

healing of the centurion's servant—the subject of our study in the lesson of last Lord's day. And in order to perform this, the grandest of His miracles up to the present, it was necessary that He should take a journey from Capernaum of about twenty-five miles to Nain, at the south-eastern end of the plain of Esdraelon. This journey was probably performed on foot, and in the morning, arriving at Nain about noon.

The place. "The modern Nain, is undoubtedly the ancient *Nain*. Though now a miserable village, the ruins indicate that it was once a town with walls and gates. It stands on the western slope of Ed-Dubiy or Little Hermon, one of the hills at the south-eastern end of the plain of Esdraelon. A little to the east of the village is the Moslem burying ground, and the rock on the west side is full of sepulchral graves."—*Stack*.

Funeral customs. "See how those women tore their arms, swung their kerchiefs, and scream, and shriek at the top of their voices! Yes and they go before to the grave; for it is not customary for men and women to walk together on such occasions. But when you know that many of these mourners and chanters are hired, and weep, and howl, and beat their breasts and tear their hair according to contract, your compassion will fail fast. Yet you must not suppose there is no genuine sorrow among this people. Amid all this ostentatious parade, there are burning tears, and hearts bursting in agonies and despair."—*Thompson*, in the *Land and the Book*, which see for further description, pgs. 97-108.

The miracle. "Though constantly exerting His power on disease in its various forms and stages, our Lord came in contact with death—the fruit of disease when it is finished—on three occasions, so far as the records go. On the first He restored a maiden who had only just passed away. On the second He restored the young man who had been dead some hours, whose body had been laid out and prepared for the grave, and who was actually being carried to the tomb. On the third He met death and wrested his victim from him after he had been in the tomb four days. There thus appears to be a gradation in the exertion in his power which is evidently designed to assure us that He has the keys of Hades and of Death."

The gate. "Ancient cities were very commonly surrounded by walls to protect them from enemies, and hence the gates. But at the entrance of almost every town in the east is the gate, although there be no wall, and as people pass in and out this way, it was formerly the place of public assembling and of dispensing of justice, *Matt* 10: 25. The Jews as well as the Romans were accustomed to bury their dead outside the gates, except that the kings of David's house were buried within the city of David, *2 Kings* 21: 18. The practice of burying in churchyards was introduced, perhaps, in honor of the early martyrs," *Jor.* 22: 39.—*Facobus*.

The bier. "The Jews did not use a coffin for their dead; this belonged to Babylon and Egypt. At Alexandria we saw a funeral procession headed by four young men, priests,—two in white, two in common blue dress—the pairs chanting responsively. Four persons carried the plain wooden bier, also the wooden coffin, which was carried. The corpse was in a coffin having a low head-piece. But in Constantinople we saw such a funeral as this at Nain. The body was stretched out on a long bier, like one asleep on a bed,—covered with shawls and silk. The head, hands, and feet were bare. The bier was carried by four persons."—*Facobus*.

"Death is the one thing above all others that is wholly beyond the control of man, and it gives us such a delightful confidence in Christ as our Saviour to find that death is wholly *subditum* His control, and nothing—not even death—can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."—*S. S. U. Notes*.

"It is remarkable that these miracles were

wrought on an only daughter, an only son, and an only brother. In each case Christ addressed the dead person directly: 'Damsel! ' 'Young man!' 'Lazarus!'—*Stack*.

DEATH.

When thoughts
Of the last bitter hour come like a blight
Upon thy spirit, and sad images
Of the stern agony, and shroud, and pall,
And breathless darkness, and the narrow house,
Make thee to shudder and grow sick at heart;
Go forth, under the open sky, and list
To nature's teachings, while from all around—
Earth and her waters, and the depths of air,
Comes a still voice—Yet a few days, and these
All this beholding sun shall see no more
In all his course; nor yet in the cold ground,
Where thy pale form was laid with many tears,
Nor in the embrace of ocean shall exist
Thy image. Earth that nourished thee shall claim
Thy growth to be resolved to earth again.

Then shalt thou shudder
With patriarchs of the infant world—with kings
The powerful of the earth—the wise, the good,
Fair forms and hoary seers of ages past,
All in one mighty sepulchre—
All that breathe
Will share thy destiny. The gay will laugh
When thou art gone, the solemn brood of care
Plead on, and each one as before will chase
His favorite phantom; yet all these shall come
And make their bed with thee. As the long train
Of ages glides away, the sons of men,
The youth in life's green spring, and he who goes
In the full strength of years, matron and maid
And the sweet babe, and the grey-headed man
Shall one by one be gathered to thy side.
By those, who in their turn shall follow thee."

—*W. C. Bryant's Thanatopsis.*

IN THE CLASS.

Our lesson presents to us, 1st. Death: 2nd. Sorrow: 3rd. Human sympathy: 4th. Divine compassion: 5th. Divine power.

DEATH.

Now when He came nigh . . . there was a dead man carried out; another illustration of the reign of death, *Rom.* 5: 14-17, one instance of the myriads carried forth to their long home and of its *certainty*, *Rom.* 5: 12. Of even the oldest it is said, "and he died," *Gen.* 5: 27. Another instance of its uncertainty—as to time, as to place, and as to circumstances: the only son of his mother, in youth, before her, in the order of nature should have gone before him. "Death seizes on old men, and lays wait for the youngest."—*Trapp*. Though the old must die, the young may die. As it is certain, we ought not to forget it, as it is uncertain we ought to be ready. *Ps.* 39: 4; *89: 48; Job* 21: 22-25; *Matt.* 25: 11-13; *Luc.* 32: 29.

The globe are but a handful to the tribes
That slumber in its bosom."—*W. C. Bryant!*

SORROW.

The only son of his mother, and she was a widow. A double sorrow, first the delight of her eyes, and next the stay of her old age: bereft indeed. *Ruth* 1: 19-21; *Zech.* 12: 10. Death's universality—all times, all places all circumstances, *Ps.* 90: 10; *107: 39; Job* 5: 7. It comes because of sin—as its fruit, and from the continual change that is going on around us. But there is a place where there is no sorrow. Sang a little boy on the streets of Chicago:

"There'll be no more sorrow there."

"Where?" said a man made desperate by grief and hastening to commit suicide,

"In heaven above where all is love,

There'll be no more sorrow there."

came back the answer in the song. It was the voice of God. He stopped, and turned and sought and found the Lord. *Isa.* 35: 10; *51: 11; Rev.* 7: 14-17; *21: 4.*

HUMAN SYMPATHY.

And much people of the city was

with her. "The most bitter lamentations are for the young, and for fathers of families." The large company that went with the sorrowing widow was an evidence of the esteem in which she and her son were held, and the deep sympathy they had with her in her great and irreparable loss. And though they could not restore her lost son, yet by their sympathy they could in a measure assuage her grief, and comfort her. "Joys are doubled by being shared, and sorrows divided." "I only cried with her" said a little girl who had given unspeakable comfort to one in deep sorrow. *Rom.* 12: 15.

DIVINE COMPASSION.

And when the Lord saw her He had compassion on her. "Sympathy" means sorrow with, "compassion" a determination to help. Man can sympathize with, where he cannot help. God's sympathy ever moves Him to compassion, if we are sorrowing or suffering. The Lord's arm is ever with heart. "Christ had a most tender heart. How shall He not pity and provide for His praying people?"—*Trapp*.

Weep not. Man can say as much. He says it not because he can remove the sorrow, only because he would if he could. But Jesus can quench our tears and turn them to smiles by taking away the cause.

DIVINE POWER.

He touched the bier to intimate to the bearers that they should stand still; and so they understood and obeyed.

I say unto these arise. He who was the "Resurrection and the Life." So spake He to the maiden, *Luke* 8: 54; similar were His words to Lazarus, *John* 11: 43. And so will it be at the last great day, *John* 5: 28, 29. And so it will spiritually with all to whom He speaks, *John* 5: 25.

"Our Lord healed, probably every kind of disease known in Palestine. He raised the dying from beds they had not seemed to leave again. But He had not yet raised the dead. This alone was wanting to complete the evidence of divine power which His miracles offered. The very next day supplied this further attestation."—*Ryle*.

Compare the ease with which Jesus performed this miracle with the miracles recorded in *1 Kings* 17: 23; *2 Kings* 4: 36. So can Jesus by a word raise us up to a new and divine life.

Aug. 25.—The Friend of Sinners.—*Luke* 7: 40-50. A. D. 28.

GOLDEN TEXT.

This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.—*Luke* 15: 2.

IN THE STUDY.

The lesson to-day follows very closely upon the one of last Lord's day. The only passage that we can insert between the two is *Matt.* 11: 20-30, where our Lord upbraids the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, for their impotence.

There is considerable difference of opinion as to the place where this Simon who invited our Lord to eat with him lives. Some think it was Nain, others Magdala, and others again Jerusalem; the probability is, however, that it was not far from Nain, if not in Nain itself.

The reason of the pharisee's invitation is not given. "Probably in inviting them Simon was influenced partly by curiosity, partly by a desire to receive the popular and distinguished Teacher, partly by willingness to show a distant approval of something which may have struck him in Christ's looks, or words, or ways. It is quite