

IN WHICH I CONFESS

by Charles S. Price

CHAPTER I, FROM "THE REAL FAITH" ©1940

FOR YEARS I have known something was wrong. What that something was I have now discovered, as the Holy Spirit Himself has unfolded before my bewildered eyes a vision of surpassing loveliness; and for the first time I have beheld new beauty and glories of the Lord in the heart of that grace we call FAITH. I call it a grace, because that is just what it is. In our blindness of heart and mind, we have taken faith out of the realm of the spiritual and, without realizing just what we were doing, have put it in the realm of the metaphysical. An army of emotions and desires has driven Faith from the chambers of the heart into the cold and unfruitful corridors of the mind.

Why have our prayers gone unanswered? Why are there so many sick, in spite of the fact that for them the so-called prayer of faith has been offered? Why are our churches filled with the lame and the halt, the deaf and the blind, who sit listening to sermons on divine healing that are true to the Word, and true to the promises of our Lord, and yet are not healed?

More than once I have gone home from some meeting with the shouts of victory ringing in my ears ... but I have gone home to weep and cry, out of a disappointed heart, unto my Lord. The crowds were shouting because of some who were healed; but I was weeping because of those people who dragged their tired, sick bodies back to their homes-just as needy as they were before they came into the services.

Was there no balm in Gilead? Was there no compassion or sympathy in the heart of the Man with the nail prints in His hands? Why were some healed in such a miraculous way, and others dismissed with an appeal to keep on believing and return later, to go through the formula again?

We must face facts. It is not pleasing to the Holy Spirit to dismiss the evident discrepancy between theology and experience with a shrug of the shoulders, and refuse to ask for light and guidance on this all important problem. Only the truth can make us free from the bondage of fears and doubts, and the discouragement that ultimately comes at the end of the road of disappointments. The only way to get the truth is to come in sincerity and absolute honesty of heart and mind to Jesus. Our Lord said that He Himself was the Truth, and as we open the door of the heart to Him we make possible the sweet revelations that only His presence can bring.

So I am going to be very, very frank. Sometimes, perhaps, almost painfully so. I cannot spread my heart out over these pages and do otherwise; for never before in my ministry as a writer have I been so stirred in my innermost being as I am now. This glorious and wonderful truth has flooded my soul, until it has lifted me in spirit to the gates of the glory world. I believe and pray that ere you finish these chapters, you too will see the gates of Grace swing open, and your feet will walk down the paths of Faith to the place where you will meet your Saviour in the garden of answered prayer.

I come not as a dogmatist, wearing the robes of infallibility; neither come I as a wielder of the pen of sarcasm dipped in the ink of criticism; but rather as a grateful child of God, to whom the Holy Spirit has been giving light on a subject which has been viewed through a glass darkly in the years that are past. But now, through the love of 'The Giver Of Every Good And Perfect Gift,' there has come to me an understanding, in part at any rate, of the real and genuine meaning of that beautiful faith of which Jesus not only spoke, but imparts to men.

The revelation has answered my questions. It has solved my problems. It has deepened my love for my Lord, and strengthened my surrender of heart and life to Him. It has revolutionized my healing ministry, for it has revealed to me the helplessness of self; and the need of the presence, the love, the grace, and the faith, of Jesus.

So I want to confess. I want to confess that my heart has been heavy, even when the crowds were shouting, singing, and declaring victory. I could see the miracles ... cases of the healing touch of the hand of Jesus ... that were manifestations of His supernatural power. How glad I have been for them. They stand today as impregnable testimonies to the power of the Lord. They are unassailable fortresses, in the realm of experience, over which is flying the glorious banner of Truth.

There are thousands and thousands of these miracles; and they prove conclusively that Jesus is really the same yesterday, today, and forever. Not that we should rely upon experience to prove the Word, but it is blessed indeed when we can see manifestations of answered prayer. Yet, from those meetings, I have gone home with the faces of poor supplicating people haunting me. I have seen them do their best to rise from the wheel chair, only to sink back again in sorrow and disappointment. I have been moved by the groans, cries, and intercessions around altars, until they have lingered with me for days after the services were over.

You have also. In your church there is a multitude of sick and needy people. They love the Lord ... they are consecrated to Him ... yet there seems to be such need for a greater lifting of the physical burdens of life in answer to prayer. Ministers of the Gospel have taken me aside scores of times and told me of their discouragements because of their seeming inability to exercise active faith in God. If it were not for the fact that every once in a while some suffering soul reaches through and brings the glory down, many of these ministers would feel like running away when requests for prayer are sent to them. Not that these men are not God's men they are! They are devoted to their calling and to the Lord, but they stand bewildered before what seems to be a contradiction between word and experience.

It does not seem quite right to sing, "Jesus never fails," and then watch the sick go out with their pains, their sicknesses and ailments, after the benediction. It is one thing to dismiss the suppliant with the words, "Only Believe;" but it is another thing entirely to dismiss that case from your thought and heart, if you are really sincerely honest before God. To testify to healing on the basis of faith or promise, before it has happened, is generally unwise, and always inexcusable, unless the faith is actually there. Even when it is there, it is better by far to be able to testify with the double voice ... one the articulate voice of praise and thanksgiving, and the other the inarticulate voice of the physical manifestation itself.

Remember that faith ... the weight of a grain of mustard seed ... will do more than a ton of will, or a mind full of determination. Genuine faith can no more manifest itself without result, than the sun shine without light and heat. Knowing this, and believing it to be true, what is it that we have been mistakenly calling faith, because real faith never fails to bring about the result? In my own heart, I am satisfied that many of God's children have failed to behold the difference between faith and belief. To believe in healing is one thing; but to have faith for it is altogether something else. That is why so many needy people, who believe, come to the Lord on the basis of His promises in the Word and try and try and try to affirm that they are healed.

OUR DIFFICULTY

Therein has been our difficulty. We have made faith a condition of mind, when it is a divinely imparted grace of the heart. Brethren, we have been wrong in our attitude and practice over and over again. When the golden sunlight of God's great grace and truth floods our hearts and minds, and when by the power of the blessed Holy Spirit we behold the provisions of His love; there will be an end to our struggling and striving, and these lives of ours will be wrapped around with the garments of His peace. In that happy hour, we shall come to the realization that we can receive faith only as He gives it. No longer will we foolishly attempt to struggle to believe. Instead of the storm, on the Galilee of life, there will be a sweet and a beautiful calm.

The disciples could have worked themselves up into an emotional frenzy, trying to still the anger of the tempest. But three little words from Jesus and the wind drops from a scream to a whisper, and the sea whimpers for a moment like a crying child in its mother's arms and then settles down to sleep on the breast of nature. Three little words from Jesus and the winds and the seas obey Him! The tempest would have laughed in the face of the disciples, though they uttered a million words of commands and rebukes in the will to believe, for the tempest knew it was greater than they.

Three little words from Jesus ... one touch from His hand divine ... and more is accomplished in the time of a lightning flash than all our struggles and mental endeavors could work in a thousand years. We have made it difficult, when He wanted to make it so easy. How my heart has bled as I have seen some poor, needy soul struggling so very hard to exercise what he thought was faith . . . when deep down in my heart I knew it did not come that way. Moreover, I knew faith did not operate in process or in results in the manner in which he had struggled so long in his yearning to obtain.

At moments like that it was so hard to say anything, for it meant the overthrow of established systems and methods. It meant the abolition of certain manifestations which for years have been needlessly associated with the exercise of faith. It meant that, having arrived at the end of the road of honest endeavor without the thing for which we had prayed and tried and tried to receive, we would be forced to come to the conclusion that there was something wrong in our attitude of soul and mind, or else the victory would have been won.

Wherein have we been wrong? Why are there so many who stand bewildered and perplexed in the midst of their own misgivings, until perhaps doubt has entered and the gates have quietly closed to the trysting place with Jesus, in the garden of the heart.

I think I know the answer! I am sure in my own heart that I have discovered what has been wrong. I can see now where so many missed the way. The only thing to do is to ask the Spirit to lead us back to the fork in the road where, because of our blindness, we left the trail. Then once again can we walk on the King's Highway of grace and prove in heart and experience that the Book is true and that our Jesus never fails. Remember that! If there have been disappointments and failure, it has been on our part; and not the failure of Him who today is our advocate before the Father's throne.
