**THE EXPOSITION OF HOLY SCRIPTURE BY ALEXANDER MACLAREN**

**MARK-023**. **TALITHA CUMI by ALEXANDER MACLAREN**

*"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.... 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."*

*Mark 5:22-24, 35-43*

The scene of this miracle was probably Capernaum; its time, according to Matthew, was the feast at his house after his call. Mark's date appears to be later, but he may have anticipated the feast in his narrative, in order to keep the whole of the incidents relating to Matthew's apostleship together. Jairus's knowledge of Jesus is implied in the story, and perhaps Jesusacquaintance with him.

**I. We note, first, the agonised appeal and the immediate answer.**

Desperation makes men bold. Conventionalities are burned up by the fire of agonised petitioning for help in extremity. Without apology or preliminary, Jairus bursts in, and his urgent need is sufficient excuse. Jesus never complains of scant respect when wrung hearts cry to Him. But this man was not only driven by despair, but drawn by trust. He was sure that, even though his little darling had been all but dead when he ran from his house, and was dead by this time, for all he knew, Jesus could give her life. Perhaps he had not faced the stern possibility that she might already be gone, nor defined precisely what he hoped for in that case. But he was sure of Jesuspower, and he says nothing to show that he doubted His willingness. A beautiful trust shines through his words, based, no doubt, on what he had known and seen of Jesusmiracles. We have more pressing and deeper needs, and we have fuller and deeper knowledge of Jesus, wherefore our approach to Him should be at least as earnest and confidential as Jairus's was. If our Lord was at the feast when this interruption took place, His gracious, immediate answer becomes more lovely, as a sign of His willingness to bring the swiftest help. While they are yet speaking, I will hear. Jairus had not finished asking before Jesus was on His feet to go.

The father's impatience would be satisfied when they were on their way, but how he would chafe, and think every moment an age, while Jesus stayed, as if at entire leisure, to deal with another silent petitioner! But His help to one never interferes with His help to another, and no case is so pressing as that He cannot spare time to stay to bless some one else. The poor, sickly, shamefaced woman shall be healed, and the little girl shall not suffer.

**II. We have next the extinction and rekindling of Jairus's glimmer of hope.**

Distances in Capernaum were short, and the messenger would soon find Jesus. There was little sympathy in the harsh, bald announcement of the death, or in the appended suggestion that the Rabbi need not be further troubled. The speaker evidently was thinking more of being polite to Jesus than of the poor father's stricken heart, Jairus would feel then what most of us have felt in like circumstances,--that he had been more hopeful than he knew. Only when the last glimmer is quenched do we feel, by the blackness, how much light had lingered in our sky, But Jesus knew Jairus's need before Jairus himself knew it, and His strong word of cheer relit the torch ere the poor father had time to speak. That loving eye reads our hearts and anticipates our dreary hopelessness by His sweet comfortings. Faith is the only victorious antagonist of fear. Jairus had every reason for abandoning hope, and his only reason for clinging to it was faith. So it is with us all. It is vain to bid us not be afraid when real dangers and miseries stare us in the face; but it is not vain to bid us believe, and if we do that, faith, cast into the one scale, will outweigh a hundred good reasons for dread and despair cast into the other.

**III. We have next the tumult of grief and the word that calms.**

The hired mourners had lost no time, and in Eastern fashion were disturbing the solemnity of death with their professional shrieks and wailings. True grief is silent. Woe that weeps aloud is soon consoled.

What a contrast between the noise outside and the still death-chamber and its occupant, and what a contrast between the agitation of the sham comforters and the calmness of the true Helper! Christ's great word was spoken for us all when our hearts are sore and our dear ones go. It dissolves the dim shape into nothing ness, or, rather, it transfigures it into a gracious, soothing form. Sleep is rest, and bears in itself the pledge of waking. So Christ has changed the shadow feared of maninto beauty, and in the strength of His great word we can meet the last enemy with Welcome! friend. It is strange that any one reading this narrative should have been so blind to its deepest beauty as to suppose that Jesus was here saying that the child had only swooned, and was really alive. He was not denying that she was what men call dead, but He was, in the triumphant consciousness of His own power, and in the clear vision of the realities of spiritual being, of which bodily states are but shadows, denying that what men call death deserves the name. Deathis the state of the soul separated from God, whether united to the body or no,--not the separation of body and soul, which is only a visible symbol of the more dread reality.

**IV. We have finally the life-giving word and the life-preserving care.**

Probably Jesus first freed His progress from the jostling crowd, and then, when arrived, made the further selection of the three apostles,--the first three of the mighty ones--and, as was becoming, of the father and mother.

With what hushed, tense expectation they would enter the chamber! Think of the mother's eyes watching Him. The very words that He spoke were like a caress. There was infinite tenderness in that Damsel!from His lips, and so deep an impression did it make on Peter that he repeated the very words to Mark, and used them, with the change of one letter (Tabithafor Talitha), in raising Dorcas. The same tenderness is expressed by His taking her by the hand, as, no doubt, her mother had done, many a morning, on waking her. The father had asked Him to lay His hand on her, that she might be made whole and live. He did as He was asked,--He always does--and His doing according to our desire brings larger blessings than we had thought of. Neither the touch of His hand nor the words He spoke were the real agents of the child's returning to life. It was His will which brought her back from whatever vasty dimness she had entered. The forth-putting of Christ's will is sovereign, and His word runs with power through all regions of the universe. The dull, cold ear of deathhears, and they that hear shall live, whether they are, as men say, dead, or whether they are dead in trespasses and sins. The resurrection of a soul is a mightier act--if we can speak of degrees of might in His acts--than that of a body.

It would be calming for the child of such strange experiences to see, for the first thing that met her eyes opening again on the old familiar home as on a strange land, the bending face of Jesus, and His touch would steady her spirit and assure of His love and help. The quiet command to give her food knits the wonder with common life, and teaches precious lessons as to His economy of miraculous power, like His bidding others loosen Lazarus's wrappings, and as to His devolution on us of duties towards those whom He raises from the death of sin. But it was given, not didactically, but lovingly. The girl was exhausted, and sustenance was necessary, and would be sweet. So He thought upon a small bodily need, and the love that gave life took care to provide what was required to support it. He gives the greatest; He will take care that we shall not lack the least.