

REAL FAITH by George Mueller (1805-1898)

(Mueller founded Children's Homes in Bristol, England and lived by faith)

TEXT: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Hebrews 11:1).

FIRST: WHAT IS FAITH? In the simplest manner in which I am able to express it, I answer: Faith is the assurance that the thing which God has said in His Word is true, and that God will act according to what He has said in His Word. This assurance, this reliance on God's Word, this confidence is FAITH.

NO IMPRESSIONS ARE TO BE TAKEN IN CONNECTION WITH FAITH. Impressions have neither one thing nor the other to do with faith. Faith has to do with the Word of God. It is not impressions, strong or weak, which will make any difference. We have to do with the written Word and not ourselves or our impressions.

PROBABILITIES ARE NOT TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. Many people are willing to believe regarding those things that seem probable to them. Faith has nothing to do with probabilities. The province of FAITH begins where probabilities cease and sight and sense fail. A great many of God's children are cast down and lament their want of Faith. They write to me and say that they have no impressions, no feeling, they see no probability that the thing they wish will come to pass.

APPEARANCES ARE NOT TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. The question is - whether God has spoken it in His Word.

And now, beloved Christian friends, you are in great need to ask yourselves whether you are in the habit of thus confiding, in your inmost soul, in what God has said, and whether you are in earnest in seeking to find whether the thing you want is in accordance with what He has said in His Word.

SECOND: HOW FAITH MAY BE INCREASED. God delights to increase the Faith of His children. Our Faith which is feeble at first, is developed and strengthened more and more by us. We ought, instead of wanting no trials before victory, no exercise for patience, to be willing to take them from God's hand as a means. I say - and say it deliberately - trials, obstacles, difficulties, and sometimes defeats, are the very food of Faith. I get letters from so many of God's dear children who say: "Dear Brother Mueller, I'm writing this because I am so weak in faith. 0/00 Just so surely as we ask to have our Faith strengthened, we must feel a willingness to take from God's hand the means for strengthening it. We must allow Him to educate us through trials and bereavements and troubles. It is through trials that Faith is exercised and developed more and more. God affectionately permits difficulties, that He may develop unceasingly that which He is willing to do for us, and to this end we should not shrink, but if He gives us sorrow and hindrances and losses and afflictions, we should take them out of His hands as evidences of His love and care for us in developing more and more that Faith which He is seeking to strengthen in us.

The Church of God is not aroused to see God as the beautiful and lovable One He is, and hence the littleness of blessedness. Oh, beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, seek to learn for yourselves, for I cannot tell you the blessedness! In the darkest moments I am able to confide in Him, for I know what a beautiful and kind and lovable Being He is, and, if it be the will of God to put us in the furnace, let Him do it, so that we may acquaint ourselves with Him as He will reveal Himself, and that we may know Him better. We come then to the conclusion that God is a lovable Being, and we are satisfied with Him, and say: "It is my Father, let Him do as He pleases. 0/00

When I first began to allow God to deal with me, relying on Him, taking Him at His Word, and set out fifty years ago simply relying on Him for myself, family, taxes, travelling expenses and

every other need, I rested on the simple promises I found in the sixth chapter of Matthew. Read Matthew 6:25-34 carefully. I believed the Word; I rested on it and practiced it. I took God at His word. A stranger, a foreigner in England, I knew seven languages and might have used them perhaps as a means of remunerative employment but I had consecrated myself to labour for the Lord, I put my reliance in the God who has promised, and He has acted according to His Word. I've lacked nothing - nothing. I have had my trials, my difficulties, and my purse empty, but my receipts have aggregated thousands of dollars, while the work has gone on these 51 years. Then, with regard to my pastoral work; for the past 51 years I have had great difficulties, great trials and perplexities. There will always be difficulties, always trials. But God has sustained me under them and delivered now out of them, and the work has gone on. Now, this is not, as some have said, because I am a man of great mental power, or endowed with energy and perseverance - these are not the reasons. It is because I have confided in God; because I have sought God, and He has cared for the Institution, which, under His direction, has 100 schools, with masters and mistresses and other departments which I have told you before.

I do not carry the burden. And now in my 67th year, I have physical strength and mental vigour for as much work as when I was a young man in the university, studying and preparing Latin orations. I am just as vigorous as at that time. How comes this? Because in the last half century of labour I've been able, with the simplicity of a child, to rely upon God. I have had my trials, but I have laid hold upon God, and so it has come to pass that I have been sustained. It is not only permission, but positive command that He gives, to cast the burdens upon Him. Oh, let us do it! My beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord and He shall sustain thee. 0/00 Day by day I do it. This morning sixty matters in connection with the church of which I am pastor, I brought before the Lord, and thus it is, day by day I do it, and year by year; ten years, thirty years, forty years.

Do not, however, expect to obtain full Faith at once. All such things as jumping into full exercise of Faith in such things I discountenance. I do not believe in it. I do not believe in it. I DO NOT BELIEVE IN IT, AND I WISH YOU PLAINLY TO UNDERSTAND I DO NOT BELIEVE IN IT. All such things go on in a natural way. The little I did obtain, I did not obtain all at once. All this I say particularly, because letters come to me full of questions from those who seek to have their Faith strengthened. Begin over again, staying your soul on the Word of God, and you will have an increase of your Faith as you exercise it.

One thing more. Some say, "Oh, I shall never have the gift of Faith Mr. Mueller has got. 0/00 This is a mistake - it is the greatest error - there is not a particle of truth in it. My Faith is the same kind of Faith that all of God's children have had. It is the same kind that Simon Peter had, and all Christians may obtain the like Faith. My Faith is their Faith, though there may be more of it because my Faith has been a little more developed by exercise than theirs; but their Faith is precisely the Faith I exercise, only, with regard to degree, mine may be more strongly exercised.

Now, my beloved brothers and sisters, begin in a little way.

At first I was able to trust the Lord for ten dollars, then for a hundred dollars, then for a thousand dollars, and now, with the greatest ease, I could trust Him for a million dollars, if there was occasion. But first, I should quietly, carefully, deliberately examine and see whether what I was trusting for, was something in accordance with His promises in His written Word.

"As labourers together with Him" (2 Corinthians 6:1).