

CRITICAL NOTES.

The majesty of Jesus thus far has been vindicated, in a most surprising manner, by his miracles as well as by the authority exhibited in his teaching. So absolute a master has he already proven himself to be in the presence of every variety of disease that his followers must by this time have been convinced that no case of physical infirmity could baffle him. Such a degree of confidence certainly had been imparted to the centurion of whom Luke tells us in the immediately preceding context, who asks that Jesus will, by a simple word of command uttered at a distance, bring back to health a servant of his who lies at the point of death. But have his followers as yet asked themselves whether their Prophet's power likewise reaches beyond death? The occurrence at Nain gives them the most unexpected light upon that question. They now know that Jesus of Nazareth can even raise the dead.

In the earliest Christian testimony the raising of Jairus's daughter had doubtless been the favorite example of Jesus's power over death in his Galilean period. It is to Luke that we owe this other most striking instance of the same power, which was sometimes also appealed to in the apostolic preaching.

It is, however, not only the majesty of Jesus which is revealed in this unique incident at Nain, but that complementary quality of divine compassion which had been only less clearly discerned in his cures of the sick and possessed.

Verse 11. Soon afterwards. Tischendorf and others who read on the next day see a closer bond between the two miracles and the sign of greater energy on the part of the Healer. As it was some twenty-five miles from Capernaum (ver. 1) to Nain, the internal grounds for the Rev. Ver. reading are rather strong. **Went.** For the purpose of preaching the Gospel there, doubtless. Chap. 4, 15, 44. **Called Nain.** Luke writes to one who has never visited Palestine. The name, meaning "pasture," or, "the pleasant," may have been given in allusion to its green pastures or the romantic beauty of the natural situation, on a site which commanded the adjacent plain of Esdraelon, Mount Tabor, the city of Nazareth among the farther hills, and snowy Hermon in the distant north. **His disciples.** As in the other two cases of resurrection, that of Jairus's daughter (Luke 8, 51; John 11), the presence of these trustworthy witnesses is carefully noted. **Great multitude.** Many of the crowd may have followed him all the way from Capernaum. Ver. 9. Others doubtless joined the moving mass at various points on the way through this rich and thickly populated province. Mark, more often than the other evangelists, calls our attention to the vast throngs that surrounded and accompanied Jesus during this period of popularity.

12. Gate. An opening in the city wall, provided with massive doors, and high enough for the admission of a wheeled vehicle, but strongly built for defense. **Behold.** This word bids the reader imagine the surprise and interest suddenly aroused in all by this unexpected encounter. The disciples and many of the following crowd had seen sick people laid before him (4, 38) and at once restored to health; but not one of them had thought of such a situation as this—a lifeless corpse brought to him. The funeral procession could not escape attention. The loud wailing of the mourners and the sound of flute-playing could be heard as soon as the procession emerged from the gate, and the body, lying on a plank or in an open wicker coffin, could be plainly seen as it was borne aloft on the heads of men. **Only son.** Her only support, the pillar of her pride and hope. She had hoped that he would close her eyes in

death. This is one of three instances (8, 42; 9, 38) in which Luke is alone in noticing the peculiar affection which parents lavish upon an only child. The "beloved physician" had observed domestic life closely. **A widow.** See how Naomi spoke of a widow's grief. Ruth 1, 19-21. It may be that Jesus had first marked the sorrows of widowhood in his own home at Nazareth. While on the cross he thinks of her loneliness after his departure. John 19, 27. He notes with enthusiasm the self-denying widow who gave her all to the Lord's treasury. Mark 12, 43. **Much people.** An incidental touch enhancing the pathos of the scene.

13. The Lord. This term, applied to Jesus to indicate his divine sovereignty (Acts 10, 36), is not used by Matthew and Mark in speaking of events prior to the resurrection. Luke first introduces it here where Jesus first appears as having power over death. **Saw her.** Not, saw him. The pale and agonized countenance drew his attention and profoundly moved his sympathy. So (John 11, 33) the sight of a woman's grief again touched him. **On her.** Not the exact idea of the Greek, which confines attention to the effect produced on Jesus by what he saw and does not represent his sympathy as in Mark 6, 34, going actively forth. **Weep not.** "Cease weeping" gives the force of the original. This strange address would at once suggest sympathy and arrest attention. The calm confidence with which he proceeds to work a miracle here is like that which he showed at Lazarus's tomb (John 11, 41), where he openly thanks the Father for granting him his petition.

14. Touched the bier. As a silent and dignified token to the bearers that they should pause. He may have exerted a slight downward pressure, which they obeyed by lowering to the ground the plank or basket on which the body rested. As in touching the leper (Mark 1, 41) he quietly ignored the ceremonial defilement thereby contracted. **I say unto thee.** How unobtrusive his authority. No walking to and fro, as in Elisha's case (2 Kings 4, 35); no wrestling in prayer as in Peter's. Acts 9, 40. **Arise.** The bier was now resting on the ground.

15. Was dead. Calls attention to the miracle as such. **Sat up.** On the bier. Return of strength. **Began to speak.** Restoration of consciousness. **Gave him.** The Greek sentence is an exact repetition of the Septuagint version of 1 Kings 17, 23, where Elijah delivers her son to the widow of Zarephath. See Acts 9, 41. The word puts the act in the light of a divine generosity toward the forlorn mother. Compare the word "bestowed," ver. 21. Jesus may have turned to the widow and said with beaming face, Behold, thy son!

16. Fear. A sense of reverential dread. Luke 5, 8. **All.** In Greek, all, without exception. **Glorified God.** Acknowledged the presence of God in the miracle. **Great prophet.** Moses and Elijah were such. **Us.** Galileans. **Visited.** The silence which followed Malachi, the last of the prophets, has at last been broken. **His people.** The Jewish nation.

17. This report. That he had raised to life a dead man. **Went forth from Galilee.** Round about. And so into Peræa and as far as Machærus, where John the Baptist was imprisoned.

18. Told him. John may have expected that Jesus would by this time have established a temporal kingdom and that he himself should have been released from prison. He has had compassion upon a broken-hearted widow, but when is he to take the fan in hand and thoroughly purge his floor?

Question 2.

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