

IMPARTED FAITH

by Charles S. Price

CHAPTER VIII, FROM "THE REAL FAITH" ©1940

THE BELLS of my heart are ringing, because I know that my Lord is able to supply all our need. The storehouses of grace are filled to overflowing and the quantity is of such abundance, that it is inconceivable to these hearts and minds of ours. We deal with earthly and temporal limits, while God deals with the illimitable and eternal. The measure of God's giving is always to overflowing. The apostle stated, "Who giveth to all men liberally;" and there is no end to His beneficence, and no lack in His inexhaustible supply.

Does it not seem tragic that, with all this, there is such spiritual poverty? Is it not a matter that should cause us to pray, and to seek His face, in order that we may discover the link which is missing in the chain of revealed and recognized truth? Surely when He has enough, and that enough is backed by His promise, then undoubtedly there is something missing some-where, when we continue in our sorrows and our needs.

In this Dispensation of Grace, with an open door to the presence of God Himself, we can arrive at but one conclusion: that faith is the quality or power by which the things desired become the things possessed. It is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. That is the nearest to a definition of what faith is—even in the Inspired Word. In spite of its potency, it is somewhat of an intangible commodity. You can't weigh it, or confine it in a container. It is almost like trying to define energy, in the realm of physics, in one comprehensive statement.

We are told that the atom is a world within itself, and that the potential energy contained within such a tiny "universe" is so great that it makes the mind of the layman bewildered. But define it—or attempt to—and you will run into difficulties. Faith too is like that. There have been times when I have felt it stealing over the soul, until I have dared to say and do things which, had I allowed reason to take charge of affairs, I would have hesitated to say and do. Though it came, perhaps, only as big as a grain of mustard seed, it flowed through word and act with irresistible power, until people stood in wonder at the mighty works of the Lord.

One thing I do know, and that is, I cannot produce faith. Neither in me—nor in you—are there the ingredients or qualities which when mixed, or put together, will make even a mustard seed of Bible faith. If this be true, are we not foolish to attempt to bring about results without it? If I want to cross a lake, and find there is no way to reach the other side, except by boat; would it not be foolish of me to struggle to get across without a boat? The thing I should seek is the boat not the other side of the lake! Get the boat, and it will take you there.

There are certain things which we receive by faith and only by faith. There is not the slightest ambiguity regarding that in the Word. Rather it sets forth a clear declaration of the truth. Now inhere do we get the faith which will take us across our "lakes"? The answer to this question is positive and sure! Between the covers of the sacred Book there is mention made of faith as the gift of God and faith as a fruit of the Spirit. Whether it be gift or fruit, however, the source and origin of faith remains the same! It comes from God. There is no other source of faith; for it is the "Faith of God!"

Suppose you could obtain faith by mixing any spiritual qualities, you might like to mention, in the crucibles of life. Suppose that faith was something you possessed. Now we all know of its power! Would it not be a dangerous possession? Suppose we could use it to cross the "lake" when God wanted us on this side? Suppose you or I had faith enough this morning to raise up every sufferer among us. If we were to utilize such power, how do we know but what we might be contravening the divine will, and overthrowing the divine plan?

A HIDDEN DANGER

Some time ago a lady brought to me a little girl who was sick. She was a sweet little tot, pretty as a picture, quiet and retiring; but a serious malady had fastened itself upon her little body. The father of the little girl, though he loved her dearly, was rebellious against the Lord. For years his wife had prayed for him to Surrender, but he had always offered some excuse. We prayed together. Three times that little one was brought for prayer. Had there been faith, she would have been healed. But she was not!

The mother went to prayer! Later she called me on the telephone and said, "Dr. Price, I feel that God is dealing with my husband. He loves our little girl so much, that I think the Lord can reach his heart through her. Would it not be wonderful if I could get him to come with us when you pray once again? Perhaps, if we could get him on his knees to pray for her, it would not be long before he would be praying for himself."

The next time they came to the house for prayer, he came along. He was courteous, kind, and solicitous about his little girl; but when I asked him to pray, he said, "No, I don't want to be a hypocrite."

The Holy Spirit led me to admonish him: "Brother, get on your knees, and let us look to the Lord together. If you do, I believe you will take a little girl home who has been healed by the touch of the Savior's hand." He looked at me in amazement, and said, "Do you really believe that?" I told him I did. Down on his knees went that man! There sweetly stole over the body of the little girl the healing virtue of Jesus; and she raised her expressive eyes to God in a prayer of thanksgiving and gratitude. While the father was searching and yielding his heart, the Saviour spoke to him those words which to an unregenerate heart bring peace.

Suppose I had possessed faith enough and could have used it at will. Would that have brought as much glory to the name of the Lord—to say nothing of the knowledge of sin forgiven to a heart—hungry father—as the imparted faith which was given at the time it was needed?

Many years ago, while I was in a Vancouver, B. C. Campaign, an incident occurred which kept me awake most of the night, with my heart open before the Lord. I had been praying for hundreds that night. There was in that meeting the very real consciousness of the sweet and wonderful presence of the Saviour. Many weary, tired bodies had been renewed by the touch of the Master's hand. They had found deliverance from their pains and sicknesses, as they knelt at the foot of the cross. I turned to Dr. Gabriel Maguire, pastor of the First Baptist Church, and said, "The Lord is imparting faith tonight; the power of the Lord is present to heal." He replied that he was never more conscious of the moving power of God in all his life.

A minute later, together we placed our hands on the head of a man. A feeling akin to a vacuum came over me. I felt so empty. The presence of the Lord was with me, but I had no confidence or faith to pray for the man, and nothing happened to him! I prayed again. Then I felt so empty that I was about to cry out to the Lord and ask why He seemed to have departed when He had been so sweetly manifest just before. Instead, I turned to the man and said, "Brother, why are you here? Who are you? What is the purpose of your coming to the platform?"

He turned pale. Then he made a confession! He told me that he was a professional hypnotist. He had stated that the power in the meeting was the power of hypnotism. He had argued with other people about it, and then had decided to use himself as a test case; as he wanted to investigate first-hand. Then, he planned to hold a public meeting and expose the whole divine healing movement. Now this man had a sickness, indeed! He needed healing; but suppose I had possessed faith for him. Would it not have been disastrous to have brought healing to that man? For, remember, if faith is powerless—it ceases to be faith. You can't have faith without results any more than you can have motion without movement.

The thing we sometimes call "faith" is simply trust. We trust in the Lord; but faith has feet and wings and power. A man could not have faith for salvation and not be saved. He could trust the Lord, and promise that someday he would come to Christ, but when he has faith for salvation, it means he is saved.

So it was with the man whose case I have just recounted. Whatever faith was given during the evening was withdrawn from me until I was praying for someone, who in the providence and will of God, was ready to receive from Him the blessing He alone can impart. It so happened that the very next one for whom we prayed, a woman, was one of the outstanding miracles of the entire campaign.

No Christian is entirely devoid of faith. It is implanted in the heart as a gift, or a fruit-faith enough to maintain your salvation; faith enough to obey the Lord, and do the things which are pleasing in His sight; but you are continually dependent upon Him for its perpetuity. You cannot keep the light and dismiss the sun. You cannot have faith in God, unless you have the faith of God. That is why the Scripture says, "By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God."

Grace and faith are so closely related that you cannot separate them. The wonder of it lies in the fact that faith is many times imparted when we feel the least deserving. It is not always the product of merit. Is not that gift of faith the beautiful flower of grace? That faith, which quiets the

restless sea of life, makes happy the heart in the knowledge that the Pilot will see us through. Has that priceless possession come because of what we have given or done?

That faith—given me to touch the hem of His garment and be lifted above and out of my pain and suffering—dare I for a moment say that I received it because of my deeds and words? The faith which was yours in the hour of your trial—the opening heaven in vision beside the open grave the angel music sounding through the heart when grief was moaning, and the poor heart aching and nearly breaking—how did it come, and why? When I survey the wondrous cross, I begin in part to understand why grace smiles on faith as it goes on every mission and ministry of life.

WHAT MANNER OF MAN

The disciples and the Master are on the waters of Galilee. The lake, which was so calm, is lashed into fury by the coming of the storm. The same lake; the same waters, and—perchance—the same day! The affrighted disciples are terror-stricken at the raging of the tempest and the fury of the winds, even as you and I would be. How quickly the scenes of life can change! It does not take long for laughter to be drowned in tears and a happy heart wrung by the cruel grip of sorrow. The incident of the storm and the calm did not happen merely for them; it happened because God wanted to speak also through it to your heart and mine.

When at last the disciples awakened the sleeping Christ, He asked them a question. You remember it well! It was, "here is your faith?" Where was it? Had it dropped into the depths of the sea on which they sailed? Had it fled on the shoulders of the storm? Had it been dissolved in the spray that washed their boat? Their Faith was with them all the time. The mistake they made was in forgetting the fact of His presence, while discerning the fact of the storm! Their Faith was not far away. Remember the words of our Lord, "Without me ye can do nothing."

Then Jesus advanced to the bow of the boat. He looked into the face of the tempest and hurled His command into the teeth of the storm. The waves obeyed. The wind halted in its tracks. Jesus had spoken, and the disciples stood awed in the presence of His power. Where was their faith? Do you not know? Can you not see? It was just as near to them as it is to you and me; for let me assure you that the fact of the storm does not mean that He has gone! To be needy is no proof that you have been deserted. It may be the door that leads to a miracle! It may be God's method of making you say, "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the seas obey Him?"

Can you imagine Peter, standing in that boat, telling those waves to be still? I can—if the Master of the sea had imparted faith for the miracle, and that in accordance with His will. It was Peter who confidently ministered in sublime spiritual bravery to the man at the beautiful gate. The man was healed, and he followed Peter and John into the Temple, shouting the praises of God as he went. "Such as I have, give I unto thee," said Peter, and he proved that he had it. But where did he get it? He had just come from an upper room and that upper room had contained the secret which was back of the healing by the Beautiful Gate.

So conscious was Peter of the fact of the Divine Impartation, that he spent the greater part of his sermon, that followed the healing, telling how weak he was and how strong His Saviour was. It was not they; it was not their power; it was their Lord.

How different this truth is from our poor feeble attempts to transfer faith from the heart to the mind; to turn faith from a grace-imparted to a cold, intellectual assent or belief; to look for it in the unholy corridors of the will, rather than in the light which streams from heaven through the windows of the soul. There is a great deal of difference between the cripple who struggles and tries to walk and the cripple who looks and prays for the faith by which he will walk; and in my own heart I know that such faith is given while the soul waits before God, in the quiet and beautiful attitude of trust and rest in His promises, rather than in the turbulent atmosphere of our noisy strivings and endeavors. "Wait, I say, on the Lord. Rest in the Lord! Wait patiently for Him and He shall bring it to pass."

Roll on, blue waves of Galilee! Blow and moan, ye winds that rage, and ye tempests that blow. You laugh at my seeming helplessness. You ridicule my endeavors to stand in the midst of the rocking of the boat. You ask me where my faith is. You taunt me about my condition. My Faith is not far away! He sleeps awhile, to teach me to rely upon Him. He sleeps, that confidence in self might be turned to trust in His promise and in the power of His presence. No, my Faith is not far away. I look at Him and smile; for His voice whispers to this poor heart of mine, and tells me that if He can rest in the midst of the tempest and the storm, then I can sweetly rest in Him.