

EXPOSITORY THOUGHTS ON THE GOSPELS.

FOR FAMILY AND PRIVATE USE.

WITH THE TEXT COMPLETE,

And Many Explanatory Notes.

BY THE REV. J. C. RYLE, B. A.,

CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD,
VICAR OF STRADBROOKE, SUFFOLK;

Author of "Home Truths," etc.

ST. LUKE. VOL. I.

LONDON:
WILLIAM HUNT AND COMPANY, 23, HOLLES STREET.
CAVENDISH SQUARE

IPSWICH: WILLIAM HUNT, TAVERN STREET.

MDCCCLVIII.

LUKE VIII. 41–48.

41 And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house:

42 For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him.

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 stanch'd.

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.

How much misery and trouble sin has brought into the world! The passage we have just read affords a melancholy proof of this. First we see a distressed father in bitter anxiety about a dying daughter. Then we see a suffering woman, who has been afflicted twelve years with an incurable disease. And these are things which sin has sown broad-cast over the whole earth. These are but patterns of what is going on continually on every side. These are evils which God did not create at the beginning, but man has brought upon himself by the fall. There would have been no sorrow and no sickness among Adam's children if there had been no sin.

Let us see in the case of the woman here described, *a striking picture of the condition of many souls*. We are told that she had been afflicted with a wearing disease for "twelve years," and that she "had spent all her living upon physicians," and that she could not be "healed of any." The state of many a sinner's heart is placed before us in this description, as in a glass. Perhaps it describes ourselves.

There are men and women in most congregations who have felt their sins deeply, and been sore afflicted by the thought that they are not forgiven and not fit to die. They have desired relief and peace of conscience, but have not known where to find them. They have tried many false remedies, and found themselves "nothing bettered, but rather worse." They have gone the round of all the forms of religion, and wearied themselves with every imaginable man-made device for obtaining spiritual health. But all has been in vain. Peace of conscience seems as far off as ever. The wound within appears a fretting, intractable sore, which nothing can heal. They are still wretched, still unhappy, still thoroughly discontented with their own state. In short, like the woman of whom we read today, they are ready to say, "There is no hope for me. I shall never be saved."

Let all such take comfort in the miracle which we are now considering.

Let them know that “there is balm in Gilead,” which can cure them, if they will only seek it. There is one door at which they have never knocked in all their efforts to obtain relief. There is one Physician to whom they have not applied, who never fails to heal. Let them consider the conduct of the woman before us in her necessity. When all other means had failed she went to Jesus for help. Let them go and do likewise.

Let us see, secondly, in the conduct of the woman before us, a *striking picture of the first beginnings of saving faith, and its effect*. We are told that she “came behind” our Lord, and “touched the border of His garment, and immediately her issue of blood stanch’d.” The act appeared a most simple one, and utterly inadequate to produce any great result. But the effect of that act was most marvellous! In an instant the poor sufferer was healed. The relief that many physicians had failed to give in “twelve years,” was obtained in one moment. It was but one touch, and she was well!

It is hard to conceive a more lively image of the experience of many souls than the history of this woman’s cure. Hundreds could testify that, like her, they long sought spiritual help from physicians, of no value, and wearied their souls by using remedies which brought no cure. At last, like her, they heard of One who healed labouring consciences and forgave sinners, “without money and without price,” if men would only come to Him by faith.—The terms seemed too easy to be credible. The tidings sounded too good to be true.—But, like the woman before us, they resolved to try. They came to Christ by faith, with all their sins, and to their amazement at once found relief. And now they feel more comfort and hope than they ever felt before. The burden seems rolled off their backs. The weight seems taken off their minds. Light seems breaking in on their hearts. They begin to “rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” (Rom. v. 2.) And all, they would tell us, is owing to one simple thing: they came to Jesus just as they were. They touched Him by faith, and were healed.

For ever let it be graven on our hearts that faith in Christ is the grand secret of peace with God. Without it we shall never find inward rest, whatever we may do in religion. Without it we may go to services daily and receive the Lord’s Supper every week,—we may give our goods to the poor, and our bodies to be burned,—we may fast and wear sackcloth, and live the lives of hermits,—all this we may do, and be miserable after all. One true believing touch of Christ is worth all these things put together. The pride of human nature may not like it. But it is true! Thousands will rise up at the last day and testify that they never felt comfort of soul till they came to Christ by faith, and were content to cease from their own works, and be saved wholly and entirely by His grace.

Let us see, lastly, in this passage, *how much our Lord desires that those who have received benefit from Him should confess Him before men*. We are

told that He did not allow this woman, whose case we have been reading, to retire from the crowd unheeded. He inquired, "Who had touched Him." He inquired again, "until the woman came forward and "declared" her case before all the people. And then came the gracious words, "Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole."

Confession of Christ is a matter of great importance. Let this never be forgotten by true Christians. The work that we can do for our blessed Master is little and poor. Our best endeavours to glorify Him are weak and full of imperfections. Our prayers and praises are sadly defective. Our knowledge and love are miserably small. But do we feel within that Christ has healed our souls? Then can we not confess Christ before men? Can we not plainly tell others that Christ has done everything for us,—that we were dying of a deadly disease, and were cured,—that we were lost, and are now found,—that we were blind, and now see?—Let us do this boldly, and not be afraid. Let us not be ashamed to let all men know what Jesus has done for our souls. Our Master loves to see us doing so. He likes His people not to be ashamed of His name. It is a solemn saying of St. Paul, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. x. 9.)—It is a still more solemn saying of Christ Himself, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed." (Luke ix. 26.)

NOTES. LUKE VIII. 41–48.

41.—[*And behold.*] Chemnitius remarks, that all the three Gospel writers who record the miracle of the raising of Jairus' daughter begin their account with this expression, "behold!" It seems intended to call our attention partly to the greatness of the miracle, and partly to the singular goodness of God in raising up friends to the Gospel even in the synagogues.

Let it be noted that Jairus lived at Capernaum, and that the Gospels mention no less than three persons of rank and influence in Capernaum for whom our Lord wrought special miracles. One is the nobleman whose son was healed. (John iv. 46.) Another is the centurion whose servant was healed, (John vii. 2.) The third is Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue.

42.—[*She lay a dying*] The Greek word so translated would be rendered more literally, "she was dying: at the point of death."

[*The people thronged him.*] Let us mark the pious observation of Quesnel on this circumstance: "Abundance of Christians, as it were, press upon Christ, in hearing His Word, receiving the sacraments, and performing the outward part of religion: but few touch Him by a lively faith, a true Christian life, the prayer of charity, and the meditation, love and imitation of His mysteries. The numerous assemblies and multitudes of people who fill the churches, and make the crowd at sermons, and yet cease not to go on in their usual course in following the world and their own passions, throng and press Christ, but do not touch Him."

43.—[*A woman having an issue of blood.*]—In order to realize this woman's case, and the greatness of the miracle here recorded, we should read Levit. xv. 19. We shall then see that

her disease rendered her ceremonially unclean. Bearing this in mind, we shall understand her desire to avoid publicity and observation. At the same time, let us not fail to note the high position which our Lord occupies in working this cure. He works it as our great High Priest. He bestows health and ceremonial cleanliness, and yet in doing so contracts no uncleanness Himself.

44.—[*Border of his garment.*] Parkhurst, in his lexicon, says, that this was “a tassel, or tuft of the garment, which the Jews in general, and our blessed Lord in particular, wore in obedience to the Mosaic law (Numb. xxii. 12), and which the Scribes and Pharisees affected to wear remarkably large, as badges of extraordinary piety and of uncommon obedience to the divine commandment.”

[*Who touched me?*] This expression would be translated more literally, “Who is the person that touched me?”

[*Master.*] Let it be noted that the word so translated is only used by St. Luke in the New Testament, and is only applied to Christ. It signifies literally, “one who is set over anything to take care of it.” It is a title of respect, and an acknowledgment of authority.

46.—[*Virtue.*] The word so translated is more frequently rendered “power,” “might,” or “strength.” The whole expression of the verse is a very peculiar one.

48.—[*Hath made whole.*] The word so rendered might have been equally well translated “hath saved.” There is, probably, an intentional use of a word of deep double meaning.