Mark - Commentaries by Hugh Henry Snell

Christian Truth: Volume 10, Go in Peace: How One Woman Got Blessing

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"And Jesus went with him; and much people followed Him, and thronged Him. And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, when she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched His garment. For she said, If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that virtue had gone out of Him, turned Him about in the press, and said, Whoso touched My clothes? And His disciples said unto Him, Thou seest the multitude thronging Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me? And He looked around about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before Him, and told Him all the truth. And He said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague." Mark 5:24-34.

There was remarkable simplicity in the ways of Jesus. His words also were full of deep doctrine; and the more we meditate on them under the teaching of the Holy Ghost the more we shall be convinced of the profound truth embodied in them. His heart was always as full of grace when He walked up and down this earth doing good, as when He died upon the cross; and oh! how blessed it is to trace Him in the various incidents recorded in the gospels, and to contemplate the exceeding rich and abundant grace that He manifested! It is wonderful that Christ—the only begotten of the Father—should ever have been seen in this world of sin, except in fiery judgment; but to find Him leaving the heights of glory and bliss to come into this evil world to save sinners is surpassingly wonderful.

In these verses, for our consideration, we find that Jesus was in the midst of a crowd of persons. We are told that "much people followed Him." Thousands, probably, surrounded Him. Apostles were there, and Jairus, one of the rulers of the synagogue, was there also; but most of those who pressed and thronged Him, came only to see His miracles and to be partakers of His temporal bounty in the loaves.

It must have been deeply interesting to behold a man heal the sick, cast out devils, cleanse the lepers, and raise the dead to life. There was something attractive to the natural senses in seeing such miraculous power put forth. Jesus had just before cast many devils from a man, and was on His way to a ruler's house to raise his dead child to life. There was, I say, something deeply interesting in all this. People like to see such wonderful works. They thus made Jesus an object of interest to their minds; but, lamentable to say, they knew Him not as their Savior. They did not regard Him as the Redeemer of the lost, but as a worker of miracles.

The crowd that surrounded Jesus cared little for Him, be cause they knew nothing of His Person and work; and the mass of people operated rather as a hindrance to a sin-convicted, helpless one coming to Jesus. So it is now. Who, I ask, are the great hinderers of the gospel in our day? Are they not those persons who make a religious profession without a vital acquaintance wit h Christ Himself? those who are content to hear about Christ, without having received Christ in their hearts as their Savior? Are not nominal Christians the very persons who cry out against brokenness of heart, repentance, the new birth, and present forgiveness of sins?

There was one person in the midst of this crowd of people in whose heart the Holy Spirit was effectually working and, as far as we know, she was the only one. So it has often been, and still is. Hundreds and thousands crowd to hear the gospel, but the heart of one only may be opened to receive it.

In the narrative we are considering, there are two points which I desire, as the Lord may graciously help, to make a few remarks upon—the work of the Spirit in the soul of the woman—the way of

Christ with this sinner.

THE SPIRIT'S WORK IN THE WOMAN. When the Holy Ghost takes a soul in hand, He teaches effectually. He uncovers the filthy rags of self-righteousness, exposes the rotten patches of self-reformation, and gives us a true knowledge of our true state before God. He is the Spirit of Truth. He convinces of sin. He lays bare the heart by so applying the written Word as to show its desperate wickedness in the sight of God's holy presence. He fastens upon the conscience the vile workings, unclean thoughts, desires, and intents of the heart.

Now look at the woman. She not only felt that she had a disease, but that it was incurable—that no earthly resource, no human means, could heal her. She had long tried various expedients and knew what it was to suffer "many things" until she had "spent all that she had"; but the end proved that she "was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse." Thus all help failed, all hope was gone. She felt that her condition was hopeless, helpless, and incurably bad. Blessed picture of the Spirit's work in the soul, though a humbling and painful process for the proud heart to pass through!

Most people around us know that they are sinners. Ask whom you will, the answer is, I know I am a sinner. But when the Spirit of God works in the heart, He teaches men that they are lost sinners, hell-deserving sinners, helpless and guilty sinners before God. Many who say that they are sinners, do not mean that they are born in sin, full of sin, dead in sin, children of wrath. It is because people do not know their real state that they, like the woman, try this or that expediency, vainly hoping to make themselves better. They go here and there, leave off some old habits, put on a measure of outward sanctity, break through certain long-accustomed ways, and adopt other lines of pursuit, hoping in this way to commend themselves to the favor of God and procure ease of conscience. Many a man blindly thinks that there is some ability in himself so to act for the future as to conceal the past. But we may be sure that if the Spirit of God is working in their souls, they will feel "nothing bettered" by these things, but that they rather grow worse; for the Holy Spirit will so open up to them the desperate wickedness and deceitfulness of their hearts that, after all their carnal contrivances, they will feel the plague of sin worse than before.

It appears from the Scripture record that this woman in her sad condition heard of One who could cure her. "She had heard of Jesus"—she heard that He could do what men could not do.

What blessed intelligence for a poor disconsolate soul! How welcome were the tidings! She felt her plague; she had proved the failing of every human prescription; she had "spent all" and was worse than ever. Now how did she treat the report? Did she hear and not act? No. She came to Jesus. It was not the venerable Jairus, nor even ordained apostles, that she felt she needed—only JESUS, for she knew that He could heal her, and He only. Her faith beheld Him in the midst of the vast crowd, like an overflowing fountain of living water, and she felt she must drink or die. She said within herself, "If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole." She was sure there was virtue in Jesus, and that it flowed freely to the touch of faith, and have it she must. Her necessity was most urgent and imperative. Neither the press of people, nor anything else, could hinder her making her way through the crowd, till she touched His garment and had the healing virtue. She knew Christ as the giver, and she came simply as the needy receiver—she touched His garment. How blessed is this sample of faith! What discrimination was wrought in her soul by the Spirit of God, between crowding around Jesus and the touch of faith! Now, mark the result. She felt that she was healed of that plague.

Now let us consider THE WAY OF JESUS WITH THIS SINNER. It was a serious moment with the woman, as well as a precious occasion for the out flowing of the love of Him who was full of grace and

truth. Jesus was on His way to the house of the ruler whose daughter was said to be "at the point of death." But the case of this one needy woman was such a weighty matter, that Jesus called the attention of the whole multitude to it. She came behind Him to touch His clothes; but with what gracious majesty did the blessed Lord turn Himself about in the press and say, "Who touched My clothes?" It is blessed to contemplate these ways of the Lord. A sinner had proved the healing virtue of Jesus, and the attention of the whole crowd must be arrested, and the urgent journey must be interrupted for the moment, while the heart of this trembling one is established and comforted, and her Christ-glorifying testimony published. "Who touched My clothes?" asked the tenderhearted Jesus. Thus the believing sinner was singled out from among the thousands; for her soul must be further taught the deep and everlasting intimacy with the Son of God, which she had by faith been brought into. She must be made to feel that her place is not now to be behind the Lord, but to stand before Him in perfect confidence and unclouded affection. When Jesus is made known in the healing virtue of His blood to any sin-sick soul, an eternal intimacy is begun; and Jesus will show, as He did this woman, something of the dignity and blessing that His own grace has brought us into. He will make us know the things that are freely given to us of God. He will say, "Thou art Mine"; "I will never leave thee"; "I will uphold" and "bless thee," etc.

The needy woman had secretly come behind Jesus; but He will have her now stand publicly before Him. There must be dealing with Jesus, and learning the lessons of His healing grace in secret before any can truly confess Him before men. Jesus turned Himself about in the press; His voice was heard by her; His loving eye singled her out among the crowd of thousands, and the woman fell down before Him, and with a grateful heart told Him all the truth "before all the people" (Luke 8:47)-with fear and trembling, I grant, as we all feel when we first leave the long-accustomed ranks of unbelief, and openly plant our feet beneath the earth-despised shelter of Immanuel's grace.

But notice another thing. Jesus holds up before the multitude the faith of this one woman who had so honored Him. He receives her worship, confesses His acceptance of her, and proclaims the new and everlasting relationship subsisting between them. Jesus calls her, "Daughter." This title showed her new relationship to God. "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Gal. 3:26. It is this that the Spirit of God now bears witness to in the consciences of believers. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Rom. 8:16. It is not a mere honorary title, like many distinctions of this world, but a new and eternal relationship into which God in Christ has brought us.

Jesus also told her that she was made whole, and that by faith—"Thy faith hath made thee whole." She had confessed the Lord "before all the people"; but that had not made her whole. It is important to see that it is not our tears, our sorrows, our reformations, or efforts of any kind that make us whole. No; it is Christ, and Christ alone. Scripture always directs us to the blood of Christ for peace, and it also assures us that "Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." Acts 10:43. Jesus had made this woman whole. Virtue had gone out of Him. Jesus assured her that the healing was perfect—she was made whole. He cleanses and justifies them by His blood, sends His Spirit into their hearts, and assures them they shall not come into condemnation, but that they have passed from death unto life.

The last words of Jesus to the woman are very emphatic—"Go in peace." The first is a remarkable word—"Go." I often think of it. Some persons never seem to learn its force in their experience. They may be sincere believers, but they are always hanging about Christ with doubts, not knowing forgiveness of sins and present peace; they are constantly asking to be made whole, hoping to be pardoned, etc., when Christ says to them, You are forgiven; "Go." They do not credit the glorious truth of present forgiveness and liberty of sonship; they are, therefore, in bondage and fear. Jesus would have it otherwise. He says, "Thy faith hath SAVED thee; go in peace"! (Luke 7:50); as much as to say, have no more doubts, fears, or misgivings; you are made whole, pardoned, reconciled, a child of God, a sinner saved. "Go in peace."

Crumbs for the Lord's Little Ones: Volume 4 (1856), "The Error of Balaam."

Jude ver. 11.

THE apostle Peter speaks of “the way of Balsam” as characterizing those who would privily bring in damnable heresies. (2 Pet. 2.) And He who walks amidst the seven candlesticks denounces those who “held” and those who “taught” the doctrine of Balsam. (Rev. 2:14, 20.) There is necessarily a close connection between “the error,” “the way,” and “the doctrine of Balsam.” But “the way,” and “the doctrine” of Balsam seem to have sprung from his “error.” “Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balsam.” (2 Peter 2:15.) Mistakes, ignorance, and blunders, every christian will find more or less in the retrospect of his own course; but he has an High Priest “who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.” But there is an error which God leaves to work out its own consequences, whether resulting in open apostasy, or severity of discipline; and that error is, after God’s will has been plainly declared, to cherish the desire to depart from it, and to construe God’s permission to have our own way into an approval of our own way. Such was the error of Balsam. Such the error even of saints, when God “grants them their own desire,” even as He did to Israel in the wilderness. (Ps. 78:29-31.) Such the error so prevalent throughout Christendom, which regards itself so complacently as the legitimate fruit of the mission of

Christ—an error issuing “in strong delusion” and awful judgment. (2 Thess. 2:11, 12.)

Nothing could be more decided than the commandment of God to Balsam, when the messengers of Balak first came to ask him to come and curse Israel. “Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed.” (Numb. 22:12.) Balsam began by tampering with the divine commandment. He does not tell the messengers of Balsam the whole truth. “Get you, says he, into your own land; for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you.” (vs. 13.) Balsam thus showed that his heart was to go with them; that the commandment of the Lord laid him under an uneasy restraint; which the temptation of higher honor and greater rewards might cause him to burst. His heart was not right with God. “He loved the wages of unrighteousness.” On the arrival of Balak’s messengers the second time, the leaning of Balsam’s heart was made manifest. He both felt and owned that he was under the restraining power of God’s hand; but instead of acting on the decisive commandment which he had received from the Lord, he bids the messengers to wait, “that (says he) I may know what the Lord will say unto me more.” The commandment of the Lord was plain and positive. First, “Thou shalt not go with them.” Secondly, “Thou shalt not curse them, for they are blessed.” Nothing more was needed; but Balsam by seeking more, was seeking to have the restraint of the Lord removed from Him, in order that he might have his own way. Viewed in this light the error of Balsam is not uncommon. There is often a tendency in our hearts to get from under the force of some plainly revealed commandment of the Lord, in order to have our own will. Happy for us when it pleases God by one pressure and another to bring us into acquiescence with His “good, acceptable, and perfect will.” But heavy and sorrowful is that discipline, when God allows us to have our own way, only to prove its folly in its necessary consequences, which are ever known unto God.

On his second waiting upon God, Balaam is allowed to have his way; but had he not been blinded by covetousness, by the very condition attached to it he might have seen that it would not end in honoring him, but in establishing the blessing of the people of Israel. “And God came unto Balsam by night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do.” The Lord gave Balsam the desire of his heart, but it was in judgment. Be He did to Israel; “He gave them their desire, and sent leanness withal into their soul.” The Lord often rebukes the waywardness of His people by referring to the instinct of animals. “Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but My people know not the judgment of the Lord.” (Jer. 8:7.) But Balaam “was rebuked for his iniquity by the dumb ass speaking with man’s voice.” Balaam hastened on his ass to go greedily after his covetousness; and the ass saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand; but Balsam saw not the angel ready to destroy him. Once and again he smote the ass for not going on; and then the ass fell down under Balsam, and expostulated with him, speaking with man’s voice. Even this miracle does not arrest him. He was so mad upon his idol, that he could not see destruction before him; but when his eyes were opened by the Lord, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and the sword drawn in his hand, then he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face. What instruction have we here! the error of construing God’s permission of our ways into approval of them, is “madness.” Destruction is before us in our own ways; and if we are permitted to go on in them it will assuredly overtake us. God used the tongue of Balsam’s ass to rebuke Balsam; and then He used Balsam’s tongue to utter some of the most glorious prophecies recorded in Scripture. Balsam could not get license to curse, however he might be permitted to run after his covetousness. God can use what instruments He pleases, either to announce or to accomplish His purposes; but the highest gifts, if there be not grace in the heart, profit not the possessor: they are used by God as the tongue of Balsam’s ass was used. Balsam was “a prophet;” he “heard the words of God, and saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open;” and he saw blessing and glory for others, but not for himself. Caiaphas subsequently prophesied that it was “expedient that one man should die for the people.” (John 11:49-52.) God used the tongue of Caiaphas as He had used the tongue of Balsam’s ass. In a day when talent is admired and has its price, it is profitable to meditate on the error of Balsam. Much truth may forcibly be presented to others, by those who have never tasted it themselves. The eyes may be opened, the understanding enlightened, and men may even prophecy in the name of Jesus (Matt. 7:22), and yet they may be “running greedily after the error of Balsam for reward.”

The error of Balaam in thinking that what God permits He therefore approves, will help to account for the actual state of Christendom. Men complacently glory in the result of their willing departure from the truth of God. But notwithstanding the thoughts of men, God’s purpose with respect to His Church remains undisturbed, even as all Balsam’s waywardness, instead of hindering, confirmed the blessing of Israel. “O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balsam the son of Bear answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord.” (Math 6:5.) “There is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord.” (Prov. 21:30.)

But evil doctrine can do that which enchantment and persecution cannot effect, even bring dishonor on Israel, and sore judgment from the hand of the Lord. A deceived heart had turned Balsam aside, and after all the illustrious prophecies his mouth had uttered, Balaam taught Balak a lesson by means of which Israel might be brought under the judgment of God; although Balak could not prevail against them. The friendship of the Moabites prevailed, where Balsam’s mouth and Balak’s power could do nothing. It was through “the counsel of Balaam that Israel committed trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord.” (Num. 31:16.) “Balsam taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.” (Rev. 2:14; Num. 25:1-3.) How intimately connected is the error with the doctrine of Balaam. And the same error has led from the days of the apostles unto our own days to the same doctrine, namely, that the friendship of the world is helpful to the children of God, instead of being enmity against God. Learning and eloquence are much oftener used to overlay sound doctrine than to help it; and to prove the possibility, and not the impossibility, of the service of God and mammon. Men have so widely departed from the doctrines of grace, which only are according to godliness, that to contend for these doctrines gives offense as being narrow-minded and uncharitable. All the external persecution to which the church has been subjected has not prevailed to make so much havoc of it, as the withering blight of false doctrine which has sprung up from within.

In what does “the error,” “the way,” “the doctrine,” “the counsel of Balaam,” issue? He is found amidst the enemies of the Lord, in open rebellion against Him, and perishes with his associates. In the great battle of the Lord, recorded Num. 31, Israel “slew the kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain: Balsam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword.” In that great day of the Lord which is approaching, where will all those who have run after the error of Balaam be found, when there must be decision either for Christ or against Him? Where will be found in that day talents, eloquence, and extensive human influence, which have dazzled men, obscured the glory of Christ, and substituted human inventions for the truth of God? “Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.” “Woe unto them, they have ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward.”

Streams of Refreshing From the Fountain of Life, Jesus Making Whole; or, the Woman in the Crowd

“And Jesus went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him. And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, when she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. 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? And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague” (Mark 5:24-34).

There was remarkable simplicity in the ways of Jesus. His words also were full of deep doctrine, and the more we meditate on them, under the teaching of the Holy Ghost, the more we shall be convinced of the profound truth often embodied in them. His heart was always as full of grace when He walked up and down this earth doing good, as when he died upon the cross; and oh! how blessed it is to trace Him in the various incidents recorded in the gospels, and to contemplate the exceeding rich and abundant grace that He manifested! it is wonderful that Christ — the only begotten of the Father — should ever have been seen in this world of sin, except in fiery judgment; but to find Him leaving the heights of glory and bliss, to come into this evil world to save sinners, is surpassingly wonderful.

In the Scripture for our consideration we find that Jesus was in the midst of a crowd of persons. We are told that

much people followed Him (Mark 5:24).

Thousands, probably, surrounded Him. Apostles were there, and Jairus, one of the rulers of the synagogue, was there also; but most of those who pressed and thronged Him came only to see His miracles, and to be partakers of His temporal bounty in the loaves.

It must have been deeply interesting to behold a man heal the sick, cast out devils, cleanse the lepers, and raise the dead to life. There was something attractive to the natural senses in seeing such miraculous power put forth. Jesus had just before cast out many devils from a man, and was on his way to a ruler’s house to raise his dead child to life. There was, I say, something deeply interesting in all this. People liked to see such wonderful works. They thus made Jesus an object of interest to their minds; but, lamentable to say, they knew Him not as their Savior. They did not regard Him as the Redeemer of the lost, but as a worker of miracles. They knew Him only as an object of prcsent interest, but not as the author of

eternal salvation (Heb. 5:9).

This is very solemn; but, I ask, are not the same principles at work now? Is there not a vast religious crowd all around us? Are not multitudes making Christian religion, as they call it, a subject of interest and conversation, without knowing Christ crucified as their Savior? It is astonishing how many people in this and other countries like to be accounted Christians. If English people go to the land of Hottentots, or to idolatrous India or China, do they not generally wish to be considered Christians? Oh, my reader, beware of any religion that comes short of present forgiveness of sins, and eternal salvation through the finished work of Christ! Do not rest, I beseech you, until you can truthfully say, “Christ has cleansed me from all my sins, and I am in Him.”

The crowd that surrounded Jesus cared little for Him, because they knew nothing of His person and work; and the mass of people operated rather as a hindrance to a sin-convicted, helpless one coming to Jesus. So it is now. Who, I ask, are the great hinderers of the gospel in our day? Are they not those persons who make a religious profession without a vital acquaintance with Christ Himself? those who are content to hear about Christ, without having received Christ in their hearts as their salvation? Are not nominal Christians the very persons who cry out against brokenness of heart, repentance, the new birth, and present forgiveness of sins? But, blessed be God! whatever apparent hindrances there may be to souls coming to Jesus, His eternal purpose must stand; and a living faith in a living Savior allows nothing to hinder it from that object, which is felt to be of such pressing necessity and eternal importance — Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

There was one person in the midst of this crowd of people in whose heart the Holy Spirit was effectually working, and, as far as we know, she was the only one. So it has often been, and still is. Hundreds and thousands crowd to hear the gospel, but the heart of one only may be opened to receive it.

In the narrative we are considering there are two points which I desire, as the Lord may graciously help, to make a few remarks upon.

1. The work of the Spirit in the soul of the woman; and

2. The way of Christ with this sinner.

l. THE SPIRIT’S WORK IN THE WOMAN. When the Holy Ghost takes a soul in hand, He teaches effectually. He uncovers the filthy rags of self-righteousness, exposes the rotten patches of self- reformation, and gives us a true knowledge of our state before God. He is the Spirit of Truth. He convinces of sin. He lays bare the heart by so applying the written word as to show its desperate wickedness in the light of God’s holy presence. He fastens upon the conscience the vile workings, unclean thoughts, desires, and intents of the heart.

Ah, my reader, it is very solemn and humiliating to be under the Holy Spirit’s convicting power. He makes us feel that we are lost and undone, and shows us that every human resource is only a sandy foundation. He makes us sensible of the fact, that the all- searching eye of God is upon us, that He knows us thoroughly, and justly pronounces us to be unrighteous, unholy, and unclean before Him.

Now look at the woman. She not only felt that she had a disease, but that it was incurable — that no earthly resource, no human means, could heal her. She had long tried various expedients, and knew what it was to

suffer many things (see Mark 5:26)

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Thus all help failed, all hope was gone. She felt that her condition was hopeless, helpless, and incurably bad. Blessed picture of the Spirit's work in the soul, though a humbling and painful process for the proud heart to pass through!

Most people around us know that they are sinners. Ask whom you will, the answer is, "I know I am a sinner." But when the Spirit of God works in the heart, He teaches men that they are lost sinners, hell- deserving sinners, helpless, and guilty sinners before God. Many who say that they are sinners, do not mean that they are born in sin, full of sin, dead in sins, children of wrath. It is because people do not know their real state that they, like the woman, try this or that expediency, vainly hoping to make themselves better. They go here and there, leave off some old habits, put on a measure of outward sanctity, break through certain long-accustomed ways, and adopt other lines of pursuit; hoping in this way to commend themselves to the favour of God, and procure ease of conscience. Many a man, when he knows that he has transgressed against God's law, endeavours to atone for it by outward reformation, blindly thinking that there is some ability in himself so to act for the future as to conceal the past. But we may be sure, that if the Spirit of God is working in their souls, they will feel

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for the Holy Spirit will so open up to them the desperate wickedness and deceitfullness of their hearts, that, after all their carnal contrivances, they will feel the plague of sin worse than before.

Oh, my reader, if you are trying to make yourself better, if you are going about to establish your own righteousness, thinking to commend yourself to God by anything of your own, may you now see the folly of it, and solemnly feel the truth that you are a lost sinner in the sight of God! Do not any longer be content to form one of the religious crowd around us, the church-going, chapel-going multitude, who pass by repentance and the new birth, and yet presume to take Christian ground; but may you turn to the Lord Jesus, who is exalted to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance and remission of sins.

It appears from the Scripture record, that this woman, in her sad condition, heard of one who could cure her.

She had heard of Jesus (Mark 5:27)

— she heard that He could do what men could not do.

What blessed intelligence for a poor disconsolate soul! How welcome were the tidings! She felt her plague; she had proved the failing of every human prescription; she had

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and was worse than ever. Now how did she treat the report? Did she hear, and not act? No. She came to Jesus. Oh, yes; the Spirit of God leads the soul straight to Jesus. He reveals to the sin- stricken soul Jesus crucified as a present and an eternal salvation. The woman was thoroughly convinced that Jesus, and Jesus only, could heal her. It was not the venerable Jairus, nor even ordained apostles, that she felt she needed; only JESUS, for she knew that He could heal her, and He only. Her faith beheld Him in the midst of the vast crowd, like an overflowing fountain of living water, and she felt she must drink or die. She said within herself,

If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole (Mark 5:28).

She was sure there was virtue in Jesus, and that it flowed freely to the touch of faith, and have it she must. Her necessity was most urgent and imperative. Neither the press of people, nor anything else, could hinder her making her way through the crowd, till she touched His garment, and had the healing virtue. She knew Christ as the giver, And she came simply as a needy receiver — she touched His garment. How.blessed is this sample of faith! What discrimination was wrought in her soul, by the Spirit of God, between crowding around Jesus, and the touch of faith! Now, mark the result. She felt that she was healed of that plague.

Before we proceed further, let us seek to apply this. We tell you, dear reader, of Jesus the Son of God, who came into the world to save sinners. We present to you His death as the Sin- bearer upon the tree; for

He died the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God (see 1 Pet. 3:18).

We testify of His blood; for the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. Dear reader, Jesus only can save you from the wrath to come, and He can save to the uttermost. All Scripture points thus to Jesus. God the Father draws sinners to Jesus. Jesus Himself says to the heavy laden sinner,

Come unto me, . . . and I will give you rest (Matt. 11:28).

The Holy Spirit leads the convicted sinner to Jesus. The gospel declares there is salvation in no other. Your state as a sinner is incurably bad. You are lost. You now hear of Jesus, that blessed Savior who came to seek and to save the lost. God commands this good news to be published. How do you treat this blessed report? Do you come to Jesus to save you! You have just seen that many crowded around Jesus, but only the touch of faith got virtue out of Him. It is not merely hearing of Jesus, or reading about Jesus, or talking about Jesus, that will save you. No; those taught of the Spirit of God know that they must perish for ever, except they come to Jesus to be cleansed by His precious blood. Oh, my reader, Jesus delighteth in mercy! Though He sits on heaven's throne, His eye discerns your inmost thoughts, and His ear can welcome the feeblest cry. He knows how thoroughly sinful you are, and still He says,

Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out (John 6:37).

Be assured that He will not be indifferent to your case, if you desire His salvation. The Father will run to meet you when you are a great way off, and then you will feel happier than you ever did before. You will know Jesus as the One who put away your sins, by the blood of His cross, who was brought again from the dead by the blood of the everlasting covenant, and who entered into heaven itself by His own blood. Be assured, dear reader, that as soon as your troubled, sin-sick soul looks to the atoning death of Jesus, believing God's testimony to the value of that blood, you will feel whole of your plague; for you will see that Jesus bare your sins, and put them away for ever, under the judgment of God, by His death upon the cross. You will then no longer dread the wrath of God, but will enjoy peace in His holy presence, and be able to sing

2. CONSIDER THE WAY OF JESUS WITH THIS SINNER. It was a serious moment with the woman, as well as a precious occasion for the outflowing of the love of Him who was full of grace and truth. Jesus was on His way to the ruler's house, whose daughter was said to be

at the point of death (Mark 5:23).

But the case of this one needy woman was such a weighty matter, that Jesus called the attention of the whole multitude to it. She came behind Him to touch His clothes; but with what gracious majesty did the blessed Lord turn Himself about in the press and say,

Who touched me? (Mark 5:31).

It is blessed to contemplate these ways of the Lord. A sinner had proved the healing virtue of Jesus, and the attention of the whole crowd must be arrested, and the urgent journey must be interrupted for the moment, while the heart of this trembling one is established and comforted, and her Christ-glorifying testimony published.

Who touched my clothes? (Mark 5:30)

said the tender-hearted Jesus. Thus the believing sinner was singled out from among the thousands; for her soul must be farther taught the deep and everlasting intimacy with the Son of God, which she had by faith been brought into. She must be made to feel that her place is not now to be behind the Lord, but to stand before Him in perfect confidence and unclouded affection. Ah, my reader, when Jesus is made known, in the healing virtue of His blood, to any sin-sick soul, an eternal intimacy is begun, and Jesus will show, as He did this woman, something of the dignity and blessing that His own grace has brought us into. He will make us know the things that are freely given to us of God. He will say,

Thou art mine (Isa. 43:1).

I will never leave thee, &c. (Heb. 13:5).

I will uphold and bless thee, &c. (see Isa. 41.10)

The needy woman had secretly come behind Jesus; but He will have her now stand publicly before Him. There must be dealing with Jesus, and learning the lessons of His healing grace in secret, before any can truly confess Him before men. Jesus turned Himself about in the press; His voice was heard by her; His loving eye singled her out among the crowd of thousands, and the woman fell down before Him, and with a grateful heart told Him all the truth

before all the people (Luke 8:47).

With fear and trembling, I grant, as we all feel when we first leave the long-accustomed ranks of unbelief, and openly plant our feet beneath the earth-despised shelter of Immanuel's grace.

Oh, my reader, see what an important matter in the mind of heaven is the salvation of one soul! Jesus rejoices over one lost sheep when it is found! The Father runs to meet one returning prodigal! The Holy Spirit often seems to pass by crowds to comfort one poor brokenhearted soul! There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth! How blessed this is!

But notice another thing. Jesus holds up before the multitude the faith of this one woman who had so honored Him. He receives her worship, confesses His acceptance of her, and proclaims the new and everlasting relationship subsisting between them. Jesus calls her

Daughter (Mark 5:34).

This title showed her new relationship to God.

Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:26).

Beloved, now are we the sons of God (1 John 3:2).

It is this that the Spirit of God now bears witness to in the consciences of believers.

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God (Rom. 8:16).

Christian reader! do you know your sonship? It is not a mere honorary title, like many distinctions of this world, but a new and eternal relationship which God in Christ has brought us into.

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God (1 John 3:1)!

Yes; believers in Christ Jesus are sons by choice, by regeneration, and by adoption.

Jesus also told her that she was made whole, and that by faith —

Thy faith hath made thee whole (Mark 5:34).

She had confessed the Lord

before all the people (Luke 8:47);

but that had not made her whole. It is important to see that it is not our tears, our sorrows, our reformations, or efforts of any kind that make us whole. No; it is Christ, and Christ alone. Scripture always directs us to the blood of Christ for peace, and it also assures us that

whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins (Acts 10:43).

Jesus had made this woman whole. Virtue had gone out of Him. Jesus assured her that the healing was perfect — she was made whole. Yes; Jesus is the Rock, and His work is perfect. He receives returning, sinful prodigals. He cleanses and justifies them by His blood, sends His Spirit into their hearts, and assures them they shall not come into condemnation, but that they have passed from death unto life.

The last words of Jesus to the woman are very emphatic —

Go in peace (Mark 5:34).

The first is a remarkable word — “Go.” I often think of it. Some persons never seem to learn its force in their experience. They may be sincere believers, but they are always hanging about Christ with doubts, not knowing forgiveness of sins and present peace; they are constantly asking to be made whole, hoping to be pardoned, &c., when Christ says to them, You are forgiven: “Go.” They do not credit the glorious truth of present forgiveness and liberty of sonship; they are, therefore, in bondage and fear. Jesus would have it otherwise. He says,

Thy faith hath SAVED thee; go in peace???(Luke 7:50)!

As much as to say, Have no more doubts, fears, or misgivings; you are made whole, pardoned, reconciled, a child of God, a sinner saved.

Go in peace.

Dear reader, if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus, take your right place before God and before men as saved! Wherever you go, go in peace as to your salvation, knowing that Christ has removed your transgressions from you as far as the east is from the west; and your sins and iniquities, God says, He will remember no more.

Perhaps one of my readers may be saying, “Am I pardoned?” “Are my sins forgiven?” Important questions indeed. Be persuaded, my friend, and take your right place before God as a guilty sinner; turn away from every other refuge, and come straight to Jesus, and to Jesus only, for salvation. Trust only in His death. Behold Him bearing sin in His own body on the tree, and the fierce wrath of Jehovah poured out upon His Son, because of the sins that were laid upon Him. Then hear God’s testimony:

God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

Believing God’s record of the value of the cross of Christ for your salvation, He warrants your saying, “I am God’s child. Jesus hath atoned for my sins; with His stripes I am healed.”

Oh, my reader! what will become of you if you die without Christ? Is it not written,

He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him (John 3:36)?

Oh, think of this, I earnestly beseech you! You are full of sin. You now hear of Jesus as the only Savior of sinners. How do you treat Him? Do you come to Him to save you, or do you despise Him?

Remember that when the woman in the crowd heard of Jesus, she came to Him to heal her, never rested till she touched Him, and you have read the happy result. Woe, woe unto you, if you neglect this great salvation! How can you escape the eternal torment of the damned, if you continue to set at naught God’s gospel? Oh, poor sinner! didst thou but feel thy guilt and danger, how wouldst thou flee to the outstretched arms of the loving Jesus, and long to feel the cleansing virtue of His blood!

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