

# FAITH IS A GIFT

## by Charles S. Price

CHAPTER IX, FROM "THE REAL FAITH" ©1940

FAITH IS ONE of two things. It is either a gift of God, or a fruit of the Spirit. Of that there cannot be the slightest doubt. Search the corridors of reason, and you will inevitably arrive at the same answer. If it is true that faith "as a grain of mustard seed" contains the dynamics which would move mountains, do you think God would entrust to our possession a weapon as potent as that? To have it otherwise, than as God has ordained, would not only destroy the entire economy and system whereby the Christian can walk in harmony and communion with God, but would put in the hands of weak people, such as you and I, an instrument which could be used for our destruction.

I do not mean that we would use faith for physical manifestations alone; but that the spiritual reactions would prove to be a curse instead of a blessing, and impediments to growth rather than help. More than once I have tried to exercise faith, and have struggled to obtain the answer I desired to my prayer; only to find, in the light of succeeding events, that it was better by far that the prayer was not answered as I had desired.

That is why God deals to every man the measure of faith he needs to walk in harmony with the Divine Will. Beyond that point, faith will not be imparted. This lesson to me is so beautiful that it awakens in my heart a song of thanksgiving and praise to the Lord I love and serve. Perhaps I do not understand the purposes of God, but trust holds on when faith is not imparted: and I am happy in the consciousness that He is working in my life for the very best.

We should trust Him when we cannot see, and rely upon Him when we cannot understand. However, let us not make the mistake of calling that trust "faith". Faith works, moves, operates and accomplishes things according to its measure and its power. Of course, to each one there is given the faith by which we call ourselves the children of God; and there is given or imparted to us the faith by which we daily know that we have passed from death unto life.

Faith is measured in the scales of God, even as we measure the commodities of earth. More than once our blessed Lord talked about little faith and great faith. He mentioned weak faith and strong faith. As we need the gift or fruit of faith, it is imparted by the Lord, in order that God's will, rather than ours, will be done on earth, and in us, even as it is in Heaven. There are many times when our desires are contrary to the will of God. Many times in our ignorance we would do the thing which would bring sorrow instead of joy. If we possessed the faith, for use at any and all times to bring about our own desires, it is clearly to be seen that the results would be disastrous.

The Christian world looks to the life of George Muller as a latter day example of the power of faith in the heart of a man who believed God. Such a life it was—a magnificent array of miraculous answers to prayer. In reading after his biographers, however, have you not noticed the fact that he knew lie was in the center of God's will? There were hungry little mouths to be fed and little orphan bodies to be clothed; and Muller believed that the Lord, who called him to that ministry, would supply every need. So when the need arose, faith was given.

There was no struggle, no agonizing, no battle against doubt; only the manifestation of an imparted faith. He was an ardent believer in fervent, effectual prayer. Many times he reveals the depth of his ministry of intercession. The reason, he says, that so many people fail to have their prayers answered is that they have not learned the value of importunity and continuity in prayer. Yet, whenever he came up to a crisis, he would tell the Lord his need in a most matter-of-fact way, and simply count it done by faith. If we are to believe his writings, it was almost as simple as a woman stepping to her telephone, calling up the grocery store, and asking for the delivery of her needs. Thus Muller prayed to God!

Can you have faith like that in yourself? Can you possess such ability, apart from the gift and anointing of the Spirit of God? To endeavor to exercise something we do not possess leads to excesses in the realm of the spiritual; and often the attempt to use faith we do not possess drives out what little trust we have in God. Let me illustrate what I mean by the *impartation* of faith.

## THE MASTER KNEW

Some years ago I was conducting a meeting in a Presbyterian Church in Medford, Oregon. The Lord led us to hold a healing service one afternoon. The place was crowded, and many were standing outside and on the window ledges, looking into the building. One of that number was a little crippled boy who walked with the aid of crutches. My heart bled for the little fellow, for there was such a look of pathos about his blue eyes that my heart was stirred. Silently I lifted my heart to the Lord, and asked for faith for the healing of the little lad.

Then across the platform there came for prayer a line of children, most of whom were accompanied by their parents. A little girl stood in front of me. Her mother was weeping. I laid my hands on her head and prayed. Nothing happened; but the spirit of the meeting seemed to change. There was a deadness and a heaviness which weighed heavily upon me. I prayed again; and the feeling seemed to increase. I looked at the weeping mother in bewilderment. She was sobbing. At last she cried out, almost hysterically, "Why won't Jesus heal my girl?"

"Where do you worship?" I asked.

"I go to the Methodist Church," was her reply.

I looked at her closely. Then into my heart there came a suspicion. Just at that moment the Lord imparted the gift of discernment to one of the people by my side who asked the woman this question: "Have you ever been in Mysticism or Occultism?"

She had, she confessed. Her little girl did not go to the Methodist Church. She, herself, had not been there for months. She had been attending a spiritualist séance week after week. Then I knew why my Lord had withheld His blessing and His faith. The mother continued to cry in her agony of soul, "He has healed others; please ask Him to heal my little girl."

I said, "Sister, do you know anything about salvation through the shed blood of Jesus on Calvary?"

She said she had at one time, but a sorrow had come into her life and, instead of taking a little tighter grip on the hand divine, she had turned away from God. In response to my appeal, she said that she would like to give her heart to Christ then and there, and asked me to pray for her. She repeated a prayer of surrender after me, and then I closed with the words, "I am trusting in Jesus as my personal Savior, and I claim the promise of the blood as the atonement for all my sin."

Into my heart, and into hers too there swept a glory wave from heaven. As I reached out my hand once again to her little girl, I knew that her days as a cripple were over. She sprang to her feet. She was healed! Then I looked at the poor little crippled boy and held out my hand for him to try to climb through the window and come to the platform for prayer. He did not come. Instead, he fell through the window, leaving his crutches on the outside! He too was healed.

The Holy Ghost took such charge of that service, that I have seldom seen anything to equal it. Not only were people healed, but many were saved. Down the aisle came a dear, old lady who had been in a wheel chair for years. She was leaping, shouting, and praising God, even as they did in the days when the Savior walked the streets with men. What a meeting! What a time to make men adore Him and angels to rejoice.

*Now, suppose I had possessed faith for the healing of that little girl. Suppose that when I first laid hands on of the Lord, and from that moment on she would have her head, she had gone away well. Her mother would have taken it as a sign that the séance was in the order been more deeply enmeshed in the spiritism that I do not believe is of God. So, when I prayed in my lack of understanding, the spirit of faith and assurance was lifted from me. How empty I felt. Then, when the mother accepted Jesus as her personal Savior, faith was imparted and the work was done. Instead of struggling to be healed, how much sweeter and richer life would be, were we to look to Jesus who is "the Author and the Finisher of our faith."*

## A HAPPY MORNING

One March morning, some years ago, I left home feeling the love and presence of the Nazarene in my heart. I was on my way to pray for a poor woman who had lost her mind, and who was confined in an institution set apart for such sufferers. I can hear now the sobs of her husband, as he cried in desperation from the broken condition of his heart. Disaster—suddenly, without any warning—had struck a beautiful home with the rapidity of a lightning flash. God was their only hope, and they knew it. I was anxious to pray for that woman and had gone forth confident that the Lord would hear and answer prayer. She was in

such a helpless condition, and in the grip of an evil spirit! When at last I arrived at her room, she cried out in blasphemy and obscenity in a voice that was not her own.

That morning we saw no visible answer to our prayers; but the poor, distracted man grasped me by the lapels of my coat and hoarsely insisted that we refuse to give up and instead keep storming the Throne of Grace for the healing which Jesus alone could give. Accordingly, I called my church to prayer; and called other churches too. We agreed to pray for an entire day for the deliverance of the poor sufferer, and more than one prayer warrior resolved to stay upon his knees until the woman was delivered.

About four o'clock that afternoon, while praying near the altar of the church, I felt the Spirit of the Lord come upon me. Under the impulse of that anointing, I stood to my feet, and trembling with emotion and the glory of His presence, I announced that our prayers had reached through, and that the answer we desired was on the way. I stepped to the telephone and told the husband of the woman, that I believed we had received the victory. We had! The following day, after a brief season of prayer and anointing, she arose in victory and triumph, and went home once again to her adoring husband and children. I knew the moment the evil spirit left her body. I was conscious of the moment he released his grip upon her poor soul.

I knew that the Faith of the Lord Jesus Christ had been given—released—at that moment of victory. I could not release His Faith myself; if I could have, in my limited understanding of God's purpose, she would have been healed the first time I prayed. But it was not until the Lord, in His Omniscience, released in me the faith he had imparted in love and grace, that the miracle of healing took place. Our possession of The Faith, as a grain of mustard seed, is ever subject not only to His impartation but also to His control.

A woman said to me the other day, "Pray for me, please. I have all the faith in the world." I knew what she meant. We hear that expression so many, many times. My reply was, "Sister, if you have that much faith, why are you sick?" She looked at me strangely. Then, after a few moments of thought, she went away to pray for faith, "as a grain of mustard seed."

I am standing now in spirit, even as I write, on the hills of retrospection. I am looking back over the way my Saviour has led me. I can see the campaigns, in Canada and the United States, in which by the grace of God I have been privileged to pray for as many as ten thousand people in a single month. One cannot do that without having some experiences stamped indelibly on the mind. In one meeting the atmosphere will be tense and hard; prayer seems to be in vain, and our efforts to bring victory meet with seeming failure. Then a sweep of glory and a rush of the power of the Holy Spirit will lift an entire audience to the portals of Heaven.

There I have felt the kiss of the breezes of Heaven on my cheek, and have seen audiences so transported and lifted in spirit that they have sung with truth, "This is like heaven to me." Such meetings have only emphasized the great truth that man in himself is helpless before "the powers of the air" and that there must be a manifestation and evidence of the presence and power of the Lord Himself.

"Without me," said the Savior, "you can do nothing." We reply foolishly sometimes, "Oh, yes, I can, for I have the faith. I can use it, exercise it, and bring things to pass with it, for the Word says that if we have faith, we can move mountains." To such, I would say, "Go ahead, try it, and see what is the result."

All things are possible to them that believe. But it is important what you believe. To believe that you, apart from grace and divine impartation, are the possessor of a power that can move mountains is dangerous indeed. I know many who have tried such a program in their own strength, and perchance on the basis of self-righteousness, but sorrow has been their lot, instead of joy.

#### THE VICAR'S DAUGHTER

When you believe Jesus—well, that is a different thing! When you believe in HIS presence and promise, HIS power, HIS grace, and HIS strength, then you are marching on the victory highway toward the hills of answered prayer. As you decrease He must increase. The less of self, the more of Him. The more the crucifixion of the self-life with its spirit of pride, the more the resurrection rays of His life will impart power and health to your soul and body.

There is one meeting I shall never forget. It was held in the arena in Winnipeg some years ago. Assisting in the campaign was our dear friend, Archdeacon Fair, of the Anglican Church. He brought to the meeting one of his Vicars, a godly clergyman, named Hobbs. This dear brother had a daughter who had been sent home from the most famous clinic in America to die. There was no hope as far as man was concerned.

So the two reverend gentlemen brought that woman to the meeting when she was in such excruciating pain that she was under the influence of opiates. She had to take them in order to live at all, for the suffering and pain was unendurable. She sat in a large chair-cushioned and surrounded by pillows. The rink was filled, not only with people, but with the presence of the Lord.

Toward the close of the service, I felt an unusual—but now familiar—feeling coming into my heart. I was literally melted in His Presence Divine. I turned to a minister sitting near and said, "The Lord is in this place and I think He is going to work a miracle tonight that will shake this meeting with the manifestation of His power." No sooner had I said those words, than I felt an impartation of faith for the sick woman.

I did not delay. Stepping over to the side of Archdeacon Fair, I asked him to pray with me for the daughter of this Vicar. He grasped my hand and said, "My Brother, I can feel the presence of Jesus in this meeting in a way I have never felt Him before in all my life. I feel that He will work this miracle tonight." He did! Upon the poor, weary, sick body of this girl, the Hand Divine was laid; and she rested in the Arms Everlasting. We could see the flush of health come back to her cheeks. She did not die. She lived, and she lives today as a living testimony to the power of our wonderful Lord.

A year later, when I visited that same building once again, I stood on the very spot where the Lord visited me that night. As I stood there, I remembered what I had been doing and what had happened at the moment He imparted to me the faith that my own poor heart lacked. That is why I say that faith is a gift of God. You do not possess it to use at will, but for the purpose for which He gives it and permits you to keep it.

Let me repeat. He gives us the necessary faith for all things that are in accordance with His blessed will. That faith is first given and then grows as a fruit of the Spirit. But for the mountain-moving faith which banishes disease and sweeps away all barriers by miraculous power, I still maintain that such faith is possible only when it is imparted and that when it is the Savior's will.

So, put *all* your trust in Jesus, for your help cometh alone from Him. Lean hard on the Master's breast, for only as you contact Him can you drink in the sweetness of His presence; and let not the devil deceive you into believing in the power of your own spiritual attainments—for without the Man of Calvary you can do *nothing*.

Trust Him when faith *is withheld*, and praise Him when it is given. Remember that "He doeth all things well." You and I would blunder and err along the pathway, were it not for His restraining and withholding hand, as well as His bounteous provision for our every need. The things that seem good to you today, could wear the robes of sorrow in your tomorrows. How much better it is to let Him have His way with you, than to always try to have your way with Him.

That is my message. It is Jesus! Only Jesus. The Christ of Calvary who is the Giver of every good and perfect gift is also the Author and Finisher of your faith. Rejoice in the love that will not let you go! Be happy in the presence of a Friend who knows you better than you know yourself. Then some day when the toils of life are the greatest, you will sing:

"All the way my Saviour leads me,  
Cheers each winding path I tread;  
Gives me grace for every trial,  
Feeds me on the living bread.  
Though my weary steps may falter,  
And my soul athirst may be,  
Gushing from the rock before me,  
Lo, a spring of joy I see."

And what greater joy can there be than the possession of that faith which is The Faith of God!