

for the grave. One cannot read this story without contrasting it with the cases where prophets and apostles by special divine power were enabled to raise the dead. In every such case there was manifest a tension and strain of all powers of soul, mind, and body. But Jesus acts with an "exalted composure," as if that which is the most astonishing of miracles to us were but an ordinary exercise of his inherent might. There seems to be nothing of accident here. While at Capernaum he is conscious that at Nain—twenty-five miles away among the mountains—a widowed mother is weeping over the corpse of her only son. He journeys to the spot, and meets the mourners on their way to the hill-side grave. At his touch the bearers pause. At his word the dead youth rises into new life; the mother receives her son; the witnesses give glory to God who has sent so great a prophet in Israel, and the fame of the mighty Worker resounds throughout the land. This story is told by Luke only.

### EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

**Verse 11. The day after.** A little incidental phrase that points to the ceaseless beneficent activity of Christ. **He went.** He may have sailed or rowed down the lake to its southern end, then walked southward along the Jordan's bank, until he reached a ravine leading westward. **Nain.** If he started early in the morning, as Orientals habitually do, he reached this town about noon. It is picturesquely perched on the north-western slope of "little Hermon," and in full view of Tabor. Its name means "Lovely," but it was never a place of much importance, and is now ruined and squalid. (1) "God often chooses very ordinary spots for the most marvellous events to happen in." This entire incident is a beautiful illustration of the doctrine of special providence. (2) *Christ often feels our troubles before we feel his relief.* **Disciples....and much people.** Curiosity-seekers and earnest followers mingled in the crowd. Almost every congregation that assembles on Sunday in church is similarly mixed, though perhaps not in the same proportion. (3) *With what motive and for what purpose do you find yourself among the people of God?* It was just now the fashion to follow Jesus. The highest hopes of the patriots had been aroused, the enmity of the persecutors was not fully developed, and as yet there had been no "sifting." (4) *Popularity is not a sure sign of success.* (5) "Genuine disciples follow their Lord, not only to Nain, but to Galgotha."

**12. Gate of the city.** Most Oriental cities are surrounded by walls, but even unwall'd villages have their gates of entrance. **Behold.** Look! One procession meets another! The jubilant crowd following the lofty-browed Prophet pauses at the approach of the bearers of the corpse, with the wailing, bereaved ones behind them. (6) *Death comes down with reckless footstep to the hall and hut.* **Carried out.** In the East burial places are always outside the city walls. The hill-sides around Nain are honey-combed with rock-hewn sepulchres. **The only son.** The death of any friend causes deep pain. The loss of a son in the morning of his manhood is one of the hardest blows that can fall. But for a widowed woman to lose her only son seems the culmination of sorrow. **She was a widow.** Widowhood in the Orient is a synonym for ruin. The loss of her husband places a woman in those countries in infinitely worse conditions than the same circumstances would bring about here. **Much people.** The Jews were a sympathetic race (John 11, 19; Jer. 6, 26; Zech. 12, 10; Amos 8, 10, 13), but unusual sympathy seems to have been drawn out for this woman. (7) *Let us not forget the Bible command to weep with those that weep, as well as to rejoice with those that rejoice.* In hours of grief a kind word or act—even a silent pressure of the hand—has a wonderful power to comfort and strengthen.

**13. The Lord.** This title is rarely applied to Jesus in the gospels; at first it meant hardly more than "sir," or "master," but later it rose to its highest meaning. At this moment "the Lord" towered as the mighty Controller of life and death. **Saw her.** Her anguish was a silent prayer. (8) *We need no intercessor with Christ.*

(9) *Jesus never shunned a trouble, nor left unlifted a burden of humanity. Had compassion on her.* It is noteworthy how often this reason is given by the evangelists for the performance of Christ's miracles. **Weep not.** The staidness of the old English of our Bible takes away somewhat from the pathos of this verse. What Jesus said, in accents of tenderest compassion, was, *Don't cry.* All that the Nain people could do was to weep with the weeper. Jesus was about to dry her tears.

**14. Came and touched.** There was not a Rabbi in all Jewry who would have touched that plunk with the corpse on it. It must have been a cause of the greatest wonder to the gaping crowd that Jesus would in this manner ceremonially defile himself. But he had come on a mission of love, and he tore conventionalities into strips as we would tear paper. **Bier.** In an Eastern burial no coffin is used. The body is wrapped in linen clothes, laid upon a bier, and carried to its last resting-place by four bearers. The bier may have been of plank or (Edersheim) of wicker-work. **Arise.** They were just outside the gate. The hum of the town's traffic still reached their ears over the walls. The confused noise of an Oriental street, the shouting of donkey drivers, the hallooing of children at play, the hawking cries of vendors of food—all these high-keyed utterances are heard at great distances through the still air. But there was one word spoken on that Galilean hill-side that sunny afternoon that went farther than any accent ever uttered by a mere mortal. Clear past the confines of this physical world, out into the calm eternities, went Jesus's call. In the gray regions of departed souls it was heard, and the ghost of this young man immediately returned to reanimate the still body on the wicker-work bier.

**15. He that was dead sat up.** No skeptical ingenuity can make any thing out of this story but a clear statement that a corpse was made to live again. **Delivered him to his mother.** How pathetic must have been this scene.

**16. Fear on all.** They had seen the power of God, and were terrified. **Glorified.** Praised. **Great prophet.** The highest conception a Jew could yet have. That God could have a Son was not yet dreamed. **Among us.** Even in Galilee. **God hath visited.** The Messiah has come.

**17. Humor.** This miracle, the most remarkable yet wrought, carried his name over all the land. **Throughout all Judea.** The news was carried southward through Samaria, and the crowds at the feast in Jerusalem took it to their distant homes. **The region round about.** The province of Galilee. Thus the land was awakened to interest from end to end. (10) *It is well when a people begin to inquire for Christ.*

**18. Disciples of John.** All Judea and Galilee were full of them—a young religious and political party which claimed John as its head, but poor John was fettered in Macharus, and was soon to lose his own head. This verse is part of the next incident narrated.