

THE WOMAN . . . who touched the hem of Christ's garment
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(Luke 8:43-44)

"And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanch'd." And in these few simple sentences. Dr. Luke recorded one of the most suggestive of all Christ's miracles. "A woman who had spent all her living upon physicians." Day after day, week after week, this worried soul had visited surgeries; time after time she had waited her turn, and had gone away with new hopes rising in her heart. But all her efforts had been in vain. This is the type of story with which John Bunyan would have revelled. He would have visited that woman in her home, and accompanied her as she went to see her physicians. He would have carefully noted the names of her doctors, and perhaps would have found them to be most suggestive. To him, quite obviously, this poor woman would have been the sinner seeking relief from inbred sin; the doctors would have been the physicians of the world, and the grand climax would have represented the moment when the soul bowed before Christ.

The Psychiatrist-Dr. Don't Worry

The Gospel of Christ always begets a sense of personal need, and in the desperate struggle which follows, the sinner has either to yield to the insistent pleadings of the Saviour, or seek elsewhere for the relief demanded by his harassed soul. A change of environment, a visit to fresh surroundings, a complete relaxation from the cares and strain of life, may work wonders in any patient, providing the cause of the trouble is not deep-seated. Many people stay away from religious meetings deciding that conviction is just a disease of the mind. They endeavour to cure it by excessive worldliness. The treatment is most expensive, particularly since it provides no cure.

The Dietician-Dr. Diet

This physician is very famous. His treatment promises permanent cure through elimination. His is the method of giving up things. The patient is urged to adhere strictly to diet, and through his complete denial of certain commodities, both body and soul are purified. In the spiritual realm, these doctors thrive. The sinner is urged to forsake every appearance of evil; to avoid anything detrimental to spiritual progress. He must shun the world and all its allurements; he is urged steadfastly to live the life of a recluse, and by the continuance of religious exercises will eventually attain that degree of spiritual health so urgently required. Immediate joy is unobtainable under this type of treatment, and the doctor is careful to explain that only those who endure to the end can ever hope to be saved.

The Specialist-Dr. Moderation

This is the wisest of all earth's physicians. With particular care he examines his patients, and outlines methods by which health may become a reality. A little of this and a little of that. Sufficient religion to satisfy the qualms of conscience; sufficient worldliness to please the innate longings of the flesh. The mountain-top for the fresh air and viewpoints of the eternal; the valley for the fellowship

THE WOMAN . . . who touched the hem of Christ's garment and delights of worldliness. Everything is all right in moderation. It would not be saying too much to add that every Christian has heard the voice of this eminent doctor. Perhaps John Bunyan would have visualised all these men, and would have underlined the text, "A woman who had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any." The ancient sufferer "came behind Jesus, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanchèd . . . And Jesus said unto her, Daughter, be of good, , comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace. And since Bunyan was also a preacher, he might have indicated that the story divided into three sections. (i) The trial of her faith. (ii) The touch of her faith. (iii) The triumph of her faith. It is a great thing to know a doctor whose reputation is equalled by his ability. Even the people of Palestine recognized this fact when they called Jesus "The Great Physician."

Oh touch the hem of His garment!
And thou too shalt be free;
His saving power, this very hour,
Shall give new life to thee.

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