronicles 13:19), and as there Bethel is mentioned with it, it seems to have been in the tribe of Benjamin: and it may be observed, that Josephus ^{f528} speaks of an Ephraim, along with Bethel likewise; so that they all seem to mean the same place; and according to the same writer, it was but a little city, and it may be an obscure one, for which reason Christ withdrew to it. Epiphanius ^{f529} makes mention of the wilderness of Bethel and Ephraim, through which he travelled, accompanied by a Jew, as he came up from Jericho to the hill country; and is very likely the same wilderness which is here spoken of; and by some called Quarentana, and placed by the river Chereth, in the tribe of Benjamin, north east of Jerusalem; and the same writer elsewhere calls ^{f530} Ephraim, the city of the wilderness: according to Jerom ^{f531}, it was twenty miles from Aelia, or Jerusalem; though according to Eusebius, it was but eight miles, which is thought to be the truest account; and by them both is

said to be a very large village, and in which they may not differ from Josephus; for it might be a large village, and yet a little city. Jerom^{f532} takes notice of a place called Aphra, in the tribe of Benjamin, which he says at that time was called the village Effrem, and was five miles from Bethel eastward; and of another called Aphraim, a city in the tribe of Issachar, which in his time went by the name of the village Affarea, six miles from the legion, northward; the former agrees best with this Ephraim.

And there continued with his disciples; spending his time in private conversation with them, teaching and instructing them in things concerning the kingdom of God, his time with them being now but short.

Ver. 55. *And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand,* etc.] Which was the fourth passover from Christ's entrance on his public ministry, and the last he ate with his disciples; when he, by being sacrificed for his people, put an end to that, and all other ceremonial observances:

and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem, before the passover: not only from the country where Ephraim was, but from all other countries in Judea and Galilee: all the males were obliged to go up to Jerusalem, at the time of the passover, where it was only kept; but many went before that time, for the reason following:

to purify themselves; we read in (⁴⁴⁰¹⁸2 Chronicles 30:18) of many that had not cleansed themselves, and yet ate the passover; for whom Hezekiah prayed, that they might be pardoned, which shows that they had done amiss: upon which place, Jarchi has this observation; that

“Judah (the men of Judah) were all clean, because they were near to Jerusalem, and could purify and sanctify themselves, and return to Jerusalem; but many of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and Issachar, and Zabulon, could not do so.”

And this seems to be the case of these people, they were country people, that lived at a distance, and not having purified themselves from several uncleannesses, came up before the time, that they might cleanse themselves, and be ready at the time: in several cases purification was required; as with new mothers, menstruous and profluvious persons, and such that had touched a dead body, or any creeping thing, and in other cases; and which by reason of distance, might be neglected; wherefore it was necessary they should come up before the time of the passover, to fit

themselves for it: the rule about defiled persons eating the passover, is this ^{f533},

“if the congregation is polluted, or the greatest part of it, or the priests are unclean, and the congregation pure, it is kept in uncleanness; but if the lesser part of the congregation is defiled, the pure keep the first passover, and the unclean the second.”

This, their commentators say ^{f534}, is to be understood of uncleanness, by touching the dead, which required seven days of purification; and it is very probable that this was the case of these persons, since it was about so many days before the passover, that they came up; (see ~~406~~ John 12:1). The account Maimonides ^{f535} gives of this matter is this;

“who is a defiled person, that is put off to the second passover? everyone who cannot eat the passover, on the night of the fifteenth of Nisan, because of his uncleanness; as profluvius men and women, menstruous and new mothers, and the husbands of menstruous women; but he that toucheth the dead carcass of a beast, or a creeping thing, and the like, on the fourteenth, lo, he dips, and they slay for him (the passover) after he has dipped; and in the evening, when his sun is set, he eats the passover; he that is defiled by touching the dead, whose seventh day happens to be on the fourteenth, though he dips and is sprinkled on, and lo, he is fit to eat the holy things at evening, yet they do not kill for him, but he is put off to the second passover; as it is said, (~~406~~ Numbers 9:6). “And there were certain men who were defiled by the dead body of a man, that they could not keep the passover on that day”; by tradition it is learned, that it was their seventh day, and therefore they asked if it should be killed for them, and they should eat at evening? and it was declared to them, that they should not kill for them: of what is this to be understood? when he is polluted with a defilement by the dead, which Nazarites shave for; but if he is polluted with other defilements by the dead, which the Nazarites do not shave for, they kill for him on his seventh day, after he has dipped, and is sprinkled upon; and when his sun is set, he eats his passover; a profluvius person, who sees two appearances, and reckons seven days, and dips on the seventh, they kill for him, and he eats at evening. — They do not kill for a menstruous woman on

her seventh day, for lo, she does not dip till the eighth night, and she is not fit to eat holy things until the ninth night.”

These, with many other cases there instanced, may serve to illustrate this passage.

Ver. 56. *Then sought they for Jesus*, etc.] That is, the country people; some on one account, and some on another; some out of curiosity to see his person, others to see his miracles, and others to hear his doctrine; and some, it may be, to take him, and deliver him up to the sanhedrim, who had issued out a proclamation to that purpose, and doubtless offered a reward: *and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple*; whither they came to purify themselves, according to the law of the sanctuary:

what think ye, that he will not come to the feast? it was a matter of dispute with them, whether Christ would come or not, to the feast; some might be of opinion that he would not, at least they very much questioned it, since the sanhedrim had published such an order for the discovery of him; and since upon it he was gone from Bethany, farther into the country; though others might be differently minded, and believe he would come, since all the males of Israel were obliged to appear at that feast, and it was his duty; and they could not persuade themselves that he would neglect his duty, for fear of the Jews.

Ver. 57. *Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees*, etc.] Who were of the sanhedrim:

had given a commandment; or published an edict, a decree of the senate: *that if any man knew where he were, he should show [it], that they might take him*; and this made it a doubtful point with some, whether he would come to the feast or not; and was the reason why others sought for him, and inquired after him, that they might discover him to the chief priests and Pharisees, and have the promised reward.