

THE VESSEL MADE OF CLAY

by Charles S. Price

CHAPTER XI, FROM "THE REAL FAITH" © 1940

FEW PEOPLE have realized the close affinity between IF the natural and the supernatural—between the body and the spirit. We have erroneously segregated the two, and have put them in realms so far apart that many think of the Lord as being able to meet only our spiritual needs. When that is as far as we go, we inevitably overlook the glorious, Blood-bought privileges which are ours for the physical man.

The great, redemptive work of our Lord covers the COMPLETE MAN—body, soul and spirit! It even reaches into the realm of physical necessities. Jesus said to his disciples "Take no (anxious) thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:31-34). These are not inferential statements but direct and definite declarations. He not only said that our Heavenly Father knew we had need of these things, but definitely promised that He would supply them.

There is a very close link between the spiritual and the natural. His disciples were not to seek the natural, but instead to seek the spiritual. They were first to find the Kingdom and then, entering the Kingdom, they would find an abundance which would meet every need of their lives. That was the direct promise of our Lord!

Hundreds of years before Jesus came to this earth, one of the Prophets of God found himself away from any source of human supply—by a brook—and there God vindicated His Word to him by sending the ravens with his food in the gloaming of the morning and the evening. The widow's barrel of meal could not be emptied, because of her unlimited supply in His treasure store. He did not supply the meal because she sought it—but because she OBEYED HIM!

The order has ever been "SEEK YE FIRST The KINGDOM OF GOD!" That is why the emphasis is on the surrender of the natural to the spiritual, and our laying upon the altar the whole of our Adamic natures; that Christ might be to us spiritually, and then physically, all He has promised to be.

The order of the Lord has always been CREATION and then "RECREATION". It has been first that which is NATURAL and, after that, that which is SPIRITUAL. In the 18th chapter of Jeremiah, we read, "The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying Arise and go down to the potter's house, and, there I will cause thee to hear My words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hands of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the Lord came to me saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in Mine hand, O House of Israel." Jeremiah 18:1-6.

It has never been the purpose of the Creator to do a "patched-up job!" The vilest of sinners become "NEW CREATIONS" when they put themselves in His hands. The disease may be of the flesh, but THE CURE IS OF THE SPIRIT! The broken clay must once again be put into the hands of the Eternal Potter, that He may make it again another vessel, as seemeth good to the Potter to make it!

A COMPLETE WORK

How many people come for healing, looking for a physical touch, only! They want the Lord to touch the body, whereas the Lord is longing to TOUCH THE SPIRIT! The physical manifestation will come; but God is a Spirit, and the flow of the Resurrection Life must come through the Spirit primarily and not merely through the physical flesh. When Jesus said, "I came that ye might have Life and that ye might have it more abundantly"; He spoke not only of spiritual life, but of that life which would literally permeate every atom of our beings, and saturate us with the glory of the Life that knows no end.

There are those who come looking for healing, but not for the HEALER! They have anticipated physical thrills. Prayer in instances may have seemed to no avail; but no petition can ever be offered in vain, and unanswered prayer today does not necessarily mean it will go unanswered tomorrow. "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." III John 2. The change externally is frequently superseded by the change internally-transformed by His Spirit in the inner man before the manifestation of the transformation is seen in the outer man! Certainly the scripture quoted, from the pen of the inspired John, throws a Divine Light upon the subject. Here was PROSPERITY FOR THE COMPLETE MAN, but, that he should prosper and be in health was contingent upon the prosperity which was within!

That is why people who say, "If the Lord will heal me, I will serve Him as long as I live," are "putting the cart before the horse." They are looking for the manifestation of His power from the outside in, when in reality His power operates from the INSIDE, OUT! Our bodies are not only the shells in which we live; but they are the tabernacles, too, of the Most High! Does He not want them well and strong? The healing rays of His Resurrection Life do not shine upon us from the outside, but shine through us from within.

The law of the Lord is PROGRESSION! We are changed from glory to glory, but growth toward perfection is never perfection until the ultimate is reached. There is nothing perfect in the human, for perfection is found only in the Divine. We come to Him that we might have Life, and that we might have it more abundantly. His life! The Resurrection Life overflowing until we are inundated in its flow!

It is good when we sing, "Come To Jesus!" It is better when we say, "Jesus has come to me." It is richer by far, however, when we can declare, "He lives within my heart!" It is scriptural for people who are in need to seek out the elders and to call for prayer from the lips of some consecrated man, but it is not God's ultimate. In Him we need no priest, for He is indeed our High Priest. Ira Him we need no intermediary, for He is The One Mediator between God and man.

The veil of the temple has been riven from top to bottom; and the Holy of Holies has been made accessible to all of Adam's race who, dying with Him in His substitutional death, will also rise with Him in the glory and power of His Resurrection Life!

Then it is we take the whole being to the ONE WHO MADE IT! We take it in consecration and surrender. We take it in yieldedness. Then the vessel which was made of clay is left in the keeping of the Heavenly Potter, who makes it yet another vessel after His pleasure! Though it be broken, He throws it not away. With what tenderness and love does He reshape us, and impart Himself as our healing in body, soul, and spirit.

EATING WITHIN

It is not the evangelist nor yet the preacher who "saves." God may use an anointed man in the declaration of His truth, but no hands-other than the hands of the Lord Himself-ever bear the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant in its application to the human heart. The elders of the church may anoint with oil and lay on their hands in the name of the Lord Jesus. The minister may give the broken bread, and put to other lips the cup of communion; but that does not necessarily mean that the recipient receives the broken Body and the shed Blood of the Lord Jesus. The communicant must not only "eat the bread" and "drink the cup" of the Lord's Supper but must actually partake in Spirit of the Sacrifice of His Lord, in order to fulfill the true purpose of this most holy and precious Sacrament.

There is no formula for healing; neither is there any formula or rule by which one can grow in grace. When we at last come to the end of self; when in condemnation of our fleshy natures-in contempt and disgust for the Adamic life which has brought us Spiritual sorrow and Physical pain-we fully yield ourselves, not merely our conduct but OURSELVES, to the Headship of our glorious Lord; then begins the LIFE SUPERNAL. It is not by imitation but by participation that we become of LIKE NATURE-LIKE SUBSTANCE, "because as He is, so are we in this world. (I, John 4: 17).

This transformation so permeates the entire man, that suffering of the body goes in conjunction with the banishment of the pain and anguish of the heart; for whom the Son sets free, is free indeed! John 8:36. His transforming glory is reflected in us as we, ourselves, are changed from glory to glory, until we shall AWAKE IN HIS BLESSED LIKENESS!

Did not our Lord say, "Go and sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee? Over and over again He tied up eternal disease with the condition of the inward man. He did not say, "How sick are you?" or "How much does it hurt?" but "Do you believe? Have you living faith within?" He was not concerned with the condition of the exterior, but He always probed beneath the "proud flesh" into the condition of the interior. Instead of struggling and striving to bring about healing by this prescribed process, or by that, it is much more pleasing-and infinitely more effective-to place the vessel back in the hands of the Maker.

The human is ever prone to over-emphasize little things and neglect the greater for the lesser. Where we eat and sleep, as well as other earthly matters, may receive Divine guidance, but they are not the ULTIMATE with God. He wants us to know Him, whom to know aright is Life eternal. He wants to lead us into Heavenly realms. So many of us are concerned about the geographical aspect of our obedience. "Shall I go to this town, Lord?" "Shall we live here, or shall we live there?" It may be perfectly true that the Lord has a definite (lace for us, but it is of far more importance that WE LIVE IN THE SPIRIT! With Jesus, the supreme thing was, not whether He was in Judea or in Samaria, but that He was in the center of His Father's Will.

MY HOME IS GOD

One of old asked Him, "Master, where dwellest Thou?" Jesus replied, "Come and see." It was so relatively unimportant, however, that no record was kept of the location of the dwelling place of Jesus. We do not know just where He was staying. The street was not given, nor was the number of the house. Was it in the city, or was it in the countryside? Perhaps it was beneath the outstretched arms of some forest tree, for we are told that He had not where to lay His head. We do not know where; but we do know that HIS HOME WAS GOD! He came to do the Father's Will; and the Father's Will was His Will!

We do know that He lived in the place of IMPLICIT OBEDIENCE, "for though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered;" (Heb. 5:8) "and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. 2:8). Shall we not also say then that sometimes our suffering comes to lead us into the place of obedience? If that be so, should not we seek our Healer rather than our healing?

It may be human for us to deal with the effects, and to constantly look upon and pray for them, but it is not as pleasing to our Father as to ask for grace TO EXAMINE THE CAUSE. That is why what we are is far more important than what we do. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills! From whence cometh my help?" (Ps. 121). Certainly it is not from the hills! "MY HELP COMETH FROM THE LORD WHICH MADE HEAVEN AND EARTH!"

We read about faith which will move mountains, and immediately begin to look at the mountains, instead of seeking the faith which will move them. He is the Author and the Finisher of our faith! If He begins it, and it ends in Him, why should we struggle to manufacture it, when He alone can impart faith! Oh, how sweet is His lovely Presence, and how marvelous—beyond description—is the exercise of HIS FAITH and the manifestation of HIS POWER. In ourselves, we can do nothing! Absolutely nothing!

We are so cluttered up with attending to the external details, and so weary in our unceasing toil, that we fail to hear the voice of Jesus say, "Come unto Me and rest! Lay down, thou weary soul, lay down, Thy head upon My breast!" It is then that we discover it is not our faith in Him, but HIS FAITH operating in us. It is not by the might of our prayer, nor by the powerful thundering of our entreaties, but by the beautiful moving of His Holy Spirit. One of His dear children who had been healed in body, soul, and spirit, and who was a living miracle of the recreative power of our Lord, said "It was when I STOPPED that JESUS STARTED!" How blessed it is to come to the place where we say, "I cannot, but HE CAN!"

Become released unto God! Just LET HIM! He spoke the Word—and a Universe was born! He said "Let..." and the oceans were in their places! He spoke and the stars were in the firmament! All was done at His command. He has always been Sovereign! He is that today! He is calling upon His children for a complete relinquishment of all that they have, and all that they are! Then as the darkness moves out, THE LIGHT MOVES IN! As self goes, HE COMES! From within us there then begins to flow the "Rivers of Living Water"—healing streams in the desert of our lives. The wilderness, which we are, begins to rejoice; and the desert, which we have been, is made to blossom as the Rose!