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

**LUKE-032**. **A MIRACLE WITHIN A MIRACLE by ALEXANDER MACLAREN**

*"43. And a woman, having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, 44. Came behind Him, and touched the border of His garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanched. 45. And Jesus said, Who touched Me? When all denied, Peter, and they that were with Him, said, Master, the multitude throng Thee and press Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me? 46. And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched Me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of Me. 47. And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and, falling down before Him, she declared unto Him before all the people for what cause she had touched Him, and how she was healed immediately. 48. And He said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace."*

*Luke 8:43-48*

The story of Jairus's daughter is, as it were, cut in two by that of the poor invalid woman. What an impression of calm consciousness of power and of leisurely dignity is made by Christ's having time to pause, even on His way to a dying sufferer, in order to heal, as if parenthetically, this other afflicted one! How Jairus must have chafed at the delay! He had left his child at the point of deathand here was the Healer loitering, as it must have seemed to a father's agony of impatience.

But Jesus, with His infinite calm and as infinite power, can afford to let the one wait and even die, while He tends the other. The child shall receive no harm, and her sister in sorrow has as great a claim on Him as she. He has leisure of heart to feel for each, and power for both. We do not rob one another of His gifts. Attending to one, He does not neglect another.

This miracle illustrates the genuineness and power of feeble and erroneous faith, and Christ's merciful way of strengthening and upholding it. The woman, a poor, shrinking creature, has been made more timid by long illness, disappointed hopes of cure, and by poverty. She does not venture to stop Jesus, as He goes with an important official of the synagogue to heal his daughter, but creeps up in the crowd behind Him, puts out a wasted, trembling hand to touch the tasselled fringe of His robe--and she is whole.

She would fain have glided away with a stolen cure, but Jesus forced her to stand out before the throng, and with all their eyes on her, to conquer diffidence and womanly reticence, and tell all the truth. Strange contrast, this, to His usual avoidance of notoriety and regard for shrinking weakness! But it was true kindness, for it was the discipline by which her imperfect faith was cleared and confirmed.

It is easy to point out the imperfections in this woman's faith. It was very ignorant. She was sure that this Rabbi would heal her, but she expected it to be done by the material contact of her finger with His robe. She had no idea that Christ's will, much less His love, had anything to do with His cures. She thinks that she may carry away the blessing, and He be none the wiser. It is easy to say, What blank ignorance of Christ's way of working! what grossly superstitious notions! Yes, and with them all what a hunger of intense desire to be whole, and what absolute confidence that a finger-tip on His robe was enough!

Her faith was very imperfect, but the main fact is that she had it. Let us be thankful for a living proof of the genuineness of ignorant and even of superstitious faith. There are many now who fall with less excuse into a like error with this woman's, by attaching undue importance to externals, and thinking more of the hem of the garment and its touch by a finger than of the heart of the wearer and the grasp of faith. But while we avoid such errors, let us not forget that many a poor worshipper clasping a crucifix may be clinging to the Saviour, and that Christ does accept faith which is tied to outward forms, as He did this woman's.

There was no real connection between the touch of her finger and her healing, but she thought that there was, and Christ stoops to her childish thought, and lets her make the path for His gift. According to thy faith be it unto thee: His mercy, like water, takes the shape of the containing vessel.

The last part of the miracle, when the cured woman is made the bold confessor, is all shaped so as to correct and confirm her imperfect faith. We note this purpose in every part of it. She had thought of the healing energy as independent of His knowledge and will. Therefore she is taught that He was aware of the mute appeal, and of the going out of power in answer to it. The question, Who touched me?has been regarded as a proof that Jesus was ignorant of the person; but if we keep the woman's character and the nature of her disease in view, we can suppose it asked, not to obtain information, but to lead to acknowledgment, and that without ascribing to Him in asking it any feigning of ignorance.

The contrast between the pressure of the crowd and the touch of faith has often been insisted on, and carries a great lesson. The unmannerly crowd hustled each other, trod on His skirts, and elbowed their way to gape at Him, and He took no heed. But His heart detected the touch, unlike all the rest, and went out with healing power towards her who touched. We may be sure that, though a universe waits before Him, and the close-ranked hosts of heaven stand round His throne, we can reach our hands through them all, and get the gifts we need.

She had shrunk from publicity, most naturally. But if she had stolen away, she would have lost the joy of confession and greater blessings than the cure. So He mercifully obliges her to stand forth. In a moment she is changed from a timid invalid to a confessor. A secret faith is like a plant growing in the dark, the stem of which is blanched and weak, and its few blossoms pale and never matured. With the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Christ's last word to her is tender. He calls her Daughter--the only woman whom He addressed by such a name. He teaches her that her faith, not her finger, had been the medium through which His healing power had reached her. He confirms by His authoritative word the furtive blessing: Be whole of thy plague. And she goes, having found more than she sought, and felt a loving heart where she had only seen a magic-working robe.