

George Muller - Christian Evangelist & Champion of Orphans

(27 Sept. 1805 - 10 March 1898)

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George Muller, preacher and philanthropist, born in Kroppenstadt near Halberstadt, [Prussia] on 27 Sept. 1805, was the son of a Prussian excise man. Though a German by birth, he became a naturalised British subject, and for over sixty years was identified with philanthropic work in England. Though he was intended for the ministry, Muller was a profligate youth, but at the end of 1825 a change came over his disposition, and he was thenceforth a man of self-abnegation, devoting himself exclusively to religious work. In 1826 he resolved to dedicate himself to missionary work either in the East Indies or among the Jews in Poland.

In June 1828 he was offered an appointment by the London Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews, and he arrived in London in March 1829 to study Hebrew and Chaldee and prepare for missionary service. But in 1830, finding that he could not accept some of the rules of the society, he left, and became pastor of a small congregation at Teignmouth. Towards the close of the same year Muller was led to adopt the principle with which henceforth his name was associated, that trust in God, in the efficacy of sincere prayer, is sufficient for all purposes in temporal as well as in spiritual things. He accordingly abolished pew-rents, refused to take a fixed salary or to appeal for contributions towards his support.

After about two years in Teignmouth, Muller went to Bristol, where he remained for the rest of his life. There he and others carried on a congregation, school, a Scriptural Knowledge Institution, and other organizations, but he was chiefly known for his work among orphans. Beginning with caring for a few orphan children, Muller's work at Bristol gradually grew to immense proportions. In the years to come, more than two thousand orphan children were being fed, clothed, educated, cared for, and trained for useful positions in five enormous houses that were erected in Ashley Down, Bristol.

These houses cost £115,000, all of which, as well as the money needed for carrying on the work - £26,000 annually -- was voluntarily contributed, mainly as the result of the wide circulation of Muller's autobiographical "Narrative of the Lord's Dealings with George Muller" which was inspired by John Newton's 'Life'. It was through this book that people across the world came to know of Muller's work, his faith and his experiences.

As a result, gifts in cash and kind flowed in without direct appeal. In the course of his life, Muller received from the pious and charitable no less than £1,500,000. He educated and sent out into the world no fewer than 123,000 pupils; he circulated 275,000 Bibles in different languages, with nearly as many smaller portions of Scripture; and he aided missions to the extent of £255,000. He supported 189 missionaries, and he employed 112 assistants. George Muller passed away on 10 March 1898.

