

George Mueller: Delighted in God by Roger Steer, Harold Shaw Publishers, Wheaton Illinois, 1981 (19 Quotes Selected by Doug Nichols)

Chapter 6 - A Visible Proof

1. Orphans Trained Up in the Fear of God

Was the most important consideration which led Mueller to found an Orphan-House a desire to ease the orphan's plight, or an attempt to demonstrate God's reality? Let Mueller answer: I certainly did from my heart desire to be used by God to benefit the bodies of poor children, bereaved of both parents, and seek, in other respects, with the help of God, to do them good for this life-I also particularly longed to be used by God in getting the dear orphans trained up in the fear of God-but still, the first and primary object of the work was that God might be magnified by the fact, that the orphans under my care are provided, with all they need, only by prayer and faith, without anyone being asked by me or my fellow labourers, whereby it may be seen, that God is FAITHFUL STILL, and HEARS PRAYER STILL. [page 64-65]

Chapter 7 - 'Whose is the Gold and the Silver'

2. Give All Money I Have

[an unnamed woman donor said] 'The Lord Jesus has given His last drop of blood for me, and should I not give all the money I have? Rather than the Orphan-House should not be established, I will give all the money I have.' [page 69]

3. Faith Is God's Own Gift

It is true that the faith, which I am enabled to exercise, is altogether God's own gift; it is true that He alone supports it, and that He alone can increase it; it is true that, moment by moment, I depend upon Him for it, and that, if I were only one moment left to myself, my faith would utterly fail; but it is not true that my faith is that gift of faith which is spoken of in I Corinthians 12:9 ... it is the self-same faith which is found in every believer, and the growth of which I am sensible of to myself [page 75]

Chapter 8 - A Change of Air

4. Ill-health Discouraged Mueller

Continued ill-health and growing responsibilities were getting Mueller down. At the end of the month he wrote in his journal, 'This morning I greatly dishonoured the Lord

by irritability, manifested towards my dear wife, and that almost immediately after I had been on my knees before God, praising Him for having given me such a wife.' [pages 79-80]

Chapter 9 - 'A Bank Which Cannot Break'

5. Prayer Was No Vain Thing

Mueller's journal often hints at, but rarely attempts to analyse, why it was that God allowed this period of 'trial.' The clue to his understanding of the situation is perhaps best expressed in an entry, in the autumn of 1838, commenting on a gift of money which he had received from Teignmouth. 'It is a most seasonable help, to defray the expenses of this day, and a fresh proof, that not in anger, but only for the trial of our faith, our gracious Lord delays as yet, to send larger sums.' Mueller saw a purpose in the trial similar to that in the Old Testament story where God tested Abraham by telling him to offer Isaac as a burnt offering on the mountain in Moriah. In one sense the period was a test of Mueller's obedience, and a time when his character was moulded-prepared, in fact, for his life's work. In the opinion of the present director of Mueller's Homes, the years of trial were 'designed by the lord to deepen Mr. Mueller's faith and to show him that prayer is no vain thing. Many years afterwards he faced his financial trials with scarcely a tremor. He had learned so much and really knew his God.' [pages 86-87] Chapter 10 - Looking to his Riches

6. The Lord Support Us in Trials

The chief end for which the Institution was established is that the Church of Christ at large might be benefited by seeing manifestly the hand of God stretched out on our behalf in the hour of need, in answer to prayer. Our desire, therefore, is not that we may be without trials of faith, but that the Lord graciously would be pleased to support us in the trial, that we may not dishonour Him by distrust. [page 101]

Chapter 11 - A Just Complaint

7. God's Will to Expand

Mueller was not content merely to consolidate the work; he was now quite sure that it was God's will for him to expand and build. His God, he often said, was a rich God and there were no limits to his resources: 'The silver and the gold are His, the cattle upon a thousand hills.' [page 115]

Chapter 12 - Stronger Through Turmoil

8. Darby's Dispensationalism

Newton began to raise the alarm against what he considered to be Darby's 'strange system of dispensational doctrines', at the heart of which was a sharp distinction between the 'earthly' hopes of the Jewish Church, and the 'heavenly' hopes of the Christian Church. The faithful Jews of the Old Testament were not comprised in the Church, and the dispensations of Old and New Testaments were totally distinct.

Darby had developed much of his dispensationalism in order to defend a new doctrine of the second coming which emerged after the Albury Prophetic Conferences in 1830, and which is associated with the name of Edward Irving. The doctrine, known as the 'Secret Rapture', was a refinement of pre-millennialism, which Mueller himself had adopted in 1829. According to the Secret Rapture teaching (which Mueller never accepted), the second coming of Christ will take place in two stages: first there will be the 'rapture of the saints' when Christ will return to take all true Christians from the earth. Only then will the Antichrist arise and usher in the period of 'tribulation'. The rule of the Antichrist will be brought to an end by the second stage of the coming-the public 'appearing' of Christ in glory. Newton, however-and he was not alone-objected. If the Church was to be removed before the tribulation began, he asked, who were the faithful ones who, according to the Book of Revelation, would suffer during that period? To Newton, the Church comprised all who were redeemed by Christ; the suffering 'faithful remnant' therefore must have been redeemed by an act of God other than Christ's redemption. Newton regarded the theory as conflicting with a central doctrine of the faith.

Darby asserted that considerable sections of the New Testament applied not to the Church but only to a future dispensation of the restored Jewish remnant. Newton told him that, in making that distinction, Darby was virtually giving up Christianity. [pages 124-125]

Chapter 13 - Mueller's Secret Treasure

9. Six Thousand Orphans in Prison

Neither national nor local government made proper provision for orphans: Mueller recorded, also in 1850, that, 'about five years ago, a brother in the Lord told me he had

seen in an official Report, that there were at that time six thousand young orphans in the prisons of England' . 'By God's help,' he wrote, 'I will do what I can to keep poor orphans from prison.' Mueller therefore began to consider the possibility of building another home large enough to accommodate seven hundred children so that he could care for one thousand altogether. [page 139]

Chapter 14 - When the South Wind Blew

10. Life is a Blessed Object from God

It is impossible to use for God the much or the little with which He may entrust us, without being blessed in our souls; for we walk, in this particular, according to His mind. In this way also life has a most blessed object. If we are willing to give back to Him the means with which He entrusts us, then occupation in our earthly calling becomes food for the inner man; for we work, because He would have us to work; and in order that our occupation of body or mind may be used for God. Laying up treasure on earth, and living for this, not only decreases spiritual enjoyment in the children of God, but weakens them more and more spiritually; whilst laying up treasure in heaven not only increases spiritual enjoyment, but develops and strengthens the spiritual faculties and powers; we are thus 'laying hold on eternal life' I Timothy 6:17-19. [page 154]

Chapter 15 - Indescribable Happiness

11. Three Thousand Letters a Year

Every morning he rose at half-past six and at a quarter to eight, after his usual period of Bible study and prayer, he began the task of going through his correspondence. Then, as The Times recorded some years later, 'at ten o'clock he was waited on by nine assistants, to whom he gave instructions.' .. (Until the 1850s he had conducted a correspondence of about three thousand letters a year without a secretary.) [page 170]

Chapter 16 - 'No Place Ever Seemed So Dear'

12. No Barriers to Enter Mueller's Homes

It is no longer considered proper to house children in such large buildings as those Mueller built on Ashley Down. Indeed, the Mueller Homes today have long since felt it right to come into line with current official policy which is to house children in small house groups so that life should conform as closely as possible to a normal home

atmosphere. However, by nineteenth-century standards, George Mueller must be considered both a pioneer and a radical. He, alone, offered modern homes to thousands of children who would otherwise have been either homeless, or sent to a workhouse or debtors' prison, or grudgingly offered a corner in the overcrowded home of a relative. And there were no barriers to entry to Mueller's Homes on the grounds of poverty, class or creed. Noting that admittance to other orphanages in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was normally gained, not according to the relative needs of the child, but upon personal recommendation or by a majority of votes at the periodic meetings of subscribers. [page 179]

13. Larger Homes Were Jolly

Mueller's large Homes also offered certain advantages which smaller modern houses cannot. Life may have been regimented, and the routine predictable, but the shared fun of so many youngsters living and growing up together meant that it was often jolly. There was also a stability and security about them which was absent from smaller homes. An orphan who began life in a small London home and only arrived at No.4 at the age often noticed the difference: in London there had been constant changes in staff and children. But in Bristol 'a teacher who had done twenty-five years was just beginning'; some ex-Ashley Down children actually returned with their grandchildren to find their old masters still there. Similarly smaller homes offered the children a more limited choice of friends, whereas if Ashley Down children quarrelled, they could always make new friends. [page 180]

14. Birthday Meal Shared

On his birthday every child was entitled to two eggs, one for himself and one for his best friend. Milk and water was the usual beverage. [page 188]

Chapter 18 - Safe to Glory

15. Mueller Trusted God Through Wife's Illness

Mueller expected the worst [about the sickness of his 73 year old wife]. But, he said, 'though heart was nigh to be broken, on account of the depth of my affection, I said to myself, "The Lord is good, and doeth good; all will be according to His own blessed character. Nothing but that, which is good, like Himself, can proceed from Him. If He pleases to take my wife, it will be good, like Himself. What I have to do, as His child, is to be satisfied with what my Father does that I may glorify Him."' [pages 207-209]

16. God Is Good

Before he preached the funeral sermon it is said that Mueller sat in the vestry repeating again and again, 'Oh Mary, my Mary!' He took as his text, 'Thou art good, and doest good', from Psalm 119:68. [page 210]

Chapter 19 - Return to the Rigi

17. Self Bible Study

He was convinced that there were many people who were perfectly genuine in their desire to be right with God, but who lacked peace, because they relied upon their feelings. After more than half a century of daily, systematic and consecutive study of the Bible, Mueller would now aim to share with a wider audience the truths that he had discovered, and to encourage Christians to become lovers of the Bible themselves; and to test everything by the word of God. [page 218]

Chapter 23 - Loved by Thousands

18. Stayed With Royalty

The Princess, whom Mrs. Mueller described as 'a beloved sister in the Lord', immediately pressed them to stay with her in her mansion; but, said Mueller, 'as we rarely accept invitations to stay with friends, because I require as much rest and time to myself as possible, we declined the proposal, and went to an hotel where we remained for two nights. Finding, however, that the Princess greatly desired we should be her guests, and that she would have been much disappointed if we had continued to refuse her kind offer of hospitality, on Monday, January 1st, we went to her mansion, and were most kindly entertained there, for upwards of eleven weeks.' [pages 264-265]

Chapter 25 - Precious Prospect

19. Died to Self, Approved Unto God

Dr Pierson records that to one who asked him the secret of his service, Mueller replied, 'There was a day when I died, utterly died'; and, as he spoke, he bent lower and lower until he almost touched the floor-'died to George Mueller, his opinions, preferences, tastes and will-died to the world, its approval or censure-died to the approval or blame even of my brethren and friends-and since then I have studied only to show myself approved unto God.' [page 290]