

# EXPOSITORY THOUGHTS ON THE GOSPELS.

FOR FAMILY AND PRIVATE USE.

WITH THE TEXT COMPLETE,

*And Many Explanatory Notes.*

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LUKE VIII. 49–56.

49 While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's <i>house</i> , saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master.	said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth.
50 But when Jesus heard <i>it</i> , he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.	53 And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.
51 And when <i>he</i> came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden.	54 And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, Arise.
52 And all wept, and bewailed her: but he	55 And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat.
	56 And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.

THE verses we have now read contain one of the three great instances which the Holy Ghost has thought fit to record of our Lord restoring a dead person to life. The other two instances are those of Lazarus and the widow's son at Nain. There seems no reason to doubt that our Lord raised others beside these three. But these three cases are specially described as patterns of His almighty power. One was a young girl, who had just breathed her last. One was a young man, who was being carried to his burial. One was a man, who had already lain four days in the grave. In all three cases alike we see life at once restored at Christ's command.

Let us notice, in the verses before us, *how universal is the dominion, which death, holds over the sons of men.* We see death coming to a rich man's house, and tearing from him the desire of his eyes with a stroke. "There cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead." Such tidings as these are the bitterest cups which we have to drink in this world. Nothing cuts so deeply into man's heart as to part with beloved ones, and lay them in the grave. Few griefs are so crushing and heavy as the grief of a parent over an only child.

Death is indeed a cruel enemy! He makes no distinction in his attacks. He comes to the rich man's hall as well as to the poor man's cottage. He does not spare the young, the strong, and the beautiful, any more than the old, the infirm, and the grey-haired. Not all the gold of Australia, nor all the skill of doctors, can keep the hand of death from our bodies in the day of his power. When the appointed hour comes, and God permits him to smite, our worldly schemes must be broken off, and our darlings must be taken away and buried out of our sight.

These thoughts are melancholy, and few like to hear of them. The subject of death is one that men blink, and refuse to look at. "All men think all men mortal but themselves." But why should we treat this great reality in this way? Why should we not rather look the subject of death in the face, in order that when our turn comes we may be prepared to die? Death will come to our houses, whether we like it or not. Death will take each of us away,

despite our dislike to hearing about it. Surely it is the part of a wise man to get ready for this great change. Why should we not be ready? There is One who can deliver us from the fear of death. (Heb. ii. 15.) Christ has overcome death, and “brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.” (2 Tim. i. 10.) He that believeth on Him hath everlasting life, and though he were dead yet shall he live. (John xi. 47; xi. 25.) Let us believe in the Lord Jesus, and then death will lose his sting. We shall then be able to say with Paul, “To me to die is gain.” (Phil. i. 21.)

Let us notice, secondly, in the verses before us, *that faith in Christ’s love and power is the best remedy in time of trouble*. We are told that when Jesus heard the tidings that the ruler’s daughter was dead, He said to him, “Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.”—These words, no doubt, were spoken with immediate reference to the miracle our Lord was going to perform. But we need not doubt that they were also meant for the perpetual benefit of the Church of Christ. They were meant to reveal to us the grand secret of comfort in the hour of need. That secret is to exercise faith, to fall back on the thought of Christ’s loving heart and mighty hand,—in one word, to believe.

Let a petition for more faith form a part of all our daily prayers. As ever we would have peace, and calmness, and quietness of spirit, let us often say, “Lord increase our faith.” A hundred painful things may happen to us every week in this evil world, of which our poor weak minds cannot see the reason. Without faith we shall be constantly disquieted and cast down. Nothing will make us cheerful and tranquil but an abiding sense of Christ’s love, Christ’s wisdom, Christ’s care over us, and Christ’s providential management of all our affairs. Faith will not sink under the weight of evil tidings. (Psa. ciii. 7.) Faith can sit still and wait for better times. Faith can see light even in the darkest hour, and a needs-be for the heaviest trial. Faith can find room to build Ebenezers under any circumstances, and can sing songs in the night in any condition. “He that believeth shall not make haste.” “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee.” (Is. xxviii. 16; xxvi. 3.) Once more let the lesson be graven on our minds. If we would travel comfortably through this world, we must “believe.”

Let us notice, finally, in these verses, *the almighty power which our Lord Jesus Christ possesses even over death*. We are told that He came to the house of Jairus and turned the mourning into joy. He took by the hand the breathless body of the ruler’s daughter, “and called saying, Damsel, arise.” At once, by that all-powerful voice, life was restored. “Her spirit came again, and she arose straightway.”

Let us take comfort in the thought that there is a limit to death’s power. The king of terrors is very strong. How many generations he has mowed down and swept into the dust? How many of the wise, and strong, and fair,

he has swallowed down and snatched away in their prime! How many victories he has won, and how often he has written, "Vanity of vanities," on the pride of man! Patriarchs and kings and prophets and apostles, have all in turn been obliged to yield to him. They have all died. But, thanks be unto God, there is One stronger than death. There is One who has said, "O death, I will be thy plagues: O grave, I will be thy destruction!" (Hosea xiii. 14.) That One is the Friend of sinners, Christ Jesus the Lord. He proved His power frequently when He came to earth the first time,—in the house of Jairus, by the tomb of Bethany, in the gate of Nain. He will prove it to all the world when He comes again. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (1 Cor. xv. 26.) "The earth shall cast out the dead." (Isa. xxvi. 19.)

Let us leave the passage with the consoling thought that the things which happened in Jairus' house are a type of good things to come. The hour cometh and will soon be here, when the voice of Christ shall call all His people from their graves, and gather them together to part no more. Believing husbands shall once more see believing wives. Believing parents shall once more see believing children. Christ shall unite the whole family in the great home in heaven, and all tears shall be wiped from all eyes.

NOTES. LUKE VIII. 49-56.

49.—[*Thy daughter is dead.*] Chemnitius remarks, that, with one exception (Mark i. 30), we never read in the Gospels of children coming to Christ on behalf of their parents, though we frequently read of parents applying on behalf of their children. He makes the deep observation, that "love is more prone to descend than to ascend."

[*The Master.*] Let it be noted that the Greek word so translated is not the same as that used in the 45th verse. It here signifies "the Teacher."

51.—[*Peter, and James, and John.*] These three Apostles, it should be remembered, were three times singled out from the rest of the twelve, and allowed to be our Lord's companions on special occasions. They were with Him on the Mount of Transfiguration, and in the Garden of Gethsemane, and on the occasion of this miracle. None of the Apostles had such a clear revelation of our Lord's divinity, our Lord's humanity, and our Lord's power and compassion towards the sorrowful and sinful.

52.—[*She is not dead, but sleepeth.*] Much has been said about the difficulty of this expression, but without any just cause. The strength of it has led some to assert that the daughter of Jairus was not really and literally dead, but only in a trance. Such an assertion contradicts the context, while there is really no difficulty in the expression that does not admit of explanation.

Burkitt says, that our Lord's meaning was this: "She is dead to you, but asleep to Me; not so dead as to be beyond my power to raise her to life."

Alford says, "The words are most probably used with reference to the speedy awakening which was to follow."

Jones, of Nayland, says, "As we have but imperfect notions of the relation and difference between life and death, our Saviour, when He was about to raise a maid to life, said to those who were present, 'The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.' He did not say, She is dead,

and I will raise her to life; but, She is asleep; whence it was to be inferred that she would awake. They who were not skilled in the language of signs and figures laughed Him to scorn, as if he had spoken in ignorance what was expressed with consummate truth and wisdom. The substitution of sleep for death has the force and value of a whole sermon in a single word.”

54.—[*He put them all out.*] When we read this expression, we should remember the words in the preceding verse, “They laughed Him to scorn.” It seems a rule in Christ’s dealings with men not to force evidence upon them, but rather to withhold from scorners and scoffers those proofs of His own mission which He affords to others. And as it was when He was upon earth, so it is now. The scoffing spirit is the spirit which is often left to itself.

55.—[*Her spirit came again.*] This is one of those texts which show plainly the separate existence of spirits, and their independence of the body. Matthew Henry remarks, “This proves that our souls exist and act in a state of separation from the body, and therefore are immortal, that death does not extinguish the candle of the Lord, but takes it out of a dark lantern. It is not, as Grotius observes, the temperament of the body, or anything that dies with it; but something that subsists by itself, which, after death, is somewhere else than where the body is. Where the soul of the child was in the interval we are not told. It was in the hand of the Father of spirits, to whom all souls at death return.”

[*To give her meat*] This would be proof positive that her body was really alive again, and that her parents saw no vision, but real material flesh and blood. It is the same evidence of resurrection which our Lord gave His disciples after His own rising from the dead: “Have ye here any meat? And he did eat before them.” (Luke xxiv. 41-43.)

56.—[*Tell no man.*] Let us note here, as in many places, how little our Lord desired publicity. To do great works, and say nothing about them,—to work powerfully, and yet noiselessly and quietly, is to walk in Christ’s steps. The shallowest streams and emptiest vessels make most noise.