

EXPOSITORY THOUGHTS
ON THE GOSPELS.

FOR FAMILY AND PRIVATE USE.

WITH THE TEXT COMPLETE,

And many Explanatory Notes.

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MDCCCLIX.

MARK V. 1–17.

1 And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.

2 And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,

3 Who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains:

4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any *man* tame him.

5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

6 But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him,

7 And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, *thou* Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.

8 For he said unto him, Come out of the man, *thou* unclean spirit.

9 And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name *is* legion: for we are many.

10 And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.

11 Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding.

12 And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.

13 And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea.

14 And they that fed the swine fled, and told *it* in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done.

15 And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

16 And they that saw *it* told them how it befel to him that was possessed with the devil, and *also* concerning the swine.

17 And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts.

THESE verses describe one of those mysterious miracles which the gospels frequently record, the casting out of a devil. Of all the cases of this kind in the New Testament, none is so fully described as this one. Of all the three evangelists who relate the history, none gives it so fully and minutely as St. Mark.

We see, in the first place, in these verses, *that the possession of a man's body by the devil, was a real and true thing in the time of our Lord's earthly ministry.*

It is a painful fact, that there are never wanting professing Christians who try to explain away our Lord's miracles. They endeavour to account for them by natural causes, and to show that they were not worked by any extraordinary power. Of all miracles, there are none which they assault so strenuously as the casting out of devils. They do not scruple to deny Satanic possession entirely. They tell us that it was nothing more than lunacy, or frenzy, or epilepsy, and that the idea of the devil inhabiting a man's body is absurd.

The best and simplest answer to such sceptical objections, is a reference to the plain narratives of the Gospels, and especially to the one before us at this moment. The facts here detailed are utterly inexplicable, if

we do not believe Satanic possession. It is notorious that lunacy, and frenzy, and epilepsy are not infectious complaints, and at any rate cannot be communicated to a herd of swine! And yet men ask us to believe, that as soon as this man was healed, two thousand swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, from a sudden impulse, without any apparent cause to account for their so doing! Such reasoning is the height of credulity. When men can satisfy themselves with such explanations, they are in a pitiable state of mind.

Let us beware of a sceptical and incredulous spirit in all matters relating to the devil. No doubt there is much in the subject of Satanic possession which we do not understand, and cannot explain. But let us not therefore refuse to believe it. The Eastern king who would not believe in the possibility of ice, because he lived in a hot country, and had never seen it, was not more foolish than the man who refuses to believe in Satanic possession, because he never saw a case himself, and cannot understand it. We may be sure, that upon the subject of the devil and his power, we are far more likely to believe too little than too much. Unbelief about the existence and personality of Satan, has often proved the first step to unbelief about God.

We see, in the second place, in these verses, *what an awfully cruel, powerful, and malicious being Satan is*. On all these three points, the passage before us is full of instruction.

The *cruelty* of Satan appears in the miserable condition of the unhappy man, of whose body he had possession. We read that he dwelt “among the tombs,” that “no man could bind him, no, not with chains,”—that no man could tame him,—and that he was “always night and day in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones,” naked, and without clothing. Such is the state to which the devil would bring us all, if he only had the power. He would rejoice to inflict upon us the utmost misery, both of body and mind. Cases like this are faint types of the miseries of hell.

The *power* of Satan appears in the awful words which the unclean spirit used, when our Lord asked, “What is thy name?” He answered, saying, “My name is Legion: for we are many.” We probably have not the faintest idea of the number, subtlety, and activity of Satan’s agents. We forget that he is king over an enormous host of subordinate spirits who do his will. We should probably find, if our eyes were opened to see spirits, that they are about our path, and about our bed, and observing all our ways, to an extent of which we have no conception. In private and in public, in church and in the world, there are busy enemies ever near us, of whose presence we are not aware.

The *malice* of Satan appears in the strange petition, “send us into the swine.” Cast forth from the man, whose body they had so long inhabited and possessed, they still thirsted to do mischief. Unable to injure any more an immortal soul, they desired leave to injure the dumb beasts which were feeding near. Such is the true character of Satan. It is the bent of his nature to do harm, to kill, and to destroy. No wonder that he is called Apollyon, the destroyer.

Let us beware of giving way to the senseless habit of jesting about the devil. It is a habit which furnishes awful evidence of the blindness and corruption of human nature, and one which is far too common. When it is seemly in the condemned criminal to jest about his executioner, then, and not till then, it will be seemly for mortal man to talk lightly about Satan. Well would it be for us all, if we strove more to realize the power and presence of our great spiritual enemy, and prayed more to be delivered from him. It was a true saying of an eminent Christian, now gone to rest, “No prayer is complete which does not contain a petition to be kept from the devil.”

We see, in the last place, from these verses, *how complete is our Lord’s power and authority over the devil*. We see it in the cry of the unclean spirit, “I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.” We see it in the command, “Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit,” and the immediate obedience that followed. We see it in the blessed change that at once took place in him that was possessed: he was found “sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind.” We see it in the petition of all the devils,—“send us into the swine,” confessing their consciousness that they could do nothing without leave. All these things show that one mightier than Satan was there. Strong as the great enemy of man was, he was in the presence of One stronger than he. Numerous as his hosts were, he was confronted with One who could command more than twelve legions of angels. “Where the word of the king is, there is power.” (Eccles. viii. 4.)

The truth here taught is full of strong consolation for all true Christians. We live in a world full of difficulties and snares. We are ourselves weak and compassed with infirmity. The awful thought that we have a mighty spiritual enemy ever near us, subtle, powerful, and malicious as Satan is, might well disquiet us, and cast us down. But, thanks be unto God, we have in Jesus an almighty Friend, who is “able to save us to the uttermost.” He has already triumphed over Satan on the cross. He will ever triumph over him in the hearts of all believers, and intercede for them that their faith fail not. And He will finally triumph over Satan completely, when He shall come forth at the second advent, and bind him in the bottomless pit.

And now, Are we ourselves delivered from Satan's power? This after all is the grand question that concerns our souls.—He still reigns and rules in the hearts of all who are children of disobedience. (Ephes. ii. 3.) He is still a king over the ungodly. Have we, by grace, broken his bonds, and escaped his hand? Have we really renounced him and all his works? Do we daily resist him and make him flee? Do we put on the whole armour of God and stand against his wiles? May we never rest till we can give satisfactory answers to these questions.¹

¹ The whole subject of the demoniacs, or cases of Satanic possession recorded in the New Testament, is unquestionably full of deep mystery. The miserable sufferings of the unhappy people possessed,—their clear knowledge that our Lord was the Son of God,—their double consciousness, sometimes the spirit speaking, sometimes the man,—all these are deep mysteries. And it can hardly be otherwise. We know little of beings that we cannot see and touch. We know nothing of the manner in which a spirit operates on the mind of a creature with flesh and bones like ourselves. We can see plainly that there were many persons possessed with devils during our Lord's earthly ministry. We can see plainly that bodily possession was something distinct from possession of heart and soul. We can conjecture the reason of their permitted possession,—to make it plain that our Lord came to destroy the works of the devil. But we must stop here. We can go no further.

Let us, however, beware of supposing that Satanic possession was entirely confined to our Lord's time, and that there is no such thing in our own days. This would be a rash and unwarrantable conclusion. Awful as the thought is, there are sometimes cases in asylums for the insane, which, if they are not clues of Satanic possession, approach as nearly to it as possible.—In short I believe the opinion of not a few eminent physicians is clear and decided that Satanic possession still continues, though cases are exceedingly rare.

Of course it would be presumption to handle so fearful a doctrine lightly, and to pronounce positively of any particular person that "he had a devil." But if such things have been,—and the New Testament puts this beyond question,—no good reason can be assigned why they should not be again. Human nature is not changed since our Lord was on earth. Satan is not yet bound. Satanic possession is therefore neither impossible nor improbable, though limits may be set to the frequency of it, through the mercy of God.

MARK V. 18–20.

18 And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him.	hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.
19 Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord	20 And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all <i>men</i> did marvel.

THE after-conduct of those whom our Lord Jesus Christ healed and cured when upon earth, is a thing which is not often related in the Gospels. The story often describes the miraculous cure, and then leaves the after-history of the person cured in obscurity, and passes on to other things.

But there are some deeply interesting cases, in which the after-conduct of persons cured is described; and the man from whom the devil was cast out in the country of the Gadarenes is one. The verses before us tell the story. Few as they are, they are full of precious instruction.

We learn from these verses, that *the Lord Jesus knows better than His people, what is the right position for them to be in.* We are told that when our Lord was on the point of leaving the country of the Gadarenes, the man “that had been possessed with the devil, prayed him that he might be with him.” We can well understand that request. He felt grateful for the blessed change that had taken place in himself. He felt full of love towards his Deliverer. He thought he could not do better than follow our Lord, and go with Him as His companion and disciple. He was ready to give up home and country, and go after Christ. And yet, strange as it appears at first sight, the request was refused. “Jesus suffered him not.” Our Lord had other work for him to do. Our Lord saw better than he did in what way he could glorify God most. “Go home to thy friends,” He says, “and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.”

There are lessons of profound wisdom in these words. The place that Christians wish to be in, is not always the place which is best for their souls. The position that they would choose, if they could have their own way, is not always that which Jesus would have them occupy.

There are none who need this lesson so much as believers newly converted to God. Such persons are often very poor judges of what is really for their good. Full of the new views which they have been graciously taught, excited with the novelty of their present position, seeing everything around them in a new light, knowing little yet of the depths of Satan and the weakness of their own hearts,—knowing only that a little time ago they were blind, and now, through mercy, they see,—of all people they are in the greatest danger of making mistakes. With the best

intentions, they are apt to fall into mistakes about their plans in life, their choices, their moves, their professions. They forget that what we like best is not always best for our souls, and that the seed of grace needs winter as well as summer, cold as well as heat, to ripen it for glory.

Let us pray that God would guide us in all our ways after conversion, and not allow us to err in our choices, or to make hasty decisions. That place and position is most healthful for us in which we are kept most humble,—most taught our own sinfulness,—drawn most to the Bible and prayer, led most to live by faith and not by sight. It may not be quite what we like. But if Christ by His providence has placed us in it, let us not be in a hurry to leave it. Let us therein abide with God. The great thing is to have no will of our own, and to be where Jesus would have us be.²

We learn, for another thing, from these verses, that *a believer's own home has the first claims on his attention*. We are taught that in the striking words which our Lord addresses to the man who had been possessed with the devil. "Go home," He says, "to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee." The friends of this man had probably not seen him for some years, excepting under the influence of Satan. Most likely he had been as one dead to them, or worse than dead, and a constant cause of trouble, anxiety, and sorrow. Here then was the path of duty. Here was the way by which he could most glorify God. Let

² I cannot help remarking, in connection with our Lord's words in this passage, that it admits of question, whether men do not *sometimes* act unadvisedly in giving up a secular calling, in order to enter the ministry of the Gospel. In plain words, I doubt whether men, who have been suddenly converted to God in the army, the navy, the law, or the merchant's office, do not *sometimes* forsake their professions with undue precipitation, in order to become clergymen.

It seems to be forgotten that conversion alone is no proof that we are called and qualified to become teachers of others. God may be glorified as really and truly in the secular calling as in the pulpit. Converted men can be eminently useful as landlords, magistrates, soldiers, sailors, barristers or merchants. We want witnesses for Christ in all these professions. Colonel Gardiner and Capt. Vicars have probably done more for the cause of Christ, as military men, than they would ever have done if they had left the army and become clergymen.

In steering our course through life, we should carefully look for the call of *providence* as well as the call of *inclination*. The position that we choose for ourselves is often that which is the worst for our souls, When two conflicting paths of duty lie before a believer, the path which has least of the cross, and is most *agreeable* to his own taste, is seldom the right one.

I write all this with a due recollection of many eminent Christians who began in a secular profession, and left it for the office of the minister. John Newton and Edward Bickersteth are instances. But I apprehend such cases are exceptions. I apprehend moreover that in every such case there would be found to have been a remarkable call of *providence* as well as an inward call of the Holy Ghost. As a general rule, I believe that the rule of St. Paul ought to be carefully observed: "Let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God." (1 Cor. vii. 24.)

him go home and tell his friends what Jesus had done for him. Let him be a living witness before their eyes of the compassion of Christ. Let him deny himself the pleasure of being in Christ's bodily presence, in order to do the higher work of being useful to others.

How much there is in these simple words of our Lord! What thoughts they ought to stir up in the hearts of all true Christians!—"Go home and tell thy friends."—Home is the place above all others where the child of God ought to make his first endeavours to do good. Home is the place where he is most continually seen, and where the reality of his grace ought most truly to appear. Home is the place where his best affections ought to be concentrated. Home is the place where he should strive daily to be a witness for Christ. Home is the place where he was daily doing harm by his example, so long as he served the world. Home is the place where he is specially bound to be a living epistle of Christ, so soon as he has been mercifully taught to serve God. May we all remember these things daily! May it never be said of us, that we are saints abroad but wicked by our own fireside,—talkers about religion abroad, but worldly and ungodly at home!

But after all, Have we anything to tell others? Can we testify to any work of grace in our hearts? Have we experienced any deliverance from the power of the world, the flesh, and the devil? Have we ever tasted the graciousness of Christ? These are indeed serious questions. If we have never yet been born again, and made new creatures, we can of course have nothing to "tell."

If we have anything to tell others about Christ, let us resolve to tell it. Let us not be silent, if we have found peace and rest in the Gospel. Let us speak to our relations, and friends, and families, and neighbours, according as we have opportunity, and tell them what the Lord has done for our souls. All are not called to be ministers. All are not intended to preach. But all can walk in the steps of the man of whom we have been reading, and in the steps of Andrew, and Philip, and the Samaritan woman. (John i. 41, 45; iv. 29.) Happy is he who is not ashamed to say to others, "Come and hear what the Lord hath done for my soul." (Psal. lxvi. 16.)

MARK V. 21–34.

21 And when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him: and he was nigh unto the sea.

22 And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet,

23 And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: *I pray thee*, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.

24 And *Jesus* went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him.

25 And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years,

26 And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse,

27 When she had heard of *Jesus*, came in the press behind, and touched his garment.

28 For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.

29 And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of that plague.

30 And *Jesus*, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?

31 And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

32 And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing.

33 But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.

34 And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

THE main subject of these verses is the miraculous healing of a sick woman. Great is our Lord's experience in cases of disease! Great is His sympathy with His sick and ailing members! The gods of the heathen are generally represented as terrible and mighty in battle, delighting in bloodshed, the strong man's patrons, and the warrior's friends. The Saviour of the Christian is always set before us as gentle, and easy to be entreated, the healer of the broken-hearted, the refuge of the weak and helpless, the comforter of the distressed, the sick man's best friend. And is not this just the Saviour that human nature needs? The world is full of pain and trouble. The weak on earth are far more numerous than the strong.

Let us mark in these verses, *what misery sin has brought into the world*. We read of one who had had a most painful disease "for twelve years." She had "suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse." Means of every kind had been tried in vain. Medical skill had proved unable to cure. Twelve long weary years had been spent in battling with disease, and relief seemed no nearer than at first. "Hope deferred" might well "make her heart sick." (Prov. xiii. 12.)

How marvellous it is that we do not hate sin more than we do! Sin is the cause of all the pain and disease in the world. God did not create man to be an ailing and suffering creature. It was sin, and nothing but sin, which brought in all the ills that flesh is heir to. It was sin to which we

owe every racking pain, and every loathsome infirmity, and every humbling weakness to which our poor bodies are liable. Let us keep this ever in mind. Let us hate sin with a godly hatred.

Let us mark, in the second place, *how different are the feelings with which people draw near to Christ*. We are told in these verses that “much people followed” our Lord, “and thronged him.” But we are only told of one person who “came in the press behind,” and touched Him with faith and was healed. Many followed Jesus from curiosity, and derived no benefit from Him. One, and only one, followed under a deep sense of her need, and of our Saviour’s power to relieve her, and that one received a mighty blessing.

We see the same thing going on continually in the Church of Christ at the present day. Multitudes go to our places of worship, and fill our pews. Hundreds come up to the Lord’s table, and receive the bread and wine. But of all these worshippers and communicants, how few really obtain anything from Christ! Fashion, custom, form, habit, the love of excitement, or an itching ear, are the true motives of the vast majority. There are but a few here and there who touch Christ by faith, and go home “in peace.” These may seem hard sayings. But they are unhappily too true!

Let us mark, in the third place, *how immediate and instantaneous was the cure which this woman received*. No sooner did she touch our Lord’s clothes than she was healed. The thing that she had sought in vain for twelve years, was done in a moment. The cure that many physicians could not effect, was wrought in an instant of time. “She felt in her body that she was healed of that plague.”

We need not doubt that we are meant to see here an emblem of the relief that the Gospel confers on souls. The experience of many a weary conscience has been exactly like that of this woman with her disease. Many a man has spent sorrowful years in search of peace with God, and failed to find it. He has gone to earthly remedies and obtained no relief. He has wearied himself in going from place to place, and church to church, and has felt after all “nothing bettered but rather worse.” But at last he has found rest.—And where has he found it?—He has found it, where this woman found hers, in Jesus Christ. He has ceased from his own works. He has given over looking to his own endeavours and doings for relief. He has come to Christ Himself, as a humble sinner, and committed himself to His mercy. At once the burden has fallen from off his shoulders. Heaviness is turned to joy, and anxiety to peace.—One touch of real faith can do more for the soul than a hundred self-imposed austerities. One look at Jesus is more efficacious than years of sack-cloth

and ashes. May we never forget this to our dying day! Personal application to Christ is the real secret of peace with God.

Let us mark, in the fourth place, *how much it becomes Christians to confess before men the benefits they receive from Christ*. We see that this woman was not allowed to go home, when cured, without her cure being noticed. Our Lord inquired who had touched Him, and “looked round about to see her that had done this thing.” No doubt He knew perfectly the name and history of the woman. He needed not that any should tell Him. But He desired to teach her, and all around Him, that healed souls should make public acknowledgement of mercies received.

There is a lesson here which all true Christians would do well to remember. We are not to be ashamed to confess Christ before men, and to let others know what He has done for our souls. If we have found peace through His blood, and been renewed by His Spirit, we must not shrink from avowing it, on every proper occasion. It is not necessary to blow a trumpet in the streets, and force our experience on everybody’s notice. All that is required is a willingness to acknowledge Christ as our Master, without flinching from the ridicule or persecution, which by so doing we may bring on ourselves. More than this is not required; but less than this ought not to content us. If we are ashamed of Jesus before men, He will one day be ashamed of us before His Father and the angels.

Let us mark, in the last place, *how precious a grace is faith*. “Daughter,” says our Lord to the woman who was healed, “thy faith hath made thee whole: go in peace.”

Of all the Christian graces, none is so frequently mentioned in the New Testament as faith, and none is so highly commended.—No grace brings such glory to Christ. Hope brings an eager expectation of good things to come. Love brings a warm and willing heart. Faith brings an empty hand, receives everything, and can give nothing in return.—No grace is so important to the Christian’s own soul. By faith we begin. By faith we live. By faith we stand. We walk by faith and not by sight. By faith we overcome. By faith we have peace. By faith we enter into rest.—No grace should be the subject of so much self-inquiry. We should often ask ourselves, Do I really believe? Is my faith true, genuine, and the gift of God?

May we never rest till we can give a satisfactory answer to these questions! Christ is not changed since the day when this woman was healed. He is still gracious and still mighty to save. There is but one thing needful if we want salvation. That one thing is the hand of faith. Let a man only “touch” Jesus, and he shall be made whole.³

³ Some remarks of Melancthon’s on this woman’s case are worth reading. We are doubtless to be careful that we do not hastily attach an allegorical and mystical sense to

the words of Scripture. Yet we must not forget the depth of meaning which lies in all the acts of our Lord's earthly ministry; and at any rate there is much beauty in the thoughts which the good Reformer expresses. He says, "This woman doth aptly represent the Jewish synagogue vexed a long time with many mischiefs and miseries, especially tortured with unconscionable princes, and unskilful priests, or physicians of the soul, the Pharisees and Sadducees; on whom she had wasted all her goods, and yet she was not a whit better, but rather much worse, till the blessed Lord of Israel in His own person came to 'visit and redeem her.'"

MARK V. 35–43.

35 While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house certain* which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further?

36 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe.

37 And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.

38 And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly.

39 And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.

40 And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying.

41 And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.

42 And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was *of the age* of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment.

43 And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.

A GREAT miracle is recorded in these verses. A dead girl is restored to life. Mighty as the “King of terrors” is, there is One mightier than he. The keys of death are in our Lord Jesus Christ’s hands. He will one day “swallow up death in victory.” (Isaiah xxv. 8.)

Let us learn from these verses, that *rank places no man beyond the reach of sorrow*. Jairus was a “ruler;” yet sickness and trouble came to his house. Jairus probably had wealth, and all the medical help that wealth can command; yet money could not keep death away from his child. The daughters of rulers are liable to sickness, as well as the daughters of poor men. The daughters of rulers must die.

It is good for us all to remember this. We are too apt to forget it. We often think and talk as if the possession of riches was the great antidote to sorrow, and as if money could secure us against sickness and death. But it is the very extreme of blindness to think so. We have only to look around us and see a hundred proofs to the contrary. Death comes to halls and palaces, as well as to cottages,—to landlords as well as to tenants,—to rich as well as to poor. It stands on no ceremony. It tarries no man’s leisure or convenience. It will not be kept out by locks and bars. “It is appointed unto men, once to die, but after this the judgment.” (Heb. ix. 27.) All are going to one place, the grave.

We may be sure there is far more equality in the portions appointed to men than at first sight appears. Sickness is a great leveller. It makes no distinction. Heaven is the only place where “the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick.” (Isai. xxiii. 24..) Happy are they who set their affections on things above! They, and they only, have a treasure which is incorruptible. Yet a little while, and they will be where they shall hear no more evil tidings. All tears shall be wiped from their faces. They shall put on

mourning no more. Never again shall they hear those sorrowful words, “thy daughter,—thy son,—thy wife,—thy husband,—is dead.” The former things will have passed away.

Let us learn, for another thing, *how almighty is the power of our Lord Jesus Christ*. That message which pierced the ruler’s heart, telling him that his child was dead, did not stop our Lord for a moment. At once he cheered the father’s fainting spirits with these gracious words, “be not afraid, only believe.” He comes to the house where many are weeping and wailing, and enters the room where the damsel is lying. He takes her by the hand, and says, “Damsel, I say unto thee arise.” At once the heart begins to beat again, and the breath returns to the lifeless body. “The damsel arose and walked.” No wonder that we read the words, “they were astonished with a great astonishment.”

Let us think for a moment how wonderful was the change which took place in that house. From weeping to rejoicing,—from mourning to congratulation,—from death to life,—how great and marvellous must have been the transition! They only can tell that, who have seen death face to face, and had the light of their households quenched, and felt the iron entering into their own souls. They, and they only, can conceive what the family of Jairus must have felt, when they saw their beloved one given back once more into their bosom by the power of Christ.—There must have been a happy family gathering that night!

Let us see in this glorious miracle a proof of what Jesus can do for dead souls. He can raise our children from the death of trespasses and sins, and make them walk before Him in newness of life. He can take our sons and daughters by the hand, and say to them, “arise,” and bid them live not to themselves, but to Him that died for them and rose again. Have we a dead soul in our family? Let us call on the Lord to come and quicken him. (Eph. ii. 1.) Let us send to Him message after message, and entreat Him to help. He that came to the succour of Jairus is still plenteous in mercy, and mighty in power.

Finally, let us see in this miracle a blessed pledge of what our Lord will do in the day of His second appearing. He will call His believing people from their graves. He will give them a better, more glorious, and more beautiful body, than they had in the days of their pilgrimage. He will gather together His elect from north, and south, and east, and west, to part no more, and die no more. Believing parents shall once more see believing children. Believing husbands shall once more see believing wives. Let us beware of sorrowing like those who have no hope, over friends who fall asleep in Christ. The youngest and loveliest believer can never die before the right time. Let us look forward. There is a glorious resurrection morning yet to come. “Them which sleep in Jesus will God

bring with Him.” (1 Thess. iv. 14.) Those words shall one day receive a complete fulfilment, “I will ransom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues: O grave, I will be thy destruction.” (Hosea xiii. 14.) He that raised the daughter of Jairus still lives. When He gathers His flock around him at the last day, not one lamb shall be found missing.