

THE HEALING TOUCH

"And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched Me."
Luke 8:46.

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These words bring before us one of the most attractive portraiture of grace suspended in the gospel gallery. It has a dark background of misery and disease, but that only serves to bring out in bolder outline the divine pencilings of mercy and compassion.

The Saviour is journeying at a summons of love. A needy, helpless child lies at the point of death; and Jairus, the grieving father, has besought the Master's aid, and not in vain. Multitudes throng His path and press upon Him as He bends His steps toward the sorrow-stricken home. But now for a moment His progress is interrupted by the action of a poor, wasted, bowed-down wreck of humanity—a woman having an issue of blood for twelve years. She was one who had suffered many things of many physicians and had spent all her living upon them, and yet grew worse. But when she had heard of Jesus, she said, with a faith spoken of throughout the world, "If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole." And now her opportunity had come. He was journeying in her direction, and, coming up in the press behind Him,—

"She only touched the hem of His garment,
And straightway she was healed."

Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was cured of that plague.

But she was unable to retain the secret. Jesus immediately knowing in Himself that virtue (or power) had gone out of Him, turned Him about in the crowd and said, "Who touched me?" "The multitude throng Thee and press Thee," said His disciples, "and sayest Thou, Who touched Me?" And Jesus said, "Somebody hath touched Me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of Me." And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before Him declared unto Him before all the people for what cause she had touched Him, and how she was healed immediately. And He said unto her, "Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace."

Notice the peculiarity of this woman's faith. Well might His disciples say to Jesus, "The multitude is thronging Thee and pressing Thee, touching Thee indeed at every point, and dost Thou under these circumstances inquire who touched Thee? Is there one touch which Thou canst single out from all the rest?" That was indeed the case. Doubtless there was not another soul in that great concourse who touched Jesus on his or her own account. They touched Him because they could not help themselves. They were in the crowd and were pushed against Him. And they were in the crowd not for anything they consciously desired or expected to receive from Him, but out of curiosity, no doubt. They were waiting for some wonder to be performed. They were on tiptoe especially with reference to His approaching visit to the house of Jairus and the possible outcome of it. But this woman was in the throng with a purpose. It was a purpose which expressed itself in the tip of the fingers with which she took hold of the hem of His garment. It was a purpose which expressed her personal faith and her dire need, and which put her in immediate contact with the strength and grace and healing virtue which were in Him.

Let us learn the lesson which may thus be gathered by this distinction between 'thronging'

Christ and 'touching' Him. See here the explanation of our fruitless prayers and sacraments, our fruitless appropriation of all the means of grace which leave us no holier than they found us, no more enlightened in spiritual things, no more comforted in sorrow, no more determined to take up the cross and follow Jesus. We are thronging Christ, but we are not touching Him. We go to church, but why? We listen to the gospel, but why? We call ourselves Christians, but why? We engage in Christian service, but why? Let me tell you a story:

There was a woman in the city of Boston who on her own account, and without any church or welfare society behind her, but solely on the principle of faith in God, conducted a home and mission for the rescue of her fallen sisters who had become abandoned to a life of shame.

That woman was converted to Christ in the church over which I was then pastor. It was on a Friday morning that she was converted. She came into the sanctuary that day, and for the first time in her life sank upon her knees in the pew and offered the prayer of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Many a day had she come into the church before, but then she had only been thronging Jesus. In that hour she touched Him! And that touch completely changed her life. All that she wrought afterward and all that God wrought in her dates from that morning when she put forth her hand and laid hold of the hem of His garment.

Do you not understand what this means without any further explanation? Oh, I beseech you when you pray, when you read the Bible, when you listen to the preaching of God's word, when you partake of the Lord's Supper, when you engage in the service of the Lord, so do it that Christ will be compelled to say,—and, oh, will not His heart rejoice in the compulsion,—"Somebody hath touched Me."—James M. Gray, D.D.

—Sent in by H. P. Cogswell.

GOD-GIVEN THORNS

2 Cor. 12:7

Strange gift indeed! a thorn to prick,
To pierce into the very quick!
To cause perpetual sense of pain—
Strange gift! And yet 'twas given for gain!

Unwelcome—yet it came to stay,
Nor could it e'en be prayed away:
It came to fill its God-planned place—
A life-enriching means of grace.

And he who bore it day by day,
Found Christ—his power, his strength, his stay.
In weakness gloried; since thereby
The power of Christ might on him lie.

O much-tried saint! with fainting heart—
The thorn with its perpetual smart,
With all its wearying, ceaseless pain
Can be thy means of priceless gain.

God's grace-thorns: Ah, what forms they take!
What piercing, smarting pain they make!
And yet each one in love is sent,
And always just for blessing meant.

And so, whate'er thy thorn may be,
From God accept it willingly;
But reckon Christ—His life—the power
To keep in thy most trying hour.

And, sure thy life will richer grow;
He, grace-sufficient will bestow;
And, in heaven's morn thy joy will be
That, by His thorn, He strengthened thee!

—Author Unknown.

CORRESPONDENCE

Saint John, N. B.

Dear Highway:

Greetings in Jesus' name. We are well on the way into another year. How quickly the time flies. Surely "our days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle." We are still saved, and have no evil report to bring of the way. God is good to all and it seems He is especially good to us. We praise Him for letting our lives fall in such places. True, "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

Our work is going on here with a general up-look. God is blessing in every department and we are looking forward for greater things.

Just after Thanksgiving we had our brother Rev. E. R. Watson with us for a week-end meeting. He did some great preaching. God blessed him, and he proved a great blessing to the church. Just after this we had Lic. Mered Grant with us at Grey's Mills for a week-end meeting. Our services were good and two souls were at the altar there on Sunday night. We enjoyed Bro. Grant very much in our home and in the church work.

The last of November we went up to Hartland for revival services. We went on over five Sundays. God gave us a gracious time there. We did so much enjoy labouring with our brother, Rev. H. C. Mullen. We appreciated the co-operation of the Hartland and Victoria Corner churches also.

We enjoyed one of the best Yuletides we have ever had. So many of our own church as well as members outside just seemed to have done their best to make it so. We received about a hundred Christmas cards from loved ones and friends and we surely do thank every one for all kindnesses shown. We were remembered by different ones with very nice gifts. One party for the last five years have sent us a turkey. May God richly bless them in both soul and body. We appreciated gifts from Grey's Mills which came just after Christmas.

Our church here at Saint John came in on us last night like a swarm of bees. They came laden with good things. A very pleasant evening was spent in social chat and in singing the praises of God. About ten o'clock Mrs. Mullen and myself were invited into the parlor where our senior deacon, Mr. William Stanley in his quaint way presented us with a substantial purse of money, it being Mrs. Mullen's birthday. Then Mrs. William Stanley presented her with a very beautiful wool blanket and a large birthday cake with fifty-two burning candles was presented to her by Mrs. H. K. Ingersoll.

We both did our best to find words to express our thanks to these dear people for all these tokens of their appreciation of our labor among them. May God richly bless them and help us to feed them on spiritual things. Then we bowed in prayer to thank God for all His goodness to us. After this the ladies served refreshments.

May God richly bless all readers of these lines and make 1938 the best year of your life.

Yours for souls,

H. S. and MRS. MULLEN

Perth, N. B.

Dear Highway Readers:

I wish to make a brief report of our special meetings we held in our church Jan. 2-23 inclusive.

Lic. G. R. Symonds was our evangelist and truly he was a man sent by God. Our brother proved himself as a preacher. He was definite on the first and second work of grace, and his