

CHAPTER 17

So sad was the character both of the princes and people of Israel, as described in the foregoing chapter, that one might have expected God would cast off a people that had so cast him off; but, as an evidence to the contrary, never was Israel so blessed with a good prophet as when it was so plagued with a bad king. Never was king so bold to sin as Ahab; never was prophet so bold to reprove and threaten as Elijah, whose story begins in this chapter and is full of wonders. Scarcely any part of the Old-Testament history shines brighter than this history of the spirit and power of Elias; he only, of all the prophets, had the honour of Enoch, the first prophet, to be translated, that he should not see death, and the honour of Moses, the great prophet, to attend our Saviour in his transfiguration. Other prophets prophesied and wrote, he prophesied and acted, but wrote nothing; but his actions cast more lustre on his name than their writings did on theirs. In this chapter we have,

I. His prediction of a famine in Israel, through the want of rain (v. 1).

II. The provision made for him in that famine,

1. By the ravens at the brook Cherith (v. 2-7).

2. When that failed, by the widow at Zarephath, who received him in the name of a prophet and had a prophet's reward; for

(1.) He multiplied her meal and her oil (v. 8-16).

(2.) He raised her dead son to life (v. 17-24). Thus his story begins with judgments and miracles, designed to awaken that stupid generation that had to deeply corrupted themselves.

<1170>1 KINGS 17:1-7

ELIJAH'S FIRST PROPHECY

The history of Elijah begins somewhat abruptly. Usually, when a prophet enters, we have some account of his parentage, are told whose son he was and of what tribe; but Elijah drops (so to speak) out of the clouds, as if, like Melchisedek, he were without father, without mother, and without

descent, which made some of the Jews fancy that he was an angel sent from heaven; but the apostle has assured us that *he was a man subject to like passions as we are* (^{<3817>}James 5:17), which perhaps intimates, not only that he was liable to the common infirmities of human nature, but that, by his natural temper, he was a man of strong passions, more hot and eager than most men, and therefore the more fit to deal with the daring sinners of the age he lived in: so wonderfully does God suit men to the work he designs them for. Rough spirits are called to rough services. The reformation needed such a man as Luther to break the ice. Observe,

1. The prophet's name: *Elijahu* — “*My God Jehovah is he*” (so it signifies), “is he who sends me and will own me and bear me out, is he to whom I would bring Israel back and who alone can effect that great work.”

2. His country: He was *of the inhabitants of Gilead*, on the other side Jordan, either of the tribe of Gad or the half of Manasseh, for Gilead was divided between them; but whether a native of either of those tribes is uncertain. The obscurity of his parentage was no prejudice to his eminency afterwards. We need not enquire whence men are, but what they are: if it be a good thing, no matter though it come out of Nazareth. Israel was sorely wounded when God sent them this balm from Gilead and this physician thence. He is called a *Tishbite* from Thisbe, a town in that country. Two things we have an account of here in the beginning of his story: —

I. How he foretold a famine, a long and grievous famine, with which Israel should be punished for their sins. That fruitful land, for want of rain, should be turned into barrenness, for the iniquity of those that dwelt therein. He went and told Ahab this; did not whisper it to the people, to make them disaffected to the government, but proclaimed it to the king, in whose power it was to reform the land, and so to prevent the judgment. It is probable that he reprov'd Ahab for his idolatry and other wickedness, and told him that unless he repented and reformed this judgment would be brought upon his land. There should be *neither dew nor rain for some years*, none but *according to my word*, that is, “Expect none till you hear from me again.” The apostle teaches us to understand this, not only of the word of prophecy, but the word of prayer, which turned the key of the clouds, ^{<3817>}James 5:17, 18. He prayed earnestly (in a holy indignation at Israel's apostasy, and a holy zeal for the glory of God, whose judgments were defied) *that it might not rain*; and, according to his prayers, the

heavens became as brass, till he *prayed again that it might rain*. In allusion to this story it is said of God's witnesses (^{<6116>}Revelation 11:6), *These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy*. Elijah lets Ahab know,

1. That *the Lord Jehovah* is the *God of Israel*, whom he had forsaken.
2. That he is a *living God*, and not like the gods he worshipped, which were dead dumb idols.
3. That he himself was God's servant in office, and a messenger sent from him: "It is he *before whom I stand*, to minister to him," or "whom I now represent, in whose stead I stand, and in whose name I speak, in defiance of the prophets of Baal and the groves."
4. That, notwithstanding the present peace and prosperity of the kingdom of Israel, God was displeased with them for their idolatry and would chastise them for it by the want of rain (which, when he withheld it, it was not in the power of the gods they served to bestow; for *are there any of the vanities of the heathen that can give rain?* ^{<2442>}Jeremiah 14:22), which would effectually prove their impotency, and the folly of those who left the living God, to make their court to such as could do neither good nor evil; and this he confirms with a solemn oath — *As the Lord God of Israel liveth*, that Ahab might stand the more in awe of the threatening, the divine life being engaged for the accomplishment of it.
5. He lets Ahab know what interest he had in heaven: It shall be *according to my word*. With what dignity does he speak when he speaks in God's name, as one who well understood that commission of a prophet (^{<2410>}Jeremiah 1:10), *I have set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms*. See the power of prayer and the truth of God's word; for he performeth the counsel of his messengers.

II. How he was himself taken care of in that famine.

1. How he was hidden. God bade him *go and hide himself by the brook Cherith*, v. 3. This was intended, not so much for his preservation, for it does not appear that Ahab immediately sought his life, but as a judgment to the people, to whom, if he had publicly appeared, he might have been a blessing both by his instructions and his intercession, and so have shortened the days of their calamity; but God had determined it should last three years and a half, and therefore, so long, appointed Elijah to abscond, that

he might not be solicited to revoke the sentence, the execution of which he had said should be *according to his word*. When God *speaks concerning a nation, to pluck up and destroy*, he finds some way or other to remove those that would stand in the gap to turn away his wrath. It bodes ill to a people when good men and good ministers are ordered to hide themselves. When God intended to *send rain upon the earth* then he bade Elijah go and *show himself to Ahab*, ^{<1180>}1 Kings 18:1. For the present, in obedience to the divine command, he went and dwelt all alone in some obscure unfrequented place, where he was not discovered, probably among the reeds of the brook. If Providence calls us to solitude and retirement, it becomes us to acquiesce; when we cannot be useful we must be patient, and when we cannot work for God we must sit still quietly for him.

2. How he was fed. Though he could not work there, having nothing to do but to meditate and pray (which would help to prepare him for his usefulness afterwards), yet he shall eat, for he is in the way of his duty, and *verily he shall be fed, in the day of famine he shall be satisfied*. When the woman, the church, is *driven into the wilderness*, care it taken that she be fed and nourished there, time, times, and half a time, that is, three years and a half, which was just the time of Elijah's concealment. See ^{<6176>}Revelation 12:6, 14. Elijah must drink of the brook, and the ravens were appointed to *bring him meat* (v. 4) and did so, v. 6. Here,

(1.) The provision was plentiful, and good, and constant, bread and flesh twice a day, daily bread and food convenient. We may suppose that he fared not so sumptuously as the prophets of the groves, who *did eat at Jezebel's table* (^{<1189>}1 Kings 18:19), and yet better than the rest of the Lord's prophets, whom Obadiah fed with bread and water, ^{<1180>}1 Kings 18:4. It ill becomes God's servants, especially his servants the prophets, to be nice and curious about their food and to affect dainties and varieties; if nature be sustained, no matter though the palate be not pleased; instead of envying those who have daintier fare, we should think how many there are, better than we, who live comfortably upon coarser fare and would be glad of our leavings. Elijah had but one meal brought him at a time, every morning and every evening, to teach him not to take thought for the morrow. Let those who have but from hand to mouth learn to live upon Providence, and trust it for *the bread of the day in the day*; thank God for bread this day, and let to-morrow bring bread with it.

(2.) The caterers were very unlikely; the *ravens* brought it to him. Obadiah, and others in Israel that had not bowed the knee to Baal, would gladly have entertained Elijah; but he was a man by himself, and must be red in an extraordinary way. He was a figure of John the baptist, whose meat was locusts and wild honey. God could have sent angels to minister to him, as he did afterwards (<1195>1 Kings 19:5) and as he did to our Saviour (<4041>Matthew 4:11), but he chose to send by winged messengers of another nature, to show that when he pleases he can serve his own purposes by the meanest creatures as effectually as by the mightiest. If it be asked whence the ravens had this provision, how and where it was cooked, and whether they came honestly by it, we must answer, as Jacob did (<0270>Genesis 27:20), *The Lord our God brought it to them*, whose the earth is and the fulness thereof, the world and those that dwell therein. But why ravens?

[1.] They are birds of prey, ravenous devouring creatures, more likely to have taken his meat from him, or to have picked out his eyes (<3807>Proverbs 30:17); but thus Samson's riddle is again unriddled, *Out of the eater comes forth meat*.

[2.] They are unclean creatures. *Every raven after his kind* was, by the law, forbidden to be eaten (<8115>Leviticus 11:15), yet Elijah did not think the meat they brought ever the worse for that, but ate and gave thanks, asking no question for conscience' sake. Noah's dove was to him a more faithful messenger than his raven; yet here the ravens are faithful and constant to Elijah.

[3.] Ravens feed on insects and carrion themselves, yet they brought the prophet man's meat and wholesome food. It is a pity that those who bring the bread of life to others should themselves take up with *that which is not bread*.

[4.] Ravens could bring but a little, and broken meat, yet Elijah was content with such things as he had, and thankful that he was fed, though not feasted.

[5.] Ravens neglect their own young ones, and do not feed them; yet when God pleases they shall feed his prophet. Young lions and young ravens may lack, and suffer hunger, but not those that fear the Lord, <0340>Psalm 34:10.

[6.] Ravens are themselves fed by special providence (<1384>Job 38:41; <4170>Psalm 147:9), and now they fed the prophet. Have we experienced

God's special goodness to us and ours? Let us reckon ourselves obliged thereby to be kind to those that are his, for his sake. Let us learn hence, *First*, To acknowledge the sovereignty and power of God over all the creatures; he can make what use he pleases of them, either for judgment or mercy. *Secondly*, To encourage ourselves in God in the greatest straits, and never to distrust him. He that could furnish a table in the wilderness, and make ravens purveyors, cooks, and servitors to his prophet, is able to supply all our need according to his riches in glory.

Thus does Elijah, for a great while, *eat his morsels alone*, and his provision of water, which he has in an ordinary way from the brook, fails him before that which he has by miracle. The powers of nature are limited, but not the powers of the God of nature. Elijah's brook dried up (v. 7) *because there was no rain*. If the heavens fail, earth fails of course; such are all our creature-comforts; we lose them when we most need them, like the brooks in summer, ^{<1865>}Job 6:15. But there is *a river which makes glad the city of God* and which never runs dry (^{<1941>}Psalm 46:4), *a well of water that springs up to eternal life*. Lord, give us that living water!

<1178>1 KINGS 17:8-16

THE WIDOW OF ZAREPHATH

We have here an account of the further protection Elijah was taken under, and the further provision made for him in his retirement. *At destruction and famine he shall laugh* that has God for his friend to guard and maintain him. The brook Cherith is dried up, but God's care of his people, and kindness to them, never slacken, never fail, but are still the same, are still continued and drawn out to those that know him, ^{<1930>}Psalm 36:10. When the brook was dried up Jordan was not; why did not God send him thither? Surely because he would show that he has a variety of ways to provide for his people and is not tied to any one. God will now provide for him where he shall have some company and opportunity of usefulness, and not be, as he had been, buried alive. Observe,

I. The place he is sent to, to *Zarephath*, or *Sarepta*, a city of Sidon, out of the borders of the land of Israel, v. 9. Our Saviour takes notice of this as an early and ancient indication of the favour of God designed for the poor Gentiles, in the fulness of time, ^{<1025>}Luke 4:25, 26. *Many widows were in*

Israel in the days of Elias, and some, it is likely, that would have bidden him welcome to their houses; yet he is sent to honour and bless with his presence a city of Sidon, a Gentile city, and so becomes (says Dr. Lightfoot) *the first prophet of the Gentiles*. Israel had corrupted themselves with the idolatries of the nations and become worse than they; justly therefore is *the casting off of them the riches of the world*. Elijah was hated and driven out by his countrymen; therefore, lo, he turns to the Gentiles, as the apostles were afterwards ordered to do, ^{<486>}Acts 18:6. But why to a city of Sidon? Perhaps because the worship of Baal, which was now the crying sin of Israel, came lately thence with Jezebel, who was a Sidonian (^{<1161>}1 Kings 16:31); therefore thither he shall go, that thence may be fetched the destroyer of that idolatry, “Even out of Sidon have I called my prophet, my reformer.” Jezebel was Elijah's greatest enemy; yet, to show her the impotency of her malice, God will find a hiding-place for him even in her country. Christ never went among the Gentiles except once *into the coast of Sidon*, ^{<4152>}Matthew 15:21.

II. The person that is appointed to entertain him, not one of the rich merchants or great men, of Sidon, not such a one as Obadiah, that was governor of Ahab's house and fed the prophets; but a poor widow woman, destitute and desolate, is commanded (that is, is made both able and willing) to sustain him. It is God's way, and it is his glory, to make use of the *weak and foolish things of the world* and put honour upon them. He is, in a special manner, the widows' God, and feeds them, and therefore they must study what they shall render to him.

III. The provision made for him there. Providence brought the widow woman to meet him very opportunely at the gate of the city (v. 10), and, by what is here related of what passed between Elijah and her, we find,

1. Her case and character; and it appears,

(1.) That she was very poor and necessitous. She had nothing to live upon but a handful of meal and a little oil, needy at the best, and now, by the general scarcity, reduced to the last extremity. When she has eaten the little she has, for aught she yet sees, she must die for want, she and her son, v. 12. She had no fuel but the sticks she gathered in the streets, and, having no servant, she must gather them herself (v. 10), being thus more in a condition to receive alms than give entertainment. To her Elijah was sent, that he might still live upon Providence as much as he did when the ravens

fed him. It was in compassion to the low estate of his handmaiden that God sent the prophet to her, not to beg of her, but to board with her, and he would pay well for his table.

(2.) That she was very humble and industrious. He found her gathering sticks, and preparing to bake her own bread, v. 10, 12. Her mind was brought to her condition, and she complained not of the hardship she was brought to, nor quarrelled with the divine Providence for withholding rain, but accommodated herself to it as well as she could. Such as are of this temper in a day of trouble are best prepared for honour and relief from God.

(3.) That she was very charitable and generous. When this stranger desired her to go and fetch him some water to drink, she readily went, at the first word, v. 10, 11. She objected not to the present scarcity of it, nor asked him what he would give her for a draught of water (for now it was worth money), nor hinted that he was a stranger, an Israelite, with whom perhaps the Sidonians cared not for having any dealings, any more than the Samaritans, ~~404~~ John 4:9. She did not excuse herself on account of her weakness through famine, or the urgency of her own affairs, did not tell him she had something else to do than to go on his errands, but left off gathering the sticks for herself to fetch water for him, which perhaps she did the more willingly, being moved with the gravity of his aspect. We should be ready to do any office of kindness even to strangers; if we have not wherewith to give to the distressed, we must be the more ready to work for them. A cup of cold water, though it cost us no more than the labour of fetching, shall in no wise lose its reward.

(4.) That she had a great confidence in the word of God. It was a great trial for her faith and obedience when, having sold the prophet how low her stock of meal and oil was and that she had but just enough for herself and her son, he bade her *make a cake for him*, and make *his* first, and then *prepare for herself and her son*. If we consider, it will appear as great a trial as could be in so small a matter. "Let the children first be served" (might she have said); "charity begins at home. I cannot be expected to give, having but little, and not knowing, when that is gone, where to obtain more." She had much more reason than Nabal to ask, "Shall I take my meat and my oil and *give it to one that I know not whence he is?*" Elijah, it is true, made mention of *the God of Israel* (v. 14), but what was that to a Sidonian? Or if she had a veneration for the name *Jehovah*, and valued the

God of Israel as the true God, yet what assurance had she that this stranger was his prophet or had any warrant to speak in his name? It was easy for a hungry vagrant to impose upon her. But she gets over all these objections, and obeys the precept in dependence upon the promise: She *went and did according to the saying of Elijah*, v. 15. *O woman! great was thy faith; one has not found the like, no, not in Israel*: all things considered, it exceeded that of the widow who, when she had but two mites, cast them into the treasury. She took the prophet's word, that she should not lose by it, but it should be repaid with interest. Those that can venture upon the promise of God will make no difficulty of exposing and emptying themselves in his service, by giving him his dues out of a little and giving him his part first. Those that deal with God must deal upon trust; seek first his kingdom, and then other things shall be added. By the law, the first-fruits were God's, the tithe was taken out first, and the heave-offering of their dough was first offered, ^{<0453>}Numbers 15:20, 21. But surely the increase of this widow's faith, to such a degree as to enable her thus to deny herself and to depend upon the divine promise, was as great a miracle in the kingdom of grace as the increase of her oil was in the kingdom of providence. Happy are those who can thus, against hope, believe and obey in hope.

2. The care God took of her guest: *The barrel of meal wasted not, nor did the cruse of oil fail*, but still as they took from them more was added to them by the divine power, v. 16. Never did corn or olive so increase in the growing (says bishop Hall) as these did in the using; but the *multiplying of the seed sown* (^{<0490>}2 Corinthians 9:10) in the common course of providence is an instance of the power and goodness of God not to be overlooked because common. The meal and the oil multiplied, not in the hoarding, but in the spending; for *there is that scattereth and yet increaseth*. When God blesses a little, it will go a great way, even beyond expectation; as, on the contrary, though there be abundance, if he blow upon it, it comes to little, ^{<0409>}Haggai 1:9; 2:16.

(1.) This was a maintenance for the prophet. Still miracles shall be his daily bread. Hitherto he had been fed with bread and flesh, now he was fed with bread and oil, which they used as we do butter. Manna was both, for the *taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil*, ^{<0418>}Numbers 11:8. This Elijah was thankful for, though he had been used to flesh twice a day and now had none at all. Those that cannot live without flesh, once a day at least,

because they have been used to it, could not have boarded contentedly with Elijah, no, not to live upon a miracle.

(2.) It was a maintenance for *the poor widow and her son*, and a recompence to her for entertaining the prophet. There is nothing lost by being kind to God's people and ministers; she that received a prophet had a prophet's reward; she gave him house-room, and he repaid her with food for her household. Christ has promised to those who open their doors to him that he will come in to them, and *sup with them*, and *they with him*, ^{<1121>}Revelation 3:20. Like Elijah here, he brings to those who bid him welcome, not only his own entertainment, but theirs too. See how the reward answered the service. She generously made one cake for the prophet, and was repaid with many for herself and her son. When Abraham offers his only son to God he is told he shall be the father of multitudes. What is laid out in piety or charity is let out to the best interest, upon the best securities. One poor meal's meat this poor widow gave the prophet, and, in recompence of it, *she and her son did eat many days* (v. 15), above two years, in a time of general scarcity; and to have their food from God's special favour, and to eat it in such good company as Elijah's, made it more than doubly sweet. It is promised to those that trust in God that they *shall not be ashamed in the evil time, but in the days of famine they shall be satisfied*, ^{<1379>}Psalm 37:19.

^{<1177>}1 KINGS 17:17-24

THE WIDOW'S CHILD RAISED TO LIFE

We have here a further recompence made to the widow for her kindness to the prophet; as if it were a small thing to be kept alive, her son, when dead, is restored to life, and so restored to her. Observe,

I. The sickness and death of the child. For aught that appears he was her only son, the comfort of her widowed estate. He was fed miraculously, and yet that did not secure him from sickness and death. *Your fathers did eat manna, and are dead, but there is bread of which a man may eat and not die*, which was given for the life of the world, ^{<1169>}John 6:49, 50. The affliction was to this widow as a thorn in the flesh, lest she should be lifted up above measure with the favours that were done her and the honours that were put upon her.

1. She was nurse to a great prophet, was employed to sustain him, and had strong reason to think the Lord would do her good; yet now she loses her child. Note, We must not think it strange if we meet with very sharp afflictions, even when we are in the way of duty, and of eminent service to God.

2. She was herself nursed by miracle, and kept a good house without charge or care, by a distinguishing blessing from heaven; and in the midst of all this satisfaction she was thus afflicted. Note, When we have the clearest manifestations of God's favour and good-will towards us, even then we must prepare for the rebukes of Providence. Our mountain never stands so strong but it may be moved, and therefore, in this world, we must always rejoice with trembling.

II. Her pathetic complaint to the prophet of this affliction. It should seem, the child died suddenly, else she would have applied to Elijah, while he was sick, for the cure of him; but being dead, dead in her bosom, she expostulates with the prophet upon it, rather to give vent to her sorrow than in any hope of relief, v. 18.

1. She expresses herself passionately: *What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God?* How calmly had she spoken of her own and her child's death when she expected to die for want (v. 12) — *that we may eat, and die!* Yet now that her child dies, and not so miserably as by famine, she is extremely disturbed at it. We may speak lightly of an affliction at a distance, but when it *toucheth us we are troubled*, ^{<1845>}Job 4:5. Then she spoke deliberately, now in haste; the death of her child was now a surprise to her, and it is hard to keep our spirits composed when troubles come upon us suddenly and unexpectedly, and in the midst of our peace and prosperity. She calls him *a man of God*, and yet quarrels with him as if he had occasioned the death of her child, and is ready to which she had never seen him, forgetting past mercies and miracles: “What have I done against thee?” (so some understand it), “Wherein have I offended thee, or been wanting in my duty? Show me wherefore thou contendest with me.”

2. Yet she expresses herself penitently: “*Hast thou come to call my sin to thy remembrance*, as the cause of the affliction, and so to call it to my remembrance, as the effect of the affliction?” Perhaps she knew of Elijah's intercession against Israel, and, being conscious to herself of sin, perhaps

her former worshipping of Baal the god of the Sidonians, she apprehends he had made intercession against her. Note,

(1.) When God removes our comforts from use he remembers our sins against us, perhaps the iniquities of our youth, though long since past, ~~1836~~ Job 13:26. Our sins are the death of our children.

(2.) When God thus remembers our sins against us he designs thereby to make us remember them against ourselves and repent of them.

III. The prophet's address to God upon this occasion. He gave no answer to her expostulation, but brought it to God, and laid the case before him, not knowing what to say to it himself. He took the dead child from the mother's bosom to his own bed, v. 19. Probably he had taken a particular kindness to the child, and found the affliction his own more than by sympathy. He retired to his chamber, and,

1. He humbly reasons with God concerning the death of the child, v. 20. He sees death striking by commission from God: *Thou hast brought this evil* for is there any evil of this kind in the city, in the family, and the Lord has not done it? He pleads the greatness of the affliction to the poor mother: "It is *evil upon the widow*; thou art the widow's God, and dost not usually bring evil upon widows; it is affliction added to the afflicted." He pleads his own concern: "It is the widow *with whom I sojourn*; wilt thou, that art my God, bring evil upon one of the best of my benefactors? I shall be reflected upon, and others will be afraid of entertaining me, if I bring death into the house where I come."

2. He earnestly begs of God to restore the child to life again, v. 21. We do not read before this of any that were raised to life; yet Elijah, by a divine impulse, prays for the resurrection of this child, which yet will not warrant us to do the like. David expected not, by fasting and prayer, to bring his child back to life (~~3023~~ 2 Samuel 12:23), but Elijah had a power to work miracles, which David had not. He *stretched himself upon the child*, to affect himself with the case and to show how much he was affected with it and how desirous he was of the restoration of the child — he would if he could put life into him by his own breath and warmth; also to give a sign of what God would do by his power, and what he does by his grace, in raising dead souls to a spiritual life; the Holy Ghost comes upon them, overshadows them, and puts life into them. He is very particular in his prayer: *I pray thee let this child's soul come into him again*, which plainly

supposes the existence of the soul in a state of separation from the body, and consequently its immortality, which Grotius thinks God designed by this miracle to give intimation and evidence of, for the encouragement of his suffering people.

IV. The resurrection of the child, and the great satisfaction it gave to the mother: the child revived, v. 22. See the power of prayer and the power of him that hears prayer, who *kills and makes alive*. Elijah brought him to his mother, who, we may suppose, could scarcely believe her own eyes, and therefore Elijah assures her it is her own: “It is *thy son that liveth*; see it is thy own, and not another,” v. 23. The good woman hereupon cries out, *Now I know that thou art a man of God*; though she knew it before, by the increase of her meal, yet the death of her child she took so unkindly that she began to question it (a good man surely would not serve her so); but now she was abundantly satisfied that he had both the power and goodness of a man of God, and will never doubt of it again, but give up herself to the direction of his word and the worship of the God of Israel. Thus the death of the child (like that of Lazarus, ^{<BIB>}John 11:4) was for the glory of God and the honour of his prophet.