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

**MARK-025**. **TOUCH OR FAITH by ALEXANDER MACLAREN**

*"If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole.... Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole."*

*Mark 5:28, 34*

**I. The erroneous faith.**

In general terms there is here an illustration of how intellectual error may coexist with sincere faith. The precise form of error is clearly that she looked on the physical contact with the material garment as the vehicle of healing--the very same thing which we find ever since running through the whole history of the Church, e.g. the exaltation of externals, rites, ordinances, sacraments, etc.

Take two or three phases of it--

**(a)** You get it formularised into a system in sacramentarianism.

* Baptismal regeneration,
* Holy Communion.
* Religion becomes largely a thing of rites and ceremonies.

**(b)** You get it in Protestant form among Dissenters in the importance attached to Church membership.

**(c)** Outward acts of worship.

There is abroad a vague idea that somehow we get good from external association with religious acts, and so on. This feeling is deep in human nature, is not confined to the Roman Catholic Church, and is not the work of priests. There is a strange revival of it to-day, and so there is need of protest against it in every form.

**II. The blessing that comes to an erroneous faith.**

The woman here was too ritualistic. How many good people there are in that same school to-day! Yet how blessed for us all, that, even along with many errors, if we grasp Him we shall not lose the grace.

**III. Christ's gentle enlightenment on the error.**

Thy faith hath saved thee. How wonderfully beautiful! He cures by giving the blessing and leading on to the full truth. In regard to the woman, it might have been that her touch did heal; but even there in the physical realm, since it was He, not His robe, that healed, it was her faith, not her hand, that procured the blessing. This is universally true in the spiritual realm.

**(a)** Salvation is purely spiritual and inward in its nature--not an outward work, but a new nature, love, joy, peace. Hence,

**(b)** Faith is the condition of salvation. Faith saves because He saves, and faith is contact with Him. It is the only thing which joins a soul to Christ. Then learn what makes a Christian.

**(c)** Hence, the place of externals is purely subsidiary to faith. If they help a man to believe and feel more strongly, they are good. Their only office is the same as that of preaching or reading. In both, truth is the agent. Their power is in enforcing truth.