

INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE MUELLER

Mueller, The Man of Faith to Whom God Gave Millions,
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Printed by Chapel Library, A Ministry of Mt. Zion Bible Church, Pensacola, FL

Pastor Charles R. Parsons describes an hour's interview with George Mueller toward the close of his life: A warm summer day found me slowly walking up the shady groves of Ashley Hill, Bristol. At the top there met my gaze the immense buildings which shelter over two thousand orphans, built by a man who has given to the world the most striking object lesson in faith it has ever seen. The first house was on the right, and there among his own people, in plain, unpretentious apartments, lived the saintly patriarch, George Mueller. Passing the lodge gate, I paused a moment to look at House No. 3, one of the five erected at a cost of \$600,000. The bell was answered by an orphan who conducted me up a lofty stone staircase and into one of the private rooms of the venerable founder of that great institution. Mr. Mueller had attained the remarkable age of ninety-one. As I stood in his presence, veneration filled my mind. "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man" (Lev. 19:32). He received me with a cordial handshake and bade me welcome. It is something merely to see a man by whom God has accomplished a mighty work: it is more to hear the tones of his voice; far greater than either is the privilege of being brought into immediate contact with his spirit and of feeling the warm breath of his soul breathed into one's own.

The communion of that hour will be graven on my memory while life shall last. This servant of the Most High opened his heart to me, counseled me, prayed with me, and gave me his blessing. In that hour the source of George Mueller's great spiritual strength was clearly made manifest. The aged saint with all his faculties unimpaired, was eloquent the whole time on one theme, the praise of Jehovah, the great Hearer and Answerer of His people's prayers. My own words were few.

"You have always found the Lord faithful to His promise, Mr. Mueller?" "Always! He has never failed me! For nearly seventy years every need in connection with this work has been supplied. The orphans from the first until now have numbered nine thousand five hundred, but they have never wanted a meal. Hundreds of times we have commenced the day without a penny, but our Heavenly Father has sent supplies the moment they were actually required. There never was a time when we had no wholesome meal. During all these years I have been enabled to trust in the living God alone. In answer to prayer \$7,500,000 have been sent to me. We have needed as much as \$200,000 in one year, and it has all come when needed. No man can ever say I asked him

for a penny. We have no committees, no collectors, no voting, and no endowment. All has come in answer to believing prayer. God has many ways of moving the hearts of men all over the world to help us. While I am praying He speaks to one and another on this continent and on that to send us help.” “My faith is tried as much as ever, and my difficulties are greater than ever.

Besides our financial responsibilities, suitable helpers have to be found constantly, and suitable places provided for hundreds of orphans constantly leaving the homes. Then often our funds run very low. Only the other week we had come nearly to the end of our supplies. I called my beloved helpers together and said to them, ‘Pray, brethren, pray!’ Immediately five hundred dollars was sent us, then a thousand, and in a few days seven thousand five hundred came in. But always we have to be praying, always believing. Oh, it is good to trust in the living God, for He hath said, ‘I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee’ (Heb. 13:5). Expect great things from God, and great things you will have. There is no limit to what He is able to do. Praises for ever to His glorious name! **Praise Him for everything! I have praised Him many times when He sent me ten cents, and I have praised Him when He has sent me sixty thousand dollars.**”

“I suppose you have never contemplated a reserve fund?” “To do so would be an act of the greatest folly. How could I pray if I had reserves? God would say, ‘Bring out those reserves, George Mueller. ’Oh no, I never thought of such a thing. Our reserve funds is in Heaven. The living God is our sufficiency. I have trusted Him for one dollar, I have trusted Him for thousands, and never trusted in vain. ‘Blessed is the man that trusteth in Him’ (Ps. 34:8). “Of course you have never thought of saving for yourself?” ...he unbuttoned his coat and drew from his pocket an old-fashioned purse with rings in the middle separating the character of the coins. Placing it in my hands he said quietly, “All I am possessed of is in that purse—every penny! Save for myself? Never!

When money is sent to me for my own use, I pass it on to God. As much as five thousand dollars has thus been sent at one time; but I do not regard such gifts as belonging to me; they belong to Him, whose I am and whom I serve. Save for myself? I dare not save; it would dishonor my loving, gracious, all-bountiful Father.” I asked him if he spent much time on his knees. “Hours every day. But I live in the spirit of prayer; I pray as I walk, when I lie down, and when I rise. And the answers are always coming.

Tens of thousands of times my prayers have been answered. When once I am persuaded a thing is right, I go on praying for it until the end comes. I never give up!” “Oh, how good, kind, gracious, and condescending is the One with whom we have to do! He has given me, unworthy as I am, immeasurably above all I have asked or thought! I am only a poor, frail, sinful man, but He has heard my prayers tens of thousands of times and used me as the means of bringing tens of thousands of souls into the way of truth in this and other lands. These unworthy lips have proclaimed salvation to great multitudes, and very many people have believed unto eternal life.”

“Seek to depend entirely on God for everything,” he answered. “Put yourself and your work into His hands. When thinking of any new undertaking, ask, Is this agreeable to the mind of God? Is it for His glory? If it is not for His glory, it is not for your good, and you must have nothing to do with it. Mind that! Having settled that a certain course is for the glory of God, begin it in His name and continue in it to the end. Undertake it in prayer and faith, and never give up!

“If it pleases Him with a work requiring about \$222,000 a year, to make me do again at the evening of my life, what I did from August, 1838, to April, 1849, I am not only prepared for it, but gladly again would I pass through all these trials of faith, with regard to means, if He only might be glorified, and His church and the world be benefited. Often and often this last point has of late passed through my mind, and I have placed myself in the position of having **no means at all left**, and two thousand one hundred persons not only at the table, but with everything else to be provided for, and all funds gone; one hundred and eighty-nine missionaries to be assisted, and **nothing whatever left**; about one hundred schools, with about nine thousand scholars in them, to be entirely supported, and no means for them in hand; about four millions of tracts and tens of thousands of copies of the Holy Scriptures yearly have to be sent out, and all the money expended.”

Invariably, however, with this probability before me, I have said to myself: God, who has raised up this work through me, God who has led me generally year after year, to enlarge it, God who has supported this work now for more than forty years, will still help and will not suffer me to be confounded, because I rely upon Him, I commit the whole work to Him, and he will provide me with what I need in the future also, though I know not whence the means are to come.” Hudson Taylor: God’s work, done in God’s way will never lack God’s supply.”

Food Provided

Samuel Chadwick in his most inspiring book, *The Path of Prayer*, relates an occasion when Dr. a. T. Pierson was the guest of George Mueller at his orphanage. He says: “One night when all the household had retired he [Mueller] asked Pierson to join him in prayer. He told him that there was absolutely nothing in the house for next morning’s breakfast. My friend tried to remonstrate with him and to remind him that all the stores were closed. Mueller knew all that. He had prayed as he always prayed, and he never told anyone of his needs but God. They prayed—at least Mueller did—and Pierson tried to. They went to bed and slept, and breakfast for two thousand children was there in abundance at the usual breakfast hour. Neither Mueller nor Pierson ever knew how the answer came. The story was told next morning to Simon Short of Bristol, under pledge of secrecy until the benefactor died. The details of it are thrilling, but all that need be told here is that the Lord called him out of bed in the middle of the night to send breakfast to Mueller’s orphanage, and knowing nothing of the need, or of the two men at prayer, he sent provisions that would feed them a month.

At Sea in Fog

Charles Inglis, the well-known evangelist, relates the following remarkable incident:

“When I first came to America thirty-one years ago, I crossed the Atlantic with the captain of a steamer who was one of the most devoted men I ever knew; and when we were off the banks of Newfoundland he said to me: ‘Mr. Inglis, the last time I crossed there, five weeks ago, one of the most extraordinary things happened that has completely revolutionized the whole of my Christian life. Up to that time I was one of your ordinary Christians. We had a man of God on board, George Mueller, of Bristol. I had been on that bridge for twenty-two hours and never left it. I was startled by someone tapping me on the shoulder. It was George Mueller. “ ‘Captain,’ said he, ‘I have come to tell you that I must be in Quebec on Saturday afternoon. ’This was Wednesday. “‘It is impossible, ’I said. “‘Very well, if your ship can’t take me God will find some other means of locomotion to take me. I have never broken an engagement in fifty-seven years.’

“‘I would willingly help you, but how can I? I am helpless.’ “‘Let us go down to the chart room and pray, ’he said. “‘I looked at this man and I thought to myself, ‘What lunatic asylum could the man have come from? I never heard of such a thing.’ “‘Mr. Mueller, ’I said, ‘do you know how dense this fog is?’ “‘No, ’he replied, ‘my eye is not on the density of the fog, but on the living God, who controls every circumstance of my life.’ “‘He went down on his knees, and he prayed one of the most simple prayers.

I thought to myself, ‘That would suit a children’s class, where the children were not more than eight or nine years of age. ’The burden of his prayer was something like this: ‘O Lord, if it is consistent with Thy will, please remove this fog in five minutes. You know the engagement You made for me in Quebec for Saturday. I believe it is Your will.’ “‘When he had finished, I was going to pray, but he put his hand on my shoulder and told me not to pray. “ ‘First,’ he said, ‘you do not believe God will do it; and, second, I believe He has done it. And there is no need whatever for you to pray about it.’ “‘I looked at him, and George Mueller said this: ‘Captain, I have known my Lord for fifty-seven years and there has never been a single day that I have failed to gain an audience with the King. Get up, Captain and open the door, and you will find the fog is gone.’ I got up, and the fog was gone. On Saturday afternoon George Mueller was in Quebec.”

The Purchase Of Land.

MR. BENJAMIN PERRY gives an account of the circumstances under which the land was purchased, prior to the erection of the orphan houses on Ashley Down, as he heard it from Mr. Mueller's own mouth, showing how directly the Lord worked on the mind of the owner.

Mr. Mueller had been making inquiries respecting the purchase of land much nearer Bristol, the prices asked being not less than £1000 per acre, when he heard that the land upon which the Orphan Houses Nos. 1 and 2 stand, was for sale, the price being £200 per acre. He therefore called at the house of the owner, and was informed that he was not at home, but that he could be seen at his place of business in the city. Mr. Mueller went there, and was informed that he had left a few minutes before, and that he would find him at home. Most men would have gone off to the owner's house at once; but Mr. Mueller stopped and reflected,

"Peradventure the Lord, having allowed me to miss the owner twice in so short a time, has a purpose that I should not see him to-day; and lest I should be going before the Lord in the matter, I will wait till the morning."

And accordingly he waited and went the next morning, when he found the owner at home; and on being ushered into his sitting-room, he said:

"Ah, Mr. Mueller, I know what you have come to see me about. You want to buy my land on Ashley Down. I had a dream last night, and I saw you come in to purchase the land, for which I have been asking £200 per acre; but the Lord told me not to charge you more than £120 per acre, and therefore if you are willing to buy at that price the matter is settled."

And within ten minutes the contract was signed.

"Thus," Mr. Mueller pointed out, "by being careful to follow the Lord, instead of going before His leading, I was permitted to purchase the land for £80 per acre less than I should have paid if I had gone to the owner the evening before."

On Difficulties

At first I was able to trust God for \$1, then \$10, the \$100, then \$1000, then \$100,000, and now with ease I could trust him for millions of dollars if there were the occasion for it.

I would carefully, quietly, deliberately examine and see whether what I was trusting for was something in accordance with His promises in his written word. Then if I found it was, the amount of difficulties would be no hindrance to my trust.

I had a secret satisfaction in the greatness of the difficulties, which were in the ways far from being cast down on account of them. They delighted my soul. For I only desired to do the will of the Lord in the matter. The greater the obstacles the more abundant the proof that I had come to the right judgment in the matter, if they were removed by prayer. I did nothing but pray.

Miraculous Provisions

"Every day brought new demands for continuance in prayer. In fact, as Mr. Mueller testifies, the only difference between latter and former days was that the difficulties were greater in proportion as the work was larger. But he adds that this was to be expected, for the Lord gives faith for the very purpose of trying it for the glory of His own name and the good of him who has the faith, and it is by these very trials that trust learns the secret of its triumphs." --from chapter 15: "The Manifold Grace of God" ---New Window

There were plenty of opportunities for the LORD to try the faith of His servant, and "the greater the difficulties, the easier for faith" to be tried, "for with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37).

"One morning the plates and cups and bowls on the table were empty. There was no food in the larder, and no money to buy food. The children were standing waiting for their morning meal, when Mueller said, 'Children, you know we must be in time for school.' Lifting his hand he said, 'Dear Father, we thank Thee for what Thou art going to give us to eat.' There was a knock on the door. The baker stood there, and said,

'Mr. Mueller, I couldn't sleep last night. Somehow I felt you didn't have bread for breakfast and the Lord wanted me to send you some. So I got up at 2 a.m. and baked some fresh bread, and have brought it.'

Mueller thanked the man. No sooner had this transpired when there was a second knock at the door. It was the milkman. He announced that his milk cart had broken down right in front of the Orphanage, and he would like to give the children his cans of fresh milk so he could empty his wagon and repair it. No wonder, years later, when Mueller was to travel the world as an evangelist, he would be heralded as 'the man who gets things from God!'" --from the "Christian Hall of Fame Series" (No.23) by Ed Reese

Trials of Faith: Fluctuations In Provisions

"The trials of faith did not cease even until the end.

July 28, 1881, finds the following entry in Mr. Mueller's journal:

'The income has been for some time past only about a third part of the expenses. Consequently all we have for the support of the orphans is nearly gone; and for the first four objects of the Institution we have nothing at all in hand. The natural appearance now is that the work cannot be carried on. But I BELIEVE that the Lord will help, both with means for the orphans and also for other objects of the Institution, and that we shall not be confounded; also that the work shall not need to be given up. I am

fully expecting help, and have written this to the glory of God, that it may be recorded hereafter for the encouragement of His children. The result will be seen. I expect that we shall not be confounded, though for some years we have not been so poor.'

While faith thus leaned on God, prayer took more vigorous hold. Six, seven, eight times a day, he and his dear wife were praying for means, looking for answers, and firmly persuaded that their expectations would not be disappointed. Since that entry was made, seventeen more years have borne their witness that this trust was not put to shame. Not a branch of this tree of holy enterprise has been cut off by the sharp blade of a stern necessity.

Though faith had thus tenaciously held fast to the promises, the pressure was, not at once relieved. When, a fortnight after these confident records of trust in God had been spread on the pages of the journal, the balance for the orphans was less than it had been for twenty-five years, it would have seemed to human sight as though God had forgotten to be gracious. But, on August 22d, over one thousand pounds came in for the support of the orphans and thus relief was afforded for a time.

Fluctuations in income and apparent prosperity did not take George Mueller by surprise. He expected them, for if there were no crises and critical emergencies how could there be critical deliverances? His trust was in God, not in donors or human friends or worldly circumstances: and because he trusted in the Living God who says of Himself,