

# **GEORGE MULLER**

## **A Study of the Principles of His Prayer-Life**

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The following lessons were developed from Arthur T. Pierson's biography about George Muller (1805-1898). Zondervan published the book as a Clarion Classic. Our purpose is to examine the spiritual principles that enabled Mr. Muller to so effectively put God's mighty power to work through his prayers. The Scriptures quoted are from the New King James version of the Bible unless otherwise noted.

## PREFACE

George Muller was one of the most influential Christian leaders of his era. The appalling social conditions in England and the special needs of helpless children in his day led him to begin a work on behalf of orphans in 1835. This work grew from the care of a few children in a rented house in Bristol to an enormous complex of buildings in Ashley Down where more than 2000 orphans could be housed and educated.

Muller is best remembered for his life of prayer. He was convinced that the only way to honor God was to trust Him completely, to live by the leading of His Spirit and to expect Him to respond to prayer. He knew that God would work through His Spirit-led children as they depended on Him.

Mr. Muller did not live by a blind trust that looked to God to fulfill his wishes. Quite to the contrary, he found that it was only by fully surrendering his will to the will of God and by permitting God to direct his every step that he could expect God to respond to his prayers. It was only as he lived in harmony with God's revealed will that he could always have the assurance of knowing that God would do what was asked of Him.

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us {because we are responding to the leading of His Spirit}, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.  
(1John 5:14-15)

George Muller stands as a challenge to our age, just as he did to his own. He has provided a clear example of how to enter into the fullness of God's blessings. He walked in the path of faith. As he lived through the life of the Son and depended on his Father for everything, he was enabled to bear much fruit through His prayers. God honored his yielded and dependent faith by enabling him to accomplish a glorious work for our Lord's eternal kingdom.

He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing... If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. (John 15: 5-8)

## The Narrative of the Lord's Dealings

The journal written by George Muller about the Lord's dealings in his life, especially in parts, reads almost like an inspired writing. It clearly traces how the work of God progressed in a human life. He reveals how a man who lives by the Spirit rather than by his own planning is able to reveal God's glory in what he does. "But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God." (John 3:21)

His journal is another example of that passage in the book of Acts where it is explained fifteen times within twenty verses how God is the leading Actor in every event. Paul and Barnabas reported to the church, not what they had done for the Lord, but all that the Lord had been doing through their lives. "They reported all that God had done with them." (Acts 14:27-15:18) God was presented as the One who was doing His work.

This does not imply that God is always able to work out His plans through each of His called-out children. Many people within the church are still too full of their own will and works to be used by God. Paul and Barnabas had died to self and self-will through a supernatural circumcision of the heart—a cutting off of the flesh-life—by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Col. 2:11) In contrast to the worldly mind-set, where self-will and self-sufficiency is highly valued, these spiritual men of God chose to live under the control and power of the Holy Spirit. They made a conscious decision to live through the Spirit of God.

For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit {live by the Spirit}, rejoice in Christ Jesus {for what He is doing in and through our lives}, and have no confidence in the flesh. (Phil. 3:3)

And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. (Gal. 5:24-25)

This Spirit-led way of life reveals itself in its yieldedness and flexibility to His movements. God is able to move these spiritual children of His as the wind freely moves a leaf around an open field. "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." (John 3:8)

The understanding we can gain from the book of Acts about how God moved men like Paul according to a divine plan, reveals the one authentic relationship that exists between the Father in heaven and His true children here on earth. You will find these people saying with Jesus, "Not my will, but Yours be done." This is how God planned for all His children to live.

I know, O Lord, that a man's life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps. (Jer 10:23 NIV)

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. (Rom. 8:14)

Having died to the old self-directed way of life, Mr. Muller permitted Christ to live and work through him as the Spirit pleased. His published journal was therefore given an appropriate title: “The Lord’s dealings with George Muller.” He revealed to us in a more recent period of time how the Lord still works through His disciples when they submit to both His ways and His plans.

The Lord will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and *to bless all the work of your hand*...if you heed the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them. (Deut. 28:12-13)

Certain prominent lessons will be learned when we look at this narrative as a whole. Those who are willing to yield to the same spiritual principles—truths that everyone can discover in God’s Word—will also have their prayers gloriously honored by God. Let us therefore pay close attention to what Mr. Muller was able to learn through his own experience.

*God had a tendency to keep the work in financial need in order to promote dependence on Him.* The natural inclination of fallen man is to live by self-sufficiency. It is a way of life that Satan fostered on the world to keep people separated from a childlike dependence upon God. But God requires His children to live by dependent faith in Him. We therefore find that the resources that Mr. Muller required for personal needs, for the care of thousands of orphans, and for the various branches of the work of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution was sometimes reduced to almost nothing. It taught him to live like a little child who continually needed to depend on Someone greater than himself.

Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as {dependent and trusting} little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 18:3-4)

This form of life is not highly valued by the independent and self-sufficient people of the world. Because these two different ways of life are diametrically opposed to each other, it will help us to better understand what Jesus meant when He said, “What is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.” (Luke 16:15) If the people of this world love something, we need to be highly concerned about taking the same course. Those who follow the ways of this world think it is wise to hoard God’s resources for themselves so they may spend more on their own pleasures. But this form of life that naturally leads people to live for things, or “mammon,” separates them from the childlike dependence that opens up the kingdom of heaven to the soul. (v. 13)

Mr. Muller did not try to accumulate resources for himself. He lived as a mere steward, continually focusing his attention on God’s plans. God could therefore use him to funnel resources into the Lord’s work. And while he continued to provide for the needs of his family, his participation with Christ in the divine nature of love led him to sacrifice himself as much as possible for the overall good of the work of God’s kingdom.

Because Mr. Muller lived for the kingdom of God and in the light of truth, he could then depend on His Father to care for his needs, which included everyone under his care.

During certain periods of his work, we find these provisions being furnished day by day, as God had provided the manna to Israel in the desert. While God will often provide means by using His power to provide employment for His children, in the case of Mr. Muller, the resources were brought to his door. There was always a new need to keep him praying and looking for help from God. And out of this childlike dependence and trust grew a faith in God that began to move mountains.

We are not saying that God cannot use people who possess their own resources. However, He cannot use His power to help people who have become sufficient in themselves and reliant on their own resources. This self-sufficiency has its source in pride. And the eternal spiritual law of God requires Him to resist the proud. (1 Pet. 5:5) But He will consistently use His divine power through a work of His grace when His children humble themselves and begin to depend on Him like trusting little children. “Therefore humble yourselves under the might hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for he cares for you.” (1 Pet. 5:6-7)

The reason the church has so little power in this day is because most people have accumulated wealth in a way that permits them to live in their own sufficiency. In contrast, much of the early church, which had neither bank accounts or stored resources, had to live by a faith that kept God constantly working in their lives. This taught them, as it also taught Mr. Muller, how to move God’s hand through prayer in mighty ways.

Mr. Muller specifically set out to prove the faithfulness of our prayer-answering God. He therefore did not seek help from anyone other than God. The glory and honor that God received through this yielded vessel, as he lived by dependent and trusting faith, is beyond measure. Truth-seeking Christians all over the world now have a much deeper understanding of their loving Father in heaven because of the lessons they have learned through Mr. Muller’s example of “living faith.” *He has revealed the true meaning of living by faith and not by the sight of human wisdom and sufficiency.*

Mr. Muller was not opposed to Christians seeking help from other believers. He simply felt called to provide a clear example of how God is able to meet our needs when we truly depend on Him. He specifically avoided making public appeals for the needs of his ministry to the orphans, even to other Christians, for the purpose of demonstrating how God is able to work out everything that is needed through secret prayer alone.

*His childlike faith revealed an unchanging faithfulness from his loving Father.* The needs associated with providing for two thousand orphans were stretched to the limit, but never was there a time when he did not receive the needed help. Every difficulty was met by divine supply. By the time the need actually arrived, the supply was always provided. These trials and tests, which were used to stretch his patience and trust in God, enabled him to live more and more by God’s power.

Mr. Muller found that as these trials brought him to the end of his own strength and made him more dependent upon God, he was able to perfect God’s power through his life. (2 Cor. 12:9) When his patience was complete, and he was living by a trusting faith in God alone, he found that he lacked nothing.

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its

perfect work {so that you may learn to depend wholly on God}, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. (Jam. 1:2-4)

Those who fret and worry about the future can know they are still living by the strength of their own flesh. And, of course, everyone who depends on their own sufficiency, or places their hope in other people, should expect to have many things to be worried and upset about. There is always a potential for failure. Since there are so many things that can interfere with these human plans, there is never a sense of real security. Those who work in their own strength will not be able to enjoy the peace of God that transcends all understanding. This heavenly peace can only be known after we have entered the Sabbath-rest of God where we “cease” from our own works and begin living by complete trust in God. Those who live by childlike faith in Him, which includes always responding to the leading of His Spirit, will discover how He is able to work out all things for their good.

There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works... Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest... (Heb. 4:9-11)

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. (Rom. 8:28)

God must deliver us from the impatient work of the flesh, and all its covetous tendencies, before we can live by the kind of faith that can rest in Him. If we truly have faith in God, and we have begun to live by His Spirit, we are also able to entrust our future to Him. It sets us free from covetousness, which is that need to accumulate more to protect our own future. Those who remain caught up in this way of life can expect to find themselves worried and troubled about many things.

Let your conduct be without covetousness {do not live as a self-seeker}; be content with such things as you have {so you will be free to live wholly for the Lord}. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” So we may boldly say: “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear...” (Heb. 13:5-6)

*Be anxious for nothing*, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:6-7)

Neither Mr. Muller nor the word of God is advocating a life where we sit back and do nothing while waiting for God to supply our needs. God’s children, as they are led by the Spirit, will always find that the Lord keeps their hands busy. For example, the apostle Paul worked night and day with his own hands to make sure he would be in a position to live for the good of others without ever being a burden on them. (2 Thess. 3:8) He also said, as an inspired writer, that able-bodied people should not be given food if they do not work. (v. 10) Those who have become like Christ in love will naturally seek to be in a position where they can help others, even more than they are helping themselves.

I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich {in the life of heaven}. (2 Cor. 8:8-9)

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind *let each esteem others better than himself*. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. (Phil. 2:3-4)

By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. (1 John 3:16)

But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. (1 John 2:5-6)

We know that Jesus did not live for Himself. He gave up the wealth of heaven to come into this world in order to live for the good of others. As He walked by faith and responded to the will of His Father, His Father made sure that He would have everything He needed to complete His assigned work. Similarly, everyone who lives for God's will, can expect Him to use His infinite power and wisdom to meet their needs.

Those who will seek out this same Kingdom-life of perfect love, which is the life that enables Christ's disciples to fulfill all the righteous requirements of the law, will have an *all-sufficient* heavenly Father to care for their needs. It sets them free from the covetous way of life that is highly esteemed among men and an abomination in the sight of God. (Luke 16:14-15) They are then free to live by the Spirit and carry out the works that God has planned to do through their lives. (Eph. 2:10)

Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing. Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds?...

And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. For all these things the nations of the world seek after {because they do not have faith in God}, and your Father knows that you need these things. But seek the kingdom of God {where everyone lives for God's will alone}, and all these things shall be added to you.

Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom {the Kingdom-life where He cares for your needs}. Sell what you have {the hoarded things that are not needed} and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Luke 12:22-24, 29-34)

Very few Christians have enough faith in Jesus to obey His teachings. In fact, most of them question His words and insist He is wrong. They have therefore stored up their

treasures in this world were it deteriorates and loses its value. Instead of receiving the hundredfold return that Jesus promised by giving it up for the work of His kingdom, they end up losing it all. In effect, God leaves them on their own to live as the heathens who do not have faith in God. They never truly come to know their Lord's heavenly Kingdom-life where everything takes place through the power of God.

*Muller discovered from experience how God was able to work on the mind, heart, and conscience of others as he prayed, some of them living in other countries, leading them to meet a specific need of the orphanage.* After being taken through certain periods of deep trial, Mr. Muller was able to trace the hand of God touching the springs of human action all over the world. God demonstrated His providential control by adjusting the amount, and the exact day and hour when the supply was given to meet certain needs. Literally from the ends of the earth, people who had never seen Mr. Muller and could not have known about the specific need at a particular time, had been led at the exact crisis of affairs to send aid in the very amount needed. In countless cases, after Mr. Muller had spent his time in secret prayer asking God for help, the answer came in such close correspondence with the request as to shut out mere coincidence as an explanation. These events are verified in the day-to-day entries in his journal. This unique work of God through faith, compels belief in a prayer-answering God.

Mr. Muller chose to seek his help from God alone. We all have a tendency to turn to the visible realm, looking to other people to save us from our trials. But Mr. Muller wanted to prove that our invisible God is a more faithful source of help in our time of need. He therefore did not seek help from other men. Those who place their hope in other people will find themselves being let down at times. In contrast, Mr. Muller knew that God would never fail if he depended wholly on Him.

Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help {the arm of the flesh}, and rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong, but who do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek the Lord! Yet He also is wise and will bring disaster, and will not call back His words, but will arise against the house of evildoers {those who live in the flesh by their own will and strength}... (Isa 31:1-2)

Mr. Muller began to see how God will actually resist our work if we became too reliant on others. *On the other hand, he found that everything always worked out when he trusted in God alone.* Again, this childlike trust permitted God to work with His mighty hand, so that the work of Mr. Muller's hands would be successful.

Let Your work appear to Your servants, and Your glory to their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God {His life of holy love} be upon us, and establish the work of our hands for us; Yes, establish the work of our hands. (Ps. 90:16-17)

*God honored his conscientious care in accepting and using gifts.* Mr. Muller has provided a pattern for everyone who desires to live as a faithful steward of God's resources. We should note that he truly followed Jesus in that he never lived for his own gain. He lived as a steward of God's resources. He knew that everything belonged to God

and that God expected His resources to be used to further His eternal kingdom. “For here we have no continuing city...” (Heb. 13:14) Knowing that God had given him an eternal Kingdom-life where everything is cared for according to God’s perfect wisdom, Mr. Muller was willing to give what he could so that others might see an expression of his Father’s self-giving love through him. As he yielded entirely to the light found in the Son’s life, the Son expressed His eternal Kingdom-life of perfect love through him.

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. (2 Cor. 9:8)

Not only was Mr. Muller concerned about how God’s resources were used, but he also used careful discernment in accepting the gifts of others. While dealing with Christian believers, he would sometimes be led to urge them to wait on God in prayer until they had a real assurance of the leading of the Spirit. He knew that people have a tendency to respond by their own emotions, without being fully submitted to the leading of the Spirit in all things. He wanted to make sure they were being led by the Spirit so they did not enter into the sin of self-will. He also knew that only what is done through the Spirit will pass through the testing fires of Judgment and be rewarded. (1 Cor. 3:13-15) Because Mr. Muller was more concerned about the welfare of the individual than his own success, God continued to honor everything he did. Even when Mr. Muller gave money back to maintain a good conscience before God, the Lord would make sure all his needs were met.

Economy was always on his mind when it came to using the money entrusted to him. He was careful to make sure that God’s resources were being effectively used for God’s purposes. He never wasted money on vain glory and pompous display. He was therefore supplied with more and more resources to use in the work of the eternal kingdom.

*As he became more attuned to God’s plans, there was a growing boldness in prayer.* His faith was energized as it was used. As the orphanage work continued to grow, it became as easy and as natural to confidently ask God for a hundred, a thousand, or even ten thousand pounds, as it had once been to ask Him for a pound. After God had shown Himself faithful time after time, it was not any more difficult to rely on the Lord for the provision of two thousand children as it was to rely on Him to care for twenty homeless orphans in the beginning. If our faith is to be strengthened, and not be lost, we must continue to live by dependent faith.

*The only way to avoid departing from a walk of childlike trust in God is to avoid turning to worldly wisdom.* God does not want His children turning to the self-sufficient ways of this world. Once a Christian organization has grown in size and has become more secure, there is a tendency to begin trusting in the wisdom of men. If we are not careful, a ministry begun in the Spirit will begin to be run like a secular business. And every movement toward self-sufficiency will naturally result in a separation from the weakness of dependent faith—the kind of faith that will perfect God’s power through our lives. While God is perfectly faithful to those who trust in Him, He will leave His people to their idols when they begin to trust in other sources.

This is what the Lord says: “Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns from the Lord {to depend on other men and means}. He will be like a bush in the wastelands... But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought, and never fails to bear fruit.” (Jer. 17:5-8 NIV)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. (Prov. 3:5-6)

But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty...that no flesh should glory in His presence. (1 Cor. 1:27-29)

Of course, God has provided man with a mind that needs to be used. But He expects us to keep our mind constantly attuned to the leading of His Spirit and to rely on Him for the results. The Spirit can only provide guidance while we are actually looking to be led along our God-appointed course.

We must avoid placing our trust in other men, where we are actually relying on them to deliver us from certain situations. God will resist our plans, and even permit them to fail, when we are reliant on human wisdom and strength. He will take whatever action is necessary to turn our faith back to Him. On the other hand, when we are depending wholly on Him, He will sometimes use the kings of this world to provide resources for His work. As Mr. Muller learned, our responsibility is to walk by His Spirit. He will lead us step by step in the way that He wants us to go, once we have died to the strong and impulsive ways of the flesh.

God has chosen to manifest His glory in this world through people who walk by His Spirit. If Christians will learn to walk in the Spirit and begin using their existing faith, though it be as small as a mustard seed, their faith will increase. And the more they live by this dependent faith, the more God’s power will be revealed through their lives. They will learn how to open doors through the power of the Spirit. *And then it will become obvious to others how the work is being done through God. This is what will enable God to receive all the glory.* “But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen that they have been done in God.” (John 3:21)

*Many of the people who are comparatively bold in seeking God’s help in a time of great crisis, fail to come to Him with a similar dependence in their daily walk. They spend most of their time living by their own strength.* But if we do not accept God’s sovereign right to direct and control our every step in life, which requires a true walk of faith, then we should not expect Him to be our help in a time of crisis. (Josh. 7:8-13) It is only as we live daily by childlike dependence upon Him, waiting on Him to direct all our steps, that we can expect Him to work out all things for our good, *as He has planned.*

The path of the righteous is level; O upright One, you make the way of the righteous smooth. Yes, Lord, walking in the way of your laws, *we wait for you...* (Isa. 26:7-8 NIV Emphasis added)

I will go before you and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze and cut the bars of iron. (Isa. 45:2)

This is not to say that great difficulties will not rise up in our path. We know there will be gates of bronze and bars of iron to go through. But God does not want us trying to break through them in our own strength. He wants us to trust in Him to remove these obstacles. If we will bring the difficulties to the Lord in prayer and learn to wait on Him for guidance, He will remove everything out of the way so we may step forward along a smooth path.

God has sworn to work out all things for our eternal good *when we have been called according to His purpose* {to be conformed to the image of His Son} *and are living for His kingdom and righteousness.* (Rom. 8:28; Matt. 6:25-33) His word is confirmed by His oath. And He has recorded these truths with one purpose in mind – that we might boldly depend on Him in all things. *He does not want us to live like the self-sufficient and self-seeking people of this world who must depend on themselves.* These people, not having faith in God, have plenty of things to worry about. But God's true children never have a need to worry. This is why God instructs them to be "anxious for nothing." (Phil. 4:6) *If more Christians would truly enter into this life of promise, the world would have an opportunity to see a godly nature that truly lives above the form of life displayed by worldly minded people.*

Once we begin to consider these truths, and begin to recognize how independence and self-sufficiency will separate us from God's plans, we should not be surprised when God permits suffering to come into our life to break our self-sufficient spirit. Many of us could discover, and save ourselves some hardship, if we truly examined ourselves in this matter of trying to live in our own strength or of looking to others to be our savior. *We would see how our afflictions have been sent for the purpose of making us more dependent upon God.* He is always working to enable us to become partakers with Him in His holy life—a life where these fleshly works die, and His will is carried out through the power of His Spirit.

My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord {which is intended to break down the self-sufficient strength of the flesh-life and make you more dependent on Him}, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives {to draw them into a Spirit-empowered way of life}...for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness {by living through the power of His Spirit}. (Heb. 12:5-10)

For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, *that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead.* (2 Cor. 1:8-9)

Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak {in self}, then I am strong {in the life of Christ's Spirit}. (2 Cor. 12:9-10)

For we are the circumcision {those who have had the flesh-life cut off}, who worship God in the Spirit {live through the Spirit}, rejoice in Christ Jesus {for what He is doing through our lives}, and have no confidence in the flesh. (Phil. 3:3)

Even when the Lord is permitting us to be sifted by Satan to break our self-sufficient spirit, as He once did with the strong and self-sufficient Peter (Luke 22:31), He does it for our eternal good. Yes, we can depend on the Lord to deliver us from Satan's hand when He has accomplished what He has purposed to do – break us of our self-sufficiency. But the only way this deliverance can come is through an acknowledgement of our own weakness and our need for the power of His Spirit in our life. Satan can only touch our spirit while self-sufficiency remains in our lives. As long as we are trusting in worldly resources, we will remain bound to a world that continues to be under the sway of the devil. (1 John 5:19)

Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as {dependent and trusting} little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 18:3)

God does not require us to break down the gates of brass and cut the bars of iron that block our way. In truth, He expects us to die to these ways of the flesh and begin relying on Him to be our Guide and Deliverer. Those who insist on living by the strength of their flesh, can expect to live in a harsh land—a land where their soul frequently becomes dry and barren.

Thus says the Lord: “Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the Lord. For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when good comes, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness.” (Jer. 17:5-6)

George Muller learned to live through the fullness of God's blessing. He believed, and because he believed, prayed; and praying, expected; and expecting, received. Blessed is he who believes, for there will be a glorious performance of those things that are promised by the Lord. “If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.” (Matt. 21:22)

If you abide in Me {by walking in the power of the Spirit}, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will {prove to} be My disciples. (John 15:7-8)

## **New Lessons in God's School of Prayer**

*The teacher also needs to be a learner.* Only those who continue to receive new insight into the ways of God can expect to lead others forward in this heavenly way of

life. *We can generally assume that people who have remained stagnant have in some way separated themselves from the way of life in God's eternal kingdom.* The children of faith in God's kingdom continue to grow with every-increasing glory. (2 Cor. 3:18)

Learning new lessons in this life of faith will also help keep our testimony fresh. We will be able to speak with authority about the spiritual principles that work in God's kingdom. As George Muller's experience of prevailing prayer continued to accumulate, he became qualified to speak to others, not merely as a matter of speculation, theory, or doctrinal belief, but based on long, varied, and personal experience.

Mr. Muller met many people who found his courageous, childlike trust in God as a complete mystery to their mind. They would often ask him in their unbelief, "What would he do if God did not send help?" Or "What if a mealtime actually came with no food?" Being worldly minded, they naturally thought in terms of making things work out in their own strength. They could not relate to a faithful God who works out all things for the good of those who live by dependent faith in Him. But Mr. Muller was always prepared to answer them from his own personal experience. *He knew it would be impossible for God to fail His children when they trusted in Him alone and remained fully submitted to the spiritual principles provided through His Word.*

The Lord your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body... For the Lord will again rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers, if you obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law, and if you turn to the Lord your God *with all your heart and with all your soul.* (Deut. 30:9-10 Emphasis added)

Mr. Muller, as he learned from his own experience, was then able to explain to others the conditions for having their prayer's faithfully answered. He began by instructing them to come to God in the right spirit and attitude. *There must be a heart that is fully yielded to all revealed light. For God to answer the prayers of people who are living in opposition to His revealed will in any matter would encourage them to continue in sin.* "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear." (Isa. 59:2)

The supplication must also be according to the "known will of God." Mr. Muller therefore insisted, in harmony with Scripture, that there is a vital relationship between holiness to God and answered prayer.

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. (John 15:7)

The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. (Jam. 5:16 NIV)

There has never been a saint who has not been taught the same essential lessons. The prayer that has consistently put God's mighty hand to work has prevailed by the same law of success—a deep inward harmony with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. *This is not the striving of our own fleshly desires, which motivates so many prayers.* Worldly-minded people all over the world pray to God in times of need. But they do not pray by

His Spirit. *There must be a harmony between our spirit and the Spirit of God before we can pray in “Christ’s name” with confidence.* This is the primary prerequisite to having our prayers consistently and faithfully answered.

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us {because we are in complete harmony with His Spirit}, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. (1 John 5:14-15)

If the inward movings of the Spirit are smothered by self-seeking or the pride of life, in just such measure will our prayers become a mere formality and not receive answers. (Jam. 4:3) There are people who ask God to do great things through their ministry because they secretly desire to have something more for themselves and to be honored among men. Some of them will even appear to be pious men of God. But God can still see into the heart. And He will not share His glory with the flesh of any man. *Those who desire to be honored by men have not yet come to know and believe in the One Christ who has revealed the true “light of life” from heaven.*

I {the Son} do not receive honor from men... How can you believe {in the Son’s way of life}, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God? (John 5:41, 44)

Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone {separated from the life and power of God}; but if it dies, it produces much grain... If anyone serves Me {in the Spirit} let him follow Me {through the cross}; and where I am {in the heavenly realms}, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me {in this way of dying to self and living through the Spirit}, *him My Father will honor.* (John 12:24-26 Emphasis added)

We need to be prepared to do whatever is necessary to enter into the place where God is able to answer our prayers. God will only honor our prayers when He knows that we have stopped living for ourselves and have begun to do all things for His glory. *This is why there must be a complete dying out to the old self-life, along with the self-sufficient spirit that naturally glories in its own works, before it is possible to share in the resurrection power of Christ’s Spirit.*

Even though Jesus did not seek honor, we know that people did honor Him. The same will apply to His disciples. But our motivation for accomplishing something should never be for the purpose of receiving honor from others. In fact, supplication that has self-glory hidden within it becomes an offense to God. Let us keep in mind that it only takes a little forbidden thing hidden away in the heart to prevent God from manifesting His glory through His people (Josh. 7:10-13)

We will not be able to remain in close touch with God, which implies living in fellowship with Him, unless a new step has been taken whenever new light is given. “But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another.” (1 John 1:7) *We walk in the light by responding to every part of God’s known will for our life.* This is another one of the secrets of George Muller’s Spirit-filled and Spirit-empowered

life: Without being concerned about what it might cost him, he followed every leading of God. Avoiding the humanistic wisdom that worldly-minded people typically use to protect and build themselves up, he permitted the Spirit to lead him as God had purposed. He chose to pay the full price to buy the heavenly Pearl so that he could live through the Kingdom-life of his Lord.

Mr. Muller also held back from taking any step until he was sure he was walking in harmony with God's will. If he could not step out in the assurance that he was doing what God had planned to do through him, he would continue to wait on the Lord until it was clarified. He knew that "whatever is not from faith is sin." (Rom. 14:23) And although self-seeking man can certainly gain many things for himself from this world, Mr. Muller knew that if he wanted to live as a true child of God, that "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven." (John 3:27)

One example of how Mr. Muller remained in harmony with God is in the way he waited for God to provide the resources that were needed to carry out his work. Over the years, God consistently increased his boarders by placing more and more children under his care. He would begin to experience a new burden to build more facilities. But he never pressed forward ahead of God. He waited until God had provided the resources for the things he was being led to do. He never stepped out ahead of God where he would end up owing someone money he could not pay. To do so would be sin. The Scripture to him was clear on this matter: "Owe no one anything." (Rom. 13:8)

While money can be legitimately borrowed, to avoid paying something that is owed to someone is a form of stealing. This is especially true when the money that should be used to pay debt is being used to buy other things. Because Mr. Muller carefully observed the teachings in God's Word, he found that God could be counted on to provide the desires of his heart, in due time.

Day by day he would wait on God in prayer, lest he might do something in haste and thereby move in advance of a clear leading. He undertook great pains in order to avoid being biased unduly by human judgment. *The unbroken peace with which he was able to meet every hindrance was proof he was not responding in the flesh.*

Mr. Muller would know that he was getting away from God's perfect will if he sensed the loss of inward peace. He literally let the heavenly "peace of God" rule his heart and arbitrate his decisions. "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts." (Col. 3:15) By continuing to wait on God and never doing anything that would separate him from this heavenly peace, he was always assured that God was in everything he was doing. God knows how to withdraw this inward peace when we begin to get out of his will.

Mr. Muller realized that the actions of self-will, which is a work of the flesh, would cause him to be "worried and troubled about many things." (Luke 10:41) Anxiety and distress will rise out of the carnal nature whenever something interferes with the plans of this flesh-life. *It reveals how we are walking by the strength of the flesh rather than living by faith in the power of God.* Therefore, if such a condition were to prevail in his heart, Mr. Muller would know he was not currently walking by the Spirit. "For the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace..."

*When God's children are truly walking in the Spirit, they are able to patiently wait in childlike faith for the Living God to open every door and to remove every obstacle. They rest in perfect peace because they know that God will always accomplish His will through those who live by faith in Him alone. As they continue to present their requests to God and rely on Him in every situation, they are enabled to enjoy "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding."*

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, *which surpasses all understanding*, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:6-7 Emphasis added)

## Following the Pillar of Cloud and Fire

I know, O Lord, that a man's life is not his own; *it is not for man to direct his steps.* (Jer. 10:23 NIV Emphasis added)

The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. (Ps. 37:23)

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. (Gal. 5:25)

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. (Rom. 8:14)

Many sincere disciples of Christ have neglected to enter into a Spirit-directed way of life. They tend to plunge forward in willful decisions whenever the flesh desires to have its own way. Emotional impulses end up swaying the issues. Because these Christians rely on their own strength and wisdom, they end up separating themselves from the power of Christ's Spirit.

God will place roadblocks in our course to expose a willful heart. His purpose is to reveal how we have been walking in the strength of the flesh. *Those who become "worried and troubled about many things," especially when their plans are not working out as desired, should realize they are living in their own strength rather than walking by the Spirit and depending upon our faithful God.*

There is a Scripture of deep meaning and great significance that we all need to understand: "He guides the humble {or meek} in what is right and teaches them his way. All the ways of the Lord are loving and faithful..." (Ps. 25:9 NIV) If we never come to the childlike dependence that has no real trust in ourselves—*where we have no confidence in the flesh*—we cannot expect to learn of the deeper things of God. He actually hides His truth from the wise and prudent.

I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes {those who live like dependent and trusting little children}. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. (Matt. 11:25-26)

Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?... But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty...*that no flesh should glory in His presence.* (1 Cor. 1:20, 27-29 Emphasis added)

Those who live by their own wisdom and strength will naturally have the opportunity to accomplish many things. But it is a human works that naturally glories in what it has done. This is the work that will be burned in the testing fires of Judgment, even when it was supposedly done for God. (1 Cor. 3:13-15) While these self-exalting ways are highly esteemed among men, they remain an abomination in the sight of God. (Luke 16:15)

When Jesus was speaking these words, there were men who were ridiculing and scoffing at what he said, as they still do today. Because these people compare themselves

among themselves to defend their position, Jesus said, “You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts.” *In other words, you too are in serious trouble if you are still resisting the words of Jesus and looking to other people to help defend your position. Do not let anyone lead you astray. Your eternity is at stake.* Look to the word of God and begin to depend on Him to open up the truth to your heart. While He hides the truth to the wise and prudent, He will reveal it to those who come to Him as dependent and trusting little children. (Jam. 1:5-6)

Jesus said, “Take My yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto {for} your souls.” (Matt. 11:29 KJV) *The meekness that was in Jesus refers to the way He lived in complete submission to His Father’s will.* As a meek person, Jesus permitted His Sovereign Father to remain in control of all things. He lived “as one” in complete harmony with the will of His Father. Those who will learn of Him and enter into the same kind of meekness, will also be enabled to enter into complete harmony with God. It will enable them to find a deep rest for their souls as they trust in their Sovereign God to work out all things for their good according to His “good and acceptable and perfect will.” (Rom. 12:2)

God guides His meek children by swaying their judgment. To wait before Him, weighing candidly on the scales the various factors of a proposed course, is a frame of mind that permits the Spirit to tip the scales in a certain direction. God touches the scales and makes the balance move according to His will. But our hand must be off the scale. If we insist on interjecting our own will {self-will, the essence of all sin}, we should not expect God to interpose with His divine power and favor. The glory of God will not be seen when we insist on using our own strength to accomplish our own plans. “ ‘Not by might nor by power {in the flesh}, but by My Spirit,’ says the Lord of hosts.” (Zech. 4:6)

This does not imply that we will not work. The children of God will always have either their minds or their hands busy when they are living by the Spirit. But we must keep attuned to the leading of the Spirit so that our labors will be a work of the Spirit. He will provide the gifting, reveal the plans and motivate the service when we are walking under His control and power. And He will do it in a way that brings all glory to the Lord.

He {the Spirit} will bring glory to me {the Son} by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. (John 16:14)

We must not try to modify God’s giftings and calling according to our own desires. “For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” (Rom. 11:29-30) Our responsibility is to discover God’s preordained will for our life. “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, *which God prepared beforehand* that we should walk in them.” (Eph. 2:10 Emphasis added) He will lead us into His perfect will if we will fully yield ourselves to the leading of His Spirit.

Those who live by the Spirit know there is a need to wait and watch for God to begin moving the cloud. By watching for God to move with His hand of providence, and by honestly testing every potential course by the lessons provided in His Word, it is possible to “stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.” (Col. 4:12)

We should also note that Satan will continue to tempt God’s children to follow the self-seeking and self-directed ways of the world. *He will even use his power to help them*

*build up a little kingdom and castle for themselves.* Satan desires to have us become independent and self-sufficient. It was in this sense that Satan came to Jesus in His wilderness testing period to show Him all the kingdoms of this world. The devil knew that if he could turn Jesus to a self-seeking and self-directed form of life, where he could convince Jesus to use His power to seek out the pleasures of this world, that he would also cause the Fall of the Second Adam. But Jesus knew better than to start living for Himself in His own strength. *He knew, as the Son of Man, that He could not do anything out from Himself without stepping into self-will and sin.* He therefore rejected Satan's offer and spoke what each of us will need to say when we are tempted to begin building a little kingdom of our own. "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" (Luke 4:8)

I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear {from the Spirit}, I judge {make decisions}; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me. (John 5:30)

A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. (John 3:27)

Nothing can prevent God's work from being accomplished when we are truly walking in the Spirit. *It is the self-directed way of life, which was fostered on the world by Satan, that prevents God from carrying out His plans through His human children.* Man would have been permitted to share with God in His dominion over all things if he had continued to live by the Spirit. As he walked by the Spirit, he would have been enabled to discover God's plans and pray according to God's will. All his prayers could then have been answered, thereby enabling him to carry out God's work in his appointed sphere of labor. *But man separated himself from the power of God and his dominion when he turned to self-will.*

Even though man was cut off from this Spirit-empowered way of life at the Fall, Christ is now able to restore the form of life that Adam lost. The barrier has been removed. We can now be filled and empowered with the Spirit of God. He is prepared to live through us and walk in us as He walked in Jesus. "For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them..." (2 Cor. 6:16 KJV) *If we will die to the fleshly ways of self-will and human effort, so we may begin living under the control and power of the Holy Spirit, God will manifest His divine life and works through our mortal bodies.*

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us...always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus {a complete dying to self-will}, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. (2 Cor. 4:7, 10)

By going back to this ancient course of walking in the Spirit, God is then able to carry out everything He planned to do through our lives. It is in this sense that we can now have a form of dominion in our appointed sphere of work. New Testament Christians, as they pray in harmony with the will of the Lord, are able to carry out God's plans. Mr. Muller became a living example of this God-planned and God-empowered way of life.

This is what the Lord says: “Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths {of a Spirit-directed and Spirit-empowered way of life}, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, ‘We will not walk in it.’ ” (Jer. 6:16 NIV)

*The reason why so many people within the church have failed to find this deep rest for their souls is because they are still living by their own will.* They have not yet ceased from their own works. Everyone who is living in a self-originated form of life can expect to experience considerable unrest. We must expect to be “worried and troubled” about many things when we are living by our own wisdom and strength.

In contrast, those who live by the Spirit do not experience these “worries.” They always experience a deep rest within their soul because they are walking in the Spirit and permitting God to work out His plans according to His perfect will. As they listen for the guidance of the Spirit and pray in harmony with the Spirit, they are empowered to accomplish the results that God intended.

When God is without someone to stand in the gap and pray in harmony with His will, He is limited in what He can accomplish in this fallen world. *The only reason why God has not done more, even after providing Christians with access to the power and dominion that Christ now possesses, is because God has so few children who are willing to die to self-will and live by His Spirit.* A careful examination of the church today would reveal how most of the people are still living for their own purposes. They are directing their own steps in order to build up their own little kingdoms and their own ministries. While they may devote some or even most of their efforts to the work of the Lord, the work is still being done according to their own will and wisdom. It has prevented God from manifesting His power and glory through His people.

The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. (Ps. 37:23)

The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man {those who are led by the Spirit in all matters} avails much. (Jam. 5:16)

Again, we can identify the humble and submissive children of God by the peace and joy that is always rising out of their heart. They naturally reveal Christ’s Kingdom-life in everything they do. “For the kingdom of God is...righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” (Rom. 14:17) Regardless of the difficulties that may be blocking a proposed course of action, they are always assured that God will accomplish His will in their lives.

*When we are seeking only to know and to do what God has planned to do through our lives, hindrances will give us no anxiety.* In fact, to Mr. Muller, obstacles tended to bring a kind of pleasure because each of these obstacles provided a new opportunity for God to manifest His power and glory. Since he lived for the sole purpose of revealing God’s glory through his prayers, every difficulty became an opportunity. He had learned this rare lesson: “I had a secret satisfaction in the greatness of the difficulties which were in the way. So, 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 this matter.” And because it was God’s will, and he was living and praying in harmony with that will, he knew that failure was impossible.

Since God's work will eventually be accomplished when it is being carried out through the prayers of His yielded and faithful children, there can never be a reason to be "worried and troubled" about anything. Here is revealed another secret to serving the Lord in the Sabbath-rest of God. (Heb. 4:9-10) Those who are able to truly cease from their own works and rest in the Lord, will always find that it settles a thousand difficult and perplexing questions. There is never a reason for difficulties to cast us down when we are living by the Spirit. There should be nothing that causes unrest, for, in answer to prayer, every obstacle will eventually be removed by God's power in His perfect timing. (Phil. 4:6-7)

If, on the other hand, the course is not God's plan at all, but only the fruit of self-will; or if some secret, selfish, and subtle pride is seeking a work that looks for honor from men, then we should expect God to chasten us, leaving our soul in a barren and dry land.

There are many Christian ministries now being motivated by the pride of life. There is a tendency to look at what others are doing and then, through envy, entering into a form of worldly competition. And wherever this envy and self-seeking exists, there you will find strife and other worldly means used to accomplish goals. The organization ends up being run like a business that is in competition with other members of Christ's body. Truly, "This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, every evil thing are there." (Jam. 3:15-16) Worldly ways are diametrically opposed to the way of faith that is revealed in God's word.

Mr. Muller rightly judged that difficulties would naturally upset and annoy him when he was walking in the strength of the flesh. Because he would not like these things, he would begin to strive to overcome the obstacle through his own carnal efforts. He knew it would even lead to running roughshod over others when they attempted to interfere with his plans.

George Muller, however, truly learned to walk by the Spirit. He understood the importance of depending on God to open all doors. The more he failed in his own strength, the more he realized that God was waiting on him to become more dependent. And if he would not have learned to wait on the Lord, the Lord could not have worked through him in the powerful way that He did.

Therefore the Lord will wait, that He may be gracious to you; and therefore He will be exalted {as the One who actually accomplishes the work}, that He may have mercy on you. For the Lord is a God of justice {who always acts according to His spiritual laws}; Blessed are all those who wait for Him. (Isa. 30:18)

*The true work of God's kingdom, which always results in God receiving the glory, is accomplished through dependent faith.* "According to your faith will it be done to you." (Matt. 9:29) These discriminations of truth only need to be stated to any spiritual mind to have their wisdom at once apparent. God had a purpose for establishing this eternal form of life. He planned for everyone to live by childlike dependence upon Him, so that He would naturally receive all the glory in His eternal kingdom.

In contrast, Satan has led people to seek out their own glory. He has therefore fostered a value system on this world that promotes self-sufficiency and self-exaltation. It

leads to a competitive way of life that seeks to be better than others. It is a form of life that is diametrically opposed to the one found in God's eternal kingdom.

And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." Mark 9:35

Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as {dependent and trusting} little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 18:3)

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. (Phil. 2:3)

*We say again, a believing child of God may safely gauge the measure of his surrender to the sovereign will of God, or his lack of surrender, by the measure of impatience that he feels when he finds obstacles in the way. For, in proportion as self-will and self-glory has sway over him, he will become disturbed and annoyed by whatever seems to oppose or hinder his plans. And instead of turning to God in faith and quietly leaving all such hindrances and obstacles to the divine power of the Lord, to deal with them as He pleases in His own way and time, the willful individual becomes impatient in the energy of the flesh. He will therefore tend to revert to worldly means to remove the obstacles by using his own scheming and struggling. You will even find him at times going beyond the clear light of truth, even stretching truth, and trying to justify what he does as being needful to accomplish God's work.*

If, like Jesus, we will learn to depend on the power of the Holy Spirit to work out all things in our life according to God's will and providence, always responding to the leading of His Spirit, we shall begin to see His hand move. We can also expect the Spirit to continually manifest God's Kingdom-life within our soul. His indwelling presence is what will enable us to find lasting peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. "For the kingdom of God is...righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Rom. 14:17)

There is never a reason to be dismayed when Satan acts as a hinderer. (1 Thess. 2:18) God permits these obstacles to delay for a time, in order to test and stretch our patience and faith. If we will continue to trust in the Lord, we can be like Caleb. Because he "followed the Lord fully," not even the giants of Anak with their walled cities and chariots of iron had any terrors for him.

The Spirit of Christ is "the Man with the sword in His hand." (Josh. 5:13) He has come to take complete control of every situation. But we cannot meet with Him until we have entered into the Sabbath-rest of God, where everyone ceases from his or her own works. We need to enter that holy ground where we come into complete harmony with His life and works.

*God never gives His sons their own power to accomplish their own plans. The power always remains with the Spirit of God. And this power can only be used when we are doing the work that He has planned to do through us. We are therefore expected to yield our life to the Spirit and enter into God's preordained will. (Eph. 2:10)*

No single subject seems to be less understood than the work of the Holy Spirit. Long ago, the renowned John Owen (1616-1683) suggested that the practical test for the

soundness of faith during the current gospel age is the willingness of the church to be dependent on the Holy Spirit. *And if this is the case, the great apostasy must be upon us because there is a shameful indifference to the leading and empowerment of the Holy Spirit in all matters of Christian life.*

To every believer who would listen to him, Mr. Muller tried to help them understand the perfect trustworthiness of God. Whenever he experienced a true need in his service to God, help was always given; and it never came too late. When a believer trusts in God's promises and remains in the path of duty, he can depend on God to remain perfectly faithful.

Even the delay of an answer to our prayers has a purpose. God often permits us to call on Him without responding for a period of time. He does this to both test our faith and our persistence. By teaching us to patiently depend on Him for everything, He is able to bring us into that place where we never lack anything. (Jam. 1:4) It also teaches us to be even more persevering in our prayers as we seek to do ever-greater things through the Spirit. Those words of Christ to Nathanael suggest what we can expect: "Do you believe? You will see greater things than these." (John 1:50)

Even when the Spirit provides a new direction and the way seems beset with difficulty, there is never any risk of failure. Of course, each new advance requires a separate and special authority from Him. Like Israel of old, we can only move forward after the cloud of the Spirit begins to move. Yesterday's guidance must give way to His latest leadings. *It is in this sense that the stops, as well as the steps, of a good man are ordered by the Lord.*

If the work is going to be God's work, let Him control it. If we permit our own flesh to become involved, and we begin to plan the work, we will inevitably find ourselves stumbling along a rocky path. But when we walk in the light of His will, and we are doing His works through the Spirit, it will become obvious how He is doing the work. (John 3:21) He will remove every obstacle in His perfect timing.

I will go before you and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze and cut the bars of iron. (Isa. 45:2)

*The most important thing in our life is to enter into God's plans and begin working through His Spirit.* In fact, nothing else really matters. There is no other way to produce lasting fruit. Therefore, whether there is an expansion or contraction in our work, let it be at God's bidding. He knows what He is doing. And then, regardless of what God has chosen to do through our ministries, it will be of equal satisfaction.

The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; You shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. (Isa. 58:11)

## God's Building: The New Orphan Houses

The movements of God's providence are truly marvelous to observe. A study of Mr. Muller's journal and the events that took place through his prayer-life, leading up to the completion of the first new Orphan House at Ashley Down, reveal how God is able to work in the most intricate of details. We cannot provide the details that A. T. Pierson included in the full biography. But we believe there is a need to show Christians in this day how God intended to work in the lives of His children. *It is our intent to build believers up in their faith so they will be prepared to turn away from the independent and self-sufficient ways of this world, and begin to be led by the Spirit of God and put God's mighty hand to work in their lives.*

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.  
(Rom. 8:13-14)

After October of 1845, it became clear to Mr. Muller that the Lord was leading him to prepare for a move of his orphanage work. Included in the reasons for considering this move were the following: Residents on Wilson Street had raised objections to the noise being made by the children; the grounds were no longer large enough for so many orphans; the drainage was not adequate and the rented houses were not favorable for proper sanitary conditions. It was also desirable to secure ground for cultivation, which would supply outdoor work for the orphans. These conditions, along with a sense that God was moving in another direction, led Mr. Muller to begin looking for a course change in God's plans.

He knew it would require a great miracle of God for it all to be worked out. First and foremost, a project of this magnitude would require large sums of money. Considering the small size of his current ministry and his lack of funds, the planning and construction of this new project would be a very difficult undertaking. The question also arose as to whether this kind of permanent structure would befit God's pilgrim people, considering they do not have a continuing city in this present world. Ongoing prayer and communion with God, however, brought a sense of quiet and restful conviction that God wanted to go forward with this new facility where more children could receive care and be brought up in the Lord.

Mr. Muller also had another reason. If God provided the needed resources through a ministry that was committed to dependent prayer, it would become an illustration to help others understand the power of prayer. A central objective behind Mr. Muller's motive was to reveal how God is able to work in a mighty way through His children, when they rely on Him alone.

Mr. Muller continued to search his own heart with a careful scrutiny to determine if there were any hidden motives of self-glory swaying his will. He did not want to be tempted by Satan to be led into the pride of life. But he was convinced in his heart that he was not seeking to develop a larger ministry for the purpose of receiving honor and praise from men. He knew that such a course would cause God to depart from the work. When strict self-examination brought to light no conscious purpose other than the glory

of God, promoting the well-being of the orphans, and provoking a larger trust in God by everyone who would witness this work, it was judged to be God's will that he should go forward.

In December of 1845, after being in prayer for thirty-six days seeking God's specific will on the matter, Mr. Muller received one thousand pounds for his orphanage work. He had never received this much in a single contribution since the beginning of the work in 1834. It was a very large donation in his day. He therefore considered it a providential sign from God.

Again, without ever asking others for help, a Christian architect in London came forward three days later with an offer to draw up plans and to oversee the construction of a facility for orphans. This burden was put on his heart after he had heard the story of Mr. Muller's work with orphans. It came in such a miraculous way that it was considered another proof of God's approval. Mr. Muller saw it as a fresh pledge of God's divine help.

For a man, personally penniless, to attempt to build such a facility on such a scale, without personal appeal to man and in sole dependence on God through prayer was no small venture of faith. We can only understand the full force of this testimony about a prayer-answering God by considering the full weight of the responsibility and some of the circumstances that he faced.

First of all, ground must be bought. There was a need for six or seven acres, and it needed to be in or near Bristol. Such a site would be expensive. The building would need to be constructed and furnished with accommodations for three hundred orphans, along with their overseers, teachers and various helpers. Even the most economical building and furnishings would require considerable resources. And then there would be the annual cost of keeping such a building open and the need for supporting this large body of children and their staff. It would be a tremendous undertaking for someone who did not make appeals for public support.

No man so poor as George Muller, if at the same time sane, would have considered such a gigantic work of faith without having a deep trust in God. Mr. Muller confessed that the secret of his success was based on his desire to only do what God was leading Him to do. He was not entering into this work of faith for personal gain, but rather to provide God with an opportunity to reveal His glory through a work that was clearly from and by the Lord.

Turning from the human wisdom that typically guides the great men of this world, Mr. Muller continued to remember God's promises, "I will guide thee with mine eye." The record he provided through his journal reveals how he never went forward in any step until the leading was "clear as daylight."

In his daily search of the Scriptures, he continued to find lessons that seemed written for his special use. The Spirit worked through the written Word to help convey messages from above. For example, he saw one day in the Book of Ezra how God used Cyrus, an idolatrous king, to be a part of the plan that God was working out. When the time was right for God's exiled people to return to their own land to do what God had planned for them to do, God inspired a worldly king to issue an edict, and to provide means to carry

out the project. Even though Mr. Muller was always cautious about accepting money from worldly people, this insight prepared him to accept help after using careful discernment. Before taking any forward step, he would wait until the Lord had provided him with a strong sense of assurance.

Mr. Muller also saw how God had stirred up His own people so their hearts would be committed to the work. He knew that this same God would, in His own way, supply the money and all the needed help for the orphanage. The Lord would especially stir up the hearts of His own called-out people. Mr. Muller's main responsibility was to fulfill the duties that were brought before him each day and to continue in persevering prayer, expecting the Lord to work.

While Mr. Muller did accept money from people outside the church, he did not permit anyone to become a part of the work until they were fully submitted to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Even carnal Christians, those who are still living by the strength of the flesh, do not understand the spiritual principles that enable God's spiritual children to work through the power of the Spirit by faith. *Those who live by human wisdom rather than through dependent faith in God, inevitably separate themselves from the power of God.* Since Mr. Muller did not want God to withdraw His mighty hand, he knew he must not permit fleshly minded people to become a part of the work.

While the enemy will place many different types of obstacles in the way in an attempt to prevent God from carrying out His plans, *the only way he can succeed is by turning the workers to the self-sufficient ways of this world.* Mr. Muller had to resist these temptations over and over again. He knew that God would remove every obstacle, including other people who were hindering the work, if he would continue to walk under the control and power of the Spirit. Mr. Muller was assured of success as long as he walked by the Spirit.

After specifically asking the Lord to go before him, Mr. Muller began to seek a suitable site. About four weeks passed by in a seemingly fruitless search. But he waited patiently on the Lord. Then one day he writes of a strong impression that the land would soon be shown to him. In a few days his mind was drawn to Ashley Down, where he found lots that met the needs.

His next step was to try to meet with the owner. He called on him twice, first at his office and then at his home. Mr. Muller failed to find him on both attempts. After explaining the purpose of his visit, he decided to go home and wait on God. He assumed that God's providential hand was involved. This being the case, the delay would have a purpose. Since he knew that any anxiety on his part would reveal both a lack of trust in God and tendency toward self-will, he chose to rest in God. Because he only wanted to see God's will fulfilled, he could wait on God to open the doors in His own timing. *The spiritual children of God know there is nothing that will prevent God from carrying out his will in their life other than their own choice to turn to the arm of the flesh.*

During the night, God worked in the heart of the seller. After learning of the request, the seller confessed to spending two wakeful hours in bed thinking about his land, and about how he should reply concerning its sale for an orphan house. He came under conviction to significantly lower the price. Thus, the Spirit was permitted to work out

some of the details as Mr. Muller patiently waited on God. By recognizing God's providential dealing in the most routine situations, and by choosing to yield to this Spirit-given impression to wait, Mr. Muller was able to obtain the property for a price below market value.

The formal offer from the London architect for his services in surveying, in drafting plans, and in overseeing the work of construction came six days later. A week later, the architect saw the site and pronounced it properly suited for its intended purpose.

Up until June of 1846, Mr. Muller only had a small amount of the needed funds. But he believed that the funding would be provided according to God's perfect timing. His journal reveals how he had been waiting on God for two hundred and twelve days. It reveals a persistent praying for the Lord to open the way for this building. Since he had already chosen not to make appeals to the public, he would continue to wait in trusting faith until God provided enough funds to start the project. He never used funds that donors had marked for the regular care of the children or for other purposes.

He also made the wise decision to find ten other Spirit-guided Christians who could assist in the oversight of this work. They would become overseers of this property in God's name. Since the foundation of a permanent institution was being formed, he believed that the Christian public, who would provide the resources for the work, needed to be represented.

He also recognized another spiritual principle that would help him in carrying out God's will in all matters. He knew there was only one Spirit. The Spirit of God is never divided. He knows everything from the beginning to the end. He is never confused. By working together with a number of people who were fully submitted to the Spirit, and by waiting on the Lord until a real sense of harmony existed, it would decrease the chance of making mistakes. While various Spirit-led people may hear different parts of God's plan, every part should blend together and reveal the true harmony that exists in God's kingdom.

Satan did his best to destroy Mr. Muller's ministry of faith. After the ground for the new orphan house had been purchased, unforeseen obstacles prevented him from taking possession. When situations like this occur, there is a natural inclination to become worried and upset, and then to begin fighting for personal rights in the strength of the flesh. But Mr. Muller chose to follow the meek and lowly path of Jesus—the life that our Lord so clearly revealed on His way to the cross. Because Mr. Muller trusted in his heavenly Father, his peace was not disturbed. *He knew that even the hindrances caused by the devil remained under God's sovereign control.* If the Lord should allow one piece of land to be taken from the ministry while he was walking by dependent faith, it was only because there was something better planned and waiting over the horizon. Everything that occurred would have a purpose in God's perfect will. *The work of the servant is to discover the will of his Master, and then to simply respond to the new leadings of the Spirit.*

There is a tendency to grow impatient whenever delays are permitted to test our faith. This impatience will often lead to other signs of a fleshly life. For example, when several strong willed people come to a point where their wills are in conflict with each other,

impatience will develop and grumbling will begin to take place. Even though God has commanded everyone to be like-minded, which can only occur when everyone has died to self-will and is living by the Spirit, they permit their flesh-life to rise up and cause divisions. Whenever these divisions begin to take place, along with the inevitable grumbling and complaining, we can know that people are in the flesh. This insistence on self-will is a sign of how they are actually resisting God and His word of truth.

Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing {by living through the same Spirit}, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. (1 Cor. 1:10)

For you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? (1 Cor. 3:3)

You too, be patient and stand firm {in your dependence upon the Lord}... Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged {for responding in the flesh}. The Judge is standing at the door! Brothers, as an example of patience...you have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. {The Lord doubled everything that Job had lost. So continue to trust in the Lord during these trials.} The Lord is full of compassion and mercy. (Jam. 5:10-11 NIV)

But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters as were some of them...*nor complain*, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition... Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. (1 Cor. 10:5-12)

If we will learn to be patient, waiting on God to reveal His will while going through periods of deep trial, realizing that nothing can occur that He does not permit, we can expect to be rewarded. But there must not be any complaining. *We are actually judging God when we complain about His providences.* If we will learn to trust in Him, His work shall be accomplished, in His timing, through His power and for His glory. *God will always reward the faith that stands firm through all the trials without reverting to the ways of the flesh.*

Then you will know that I am the Lord, for they shall not be ashamed who wait for Me. (Isa. 49:23)

Mr. Muller eventually received possession of the property. And then, as if he was being rewarded for having the patience of Job, he received a gift of two thousand pounds on July 6th. It was double the amount of the previous record contribution. And then on January 25, 1847, there was another like offering. As result, the work on the building could begin on the following July 5th. Six months later, after four hundred days of waiting on God for this new orphan house, nine thousand pounds of unsolicited money had been given in answer to believing prayer.

*When days seem to stretch on without any apparent progress in our plans, according to our liking, we must remember that a thousand years are like a day to God. He sees things from an eternal perspective. Like David, many have become disappointed when they were not permitted to build something for God in their own timing. But we should never be discouraged. God is always working, and His plans are perfect. He will work out His plans in His own good timing. Let us simply rest in Him.*

There seemed to be an extended period of time when funds were not received as the building began to approach completion. It seemed like God was always putting Mr. Muller's faith to the test. He was naturally led to more intensive prayer. Included in the needs that still had to be supplied were the proper equipment and supplies, along with staffing for three hundred children. If only one element blocked the completion of the work, then the whole work would be a failure of God's faithfulness. *But since he knew that nothing could prevent God's ordained work from being accomplished, Mr. Muller did not doubt.* And, as a result of his prayers of faith, he received favor from God beyond even his own expectations.

*There are many Christians throughout the world who have been praying for God to work through their own ministries in a similar way. But they seldom receive a response from God. Since God does not show favoritism, there is always a need for self-examination to determine why God is unable to work through our prayers. God will provide the needed wisdom and make the hindrances known when we are willing to honestly ask God and examine our lives by the standards of His word.*

But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord. (Jam. 1:6-7)

Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your own pleasures {for your own desires}. (Jam. 4:3)

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive {self-willed or self-seeking} way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Ps. 139:23-24 NIV)

Mr. Muller was very careful in the use of money. Even though a considerable amount was funneled through him over the years for the orphan work, he never accumulated any of the money for himself. He continued to live by faith, trusting in God to provide provisions for his family, as the needs arose. And God honored His faithful steward.

Scarcely were the orphans housed in their new home on Ashley Down when Mr. Muller began to sense the need to care for one thousand children instead of three hundred. He sensed that God was already beginning to move. And before entering into the year 1851, this conviction began to mature into a clearer understanding of God's plan. However, with his uniform carefulness and prayerfulness, he examined his motives before going forward. *He wanted to make sure that it continued to be a work of God.*

Many start out with humble beginnings in the power of God's Spirit, but when the organization becomes established and the work grows more secure, there is a tendency to

revert to human means. The leaders begin to run the organization like a business that relies on the wisdom of this world rather than on God. *It inevitably draws them into the pride of life. People naturally expect to be appreciated for the work they have done through their own ingenuity and with their own hands.* And this always separates the work from the supernatural power of God's Spirit.

I will utter My judgments against them concerning all their wickedness, because they have forsaken Me...*and worshiped the works of their own hands.* (Jer. 1:16)

Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done and on the labor in which I had toiled; and indeed {even though it was very great} all was vanity and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun. (Eccl 2:11)

God expects us to labor with our hands. *But when we begin to work in our own strength and seek to create things that will lead others to praise the work of our hands, we can expect God to judge it as evil {self-seeking} and separate Himself from the work.* Mr. Muller was therefore very careful to avoid every worldly means that might lead him into self-sufficiency and self-exaltation.

Again, there were many obstacles that needed to be faced in going forward with another orphan house, such as the cost of the building and the ongoing provisions that would be needed for so many children. But to all these hindrances, *the one all-sufficient answer was the all-sufficient God.* Mr. Muller simply disregarded his own weaknesses, folly and poverty, and focused his faith on God's power, wisdom and riches. He knew that all things would work out for good while he was following the leading of the Spirit.

On January 4, 1851, a gift of three thousand pounds was received—the largest single donation up to that date. Since the use of this money was left to his discretion, he accepted it as a sign from God. He began to go forward with the construction of a new building.

Because he already had four hundred and eighty orphans waiting admission, his thought was to find a way to complete the new building before the funds were provided. James 1:4 was now deeply impressed on him as the injunction to be kept before him: “But let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” He would wait on God and look for the Lord's perfect timing in all matters. He knew that God would provide the resources in the right order and timing.

On November 12, 1857, Orphan House No. 2 was opened to an additional four hundred orphans. The God who had provided the building through answered prayer, also furnished the needed helpers through prayer.

The work continued to grow and go forward. Orphan House No. 3 was opened March 12, 1862. However, all the needed helpers—*workers who lived by the Spirit*—were not yet supplied. But this delay was only a new incentive for persevering prayer. Instead of going into the world to find help through his own labors, he increased from one period of concerted prayer to three periods of concerted prayer each day, asking for God to provide suitable persons who lived by the Spirit. The Lord provided the spiritual workers one

after another, and in no case too late. The reception of children into the facility was not hindered and God continued to receive all the glory.

*Having spiritual workers in the raising of children is absolutely essential. Children learn from what they see. The objective of the Christian worker, or the parent of a child, is to convert the child's natural dependence from the adult authority to God. But to do this the child must consistently see how the adult depends on God and receives consistent help from God. In contrast, if the adult follows the independent and self-sufficient ways of this world, the child will naturally follow the same spirit of the world. Many Christians have taken their children to church to learn religion without ever teaching them to live daily by faith in God. The primary objective in training anyone in the Christian walk is to teach them to be led by the Spirit of God in all matters. God will then be able to take complete control and work out all things for their good. If this goal is ever to be achieved, the workers must truly be spiritually minded.*

There continued to be a need for further enlargement of the facilities. God kept providing more children to be raised in the ways of the Spirit. There was an increasing demand for accommodating new applicants, and the past experience of God's wondrous dealings urged him to both seek and expect greater things from his Lord. In May 1866, building No. 4 was begun; and in the following January, building No. 5. By the beginning of 1868, fifty eight thousand pounds had come in for these buildings. On November 5, 1868, new Orphan House No. 4, and on January 6, 1870, new Orphan House No. 5 were opened for use. A balance of several thousand pounds remained for general purposes. God continued to supply the resources to meet the current need. Thus, early in 1870, the orphan work had reached five large buildings on Ashley Down with accommodations for two thousand orphans, along with their teachers and assistants.

We have attempted to gather together in a short narrative this monumental work carried out by a prayer-answering God. The work remained one in its plan and purpose. At each new stage it provided only a wider application and illustration of the same divine laws and basic spiritual principles that must be followed if God's power and glory are to be revealed. Since George Muller permitted God to control his life with these principles, God honored his prayers. Truly, "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." (Jam. 5:16 NIV)

*Mr. Muller's one supreme aim was the glory of God. His one great means to carry out the work was believing prayer. Even though the work was carried out physically through much human labor, the overall work did not have its source in human effort. In the Sabbath-rest of God, everyone ceases from his or her own self-originated works {our "good ideas" of how to promote God's kingdom}, and permits Christ's Spirit to accomplish God's work.*

If the child of God has truly ceased from his own labors and has begun to work in the energy of the Spirit, he will never find himself running out of energy. *There is no such thing as spiritual burn out when one is walking by the Spirit.* The Living Water of divine life, which comes from an unlimited eternal source, will continue to flow through the soul as a never-ending river of spiritual energy. And in contrast to the kind of work that led Martha to be "worried and troubled about many things," which inevitably wears people out spiritually, *those who labor in the Spirit will consistently enjoy a peace that*

*transcends all understanding.* (Luke 10:38-42) As the apostle Paul demonstrated, they will go on working in the energy of the Spirit without ever growing spiritually weary.

“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” But this He spoke concerning the Spirit... (John 7:38-39)

To this end I labor, struggling with all *His energy*, which so powerfully works in me. (Col. 1:29 NIV Emphasis added)

Let us therefore labor through the Spirit. We can now share with Christ in “the power of an endless life.” (Heb. 7:16) He will continue to fill our inner being to overflowing with His love, joy and peace, supplying an endless source of spiritual energy, as long as we are walking under the control and power of His Spirit. *Those who run out of spiritual energy in their ministries, need to cease from their own labors and enter into God’s rest, so they may work in the power of His Spirit.*

But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. (Isa. 40:31)

When visiting the orphan houses, there are several prominent features easily noticed: The first being the magnitude of this complex of buildings. They are very spacious, with about seventeen hundred windows. They provide accommodations for more than two thousand children and workers. Because economical stewardship was the ruling law in Mr. Muller’s ministry, we find that utility rather than grandeur were stamped on them.

Mr. Muller stressed economy in the buildings rather than elegance because people with very little income provided much of the resources, often after sorely denying themselves for the sake of the orphans. When we remember how many of these offerings, numbering tens of thousands, were, like the widow’s mites, very small in themselves, yet, relative to ability, very large for the giver, it will be seen how incongruous it would have been to spend this money on unnecessary indulgences. If the donors could sacrifice so much to provide the funding, it would be unconscionable to spend it on extravagances that would only tempt the children to be drawn into the pleasure-seeking ways of this world.

## Lessons from a Life “In Christ”

Jesus Christ promised to manifest His life through everyone who will deny themselves and follow Him through the cross. He spoke of a day when He would reveal within our inner being the same heavenly life that He shares with His Father. *This supernatural life from heaven is available to everyone who will respond to all of His teachings.*

Because I live {in the divine life of the Father}, you will live also {in the same life}. *At that day* you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you... He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me...and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.  
(John 14:19-21)

*We follow Christ by presenting our bodies to Him as a living sacrifice. It implies dying to our own will so we may live by His Spirit. Only then can He truly manifest Himself and His power through our lives.*

Mr. Muller has provided a personal testimony of what it means to die to self. Here was the key to his power in prayer: “There was a day when I died, utterly died...died to George Muller, *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.*” Because He chose to live for God and His divine will alone, God could honor him by responding to his prayers.

*God is waiting to work through each one of us as He worked through Mr. Muller. But He cannot do it until we have taken the same course and have learned to live by the same spiritual principles. When we are no longer living {when our self-originated flesh-life has been “crossed out”} and Christ has free reign to live through us, we can also expect to accomplish the works that God has called us to do.*

Jesus had a self and He had a will. But He continually submitted Himself and His will to the cross so He could display His Father’s life and works. Not only in Gethsemane, but from the day He was aware of the need to be about His Father’s business He could say, “Father, not My will, but yours be done.” Because He presented Himself to be a vessel of His Father’s life and will, He could also say, “If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father.” (John 14:9) “But the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.” (John 14:10-11) *And when we follow Jesus in this same way, we can expect Him to manifest His life and works through us in a similar manner.*

If we are to follow Christ, we must live by His motto. It is quite simple: “Deny thyself.” Satan also has a motto that his followers live by. It too is quite simple: “Spare {save} thyself.” The two ways are in direct conflict with each other. *The maxim we choose to live by will determine who we are following, regardless of what we profess with our mouth!*

One of the sharpest rebukes ever administered by Jesus was directed toward Peter when he tried to convince Jesus to submit to Satan’s maxim. Because Jesus immediately

recognized the “Spare thyself” thought process being expressed by Peter, He said, “Get behind me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.” (Matt. 16:23) Again, these two ways are diametrically opposed to each other.

*It was Satan who fostered the self-seeking way of life on the world. It is a way of life that is in conflict with the “light of life”—the life that was so clearly revealed through Jesus. We can therefore say, with Scripture to support our statement, that everyone who is still following a self-seeking way of life, is still on a course that results in God’s wrath.*

God...“will render to each one according to his deeds”: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for {God’s} glory, honor, and immortality; *but to those who are self-seeking* and do not obey the truth {as Jesus revealed the light of truth in a mortal body}... indignation and wrath. (Rom. 2:6-8)

This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic {of the devil}. For where envy and *self-seeking exist*, confusion and every evil thing are there. (Jam. 3:15)

It was immediately after Peter tried to convince Jesus to spare Himself, and follow the self-seeking ways of the world, that our Lord described the one and only way to become a true partaker with Him in His heavenly life of perfect love. *It is not possible to find Christ’s life while living for self. They are two totally different ways of life.*

If anyone desires to come after Me {into the divine life of perfect love}, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For...whoever loses his life for My sake will find it... (Matt. 16:24-25)

In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him... Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; *because as He is, so are we in this world.* (1 John 4:9, 17 Emphasis added)

For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live *should live no longer for themselves, but for Him...* (2 Cor. 5:14-15 Emphasis added)

Dying to the old self-life is not an easy course. While it is easy to make a vow of consecration at the altar and perform an act of surrender, this surrender will be tested. God can see into the heart and He knows when people are still living for themselves. The tests He permits to come into our lives, and our ongoing reactions to them, will reveal whether or not we have truly reckoned ourselves to be dead to our own will and ways.

*We need to keep in mind that it is not possible to live in the fullness of life that comes from heaven while still trying to find life from this world. If we truly want to receive life from the heavenly realms, we must die to the form of life that comes from this world through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. May we all come to*

Paul's understanding of how to live through the power of God so that we may avoid the destruction that will come upon everyone who remains earthly-minded!

But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I have counted all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord {to reveal His life}, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection... (Phil. 3:7-10)

Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that *they are the enemies of the cross of Christ* {who refuse to die to self-will and self-seeking}: *whose end is destruction*, whose god is their belly...*who set their mind on earthly things*. (Phil. 3:7-10, 17-19 Emphasis added)

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God {on the throne of power}. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (Col. 3:1-3)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. (Eph. 1:3-4)

How can we expect to live through the life of Christ if we continue to follow the self-seeking ways of this world? Christ had to take the way of the cross before He could be highly exalted into the heavenly realms where He now holds all power and authority. He then instructed His disciples to follow the same course. *If we reject His way of the cross, which naturally prevents Him from working through us in the power of His Spirit, we must expect to remain enemies of God.*

Do you not know that friendship with the world {its self-seeking and self-exalting way of life} is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (Jam. 4:4)

*Let this mind be in you* which was also in Jesus Christ, who...made Himself of no reputation, *taking the form of a bondservant*...He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him... (Phil. 2:5-9 Emphasis added)

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time... But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while {in dying out to the flesh-life}, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you {in His eternal Kingdom-life}. (1 Pet. 5:6, 10)

Christians have been called out from Satan's self-seeking way of life to enter into the Son's eternal Kingdom-life, where everyone reveals His nature of perfect love and

carries out God's will here on earth as it is done in heaven. We all need to examine our own lives by the clear teachings of Scripture before it is too late. *While we may be able to justify ourselves by comparing ourselves with each other, this self-justification will never stand at Day of Judgment. Our life will be compared to the "light of life" as revealed through Jesus.* That is why it is so important to lose our old self-life so we may find His divine life before leaving this world. "For...whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." (Matt. 16:25)

Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone {separated from the divine life of God}; but if it dies, it produces much grain... If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me {through the cross}; *and where I am* {in the eternal Kingdom-life of perfect love}, *there My servant will be also.* If anyone serves Me {in this way of dying to self and living through the Spirit}, him My Father will honor {by making them a partaker of the divine nature}. (John 12:24-26 Emphasis added)

I am the light of the world. He who follows Me {in the way of the cross} shall not walk in darkness {the self-seeking ways of this world}, but have the light of life {perfect love}. (John 8:12)

But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in Him. By this we know that we are in Him {and are prepared to come before Him on the Day of Judgment}. He who says he abides in Him ought {must} himself also to walk just as He walked {in self-sacrificing love}. (1 John 2:5-6)

There are many who attempt to use Peter's pre-Pentecostal nature as their excuse for continuing to live in their own willful ways. But we need to realize that Peter's whole nature was deeply altered on the day of Pentecost. As he later testified, the Holy Spirit, based on his yielded faith, purified his heart. (Acts 15:8-9) The old self-seeking and self-exalting nature died on that day. From then on he sacrificed himself unto death, as Jesus did.

The world scornfully and mockingly looked at the life of Jesus Christ and said of Him: "He saved others, himself he cannot save." Because they were still caught up in the devil's way of life, they could not comprehend how this way of death to self makes it possible to be raised to a place of power and true fruitfulness. *The people who love the ways of this world will hate Christ's self-emptying and self-sacrificing way of life.* They will prefer to follow the desires of their father the devil, who is the one who fostered the "Save thyself" motto on the world. (John 8:43-44) May we all examine ourselves with the light of truth before it is too late.

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you {with His nature of self-sacrificing love}—unless, of course, you fail the test? (2 Cor 13:5 NIV)

By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. (1 John 3:16)

Jesus poured out His life so that others might be saved. *And when He manifests the same life of perfect love through our mortal bodies, we can expect to have a new divine nature that naturally follows the same course.* While many within the church still have an aversion to these teachings and will attempt to defend their self-life, we can see from the testimony revealed in God's Word how the early disciples began to live when they walked in the "Spirit of love." Everyone begins to walk as Jesus did once they have received the "abundance of grace" and "the gift of righteousness" that overcomes the old Adam-life. (Rom. 5:17)

Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common... *And great grace was upon them all.* {This is not a political system, but a nature of self-sacrificing love.} Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need. (Acts 4:32-36 Emphasis added)

Moreover, brethren, *we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia:* that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift... (2 Cor. 8:1-5 Emphasis added)

I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich {in the life of heaven}. (2 Cor. 8:8-9)

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance {of perfect love} for every good work. (2 Cor. 9:8)

We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open. You are not restricted {from entering into this life of perfect love} by us, but you are restricted by your own {selfish} affections. (2 Cor 6:11-12)

We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. {The grace that perfects the heart in love.}... Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation {when we are to become like Jesus in His nature of self-sacrificing love}. (2 Cor. 6:1-2)

*Self-denial is not cutting off an indulgence here and there. The Holy Spirit must be permitted to remove the root of all selfishness if we are to ever walk as Jesus did.* Christ cannot manifest His life and glory through the temple of our body while the flesh-life remains alive and active. If we permit the root of selfishness to have even a little remains

within the heart, this nature will continue to put a shadow of darkness over everything we do, regardless of how holy we try to make ourselves appear.

And what is cross bearing? We often speak of our “crosses.” But the Word of God never uses this word in the plural. It has never required more than one cross to put someone to death. While we are instructed to take up our cross daily to prevent the old fleshly nature from coming back to life, there is but one cross—the cross on which the self-life is crucified with Christ. *Those who are truly crucified to self will find they are dead to the world, and that Christ has begun to live through them with His nature of self-sacrificing love.*

But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. (Gal. 6:14)

I have been crucified with Christ; it is not longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. (Gal. 2:20)

Everyone is now living by one of the two mottos we have been discussing. Either they have chosen Satan’s way of living for self, or they have chosen to follow Jesus by denying self. “No one can serve two masters.” (Matt. 6:24) There are many who have been attempting to live for both God’s kingdom and their own little kingdom. But they will one day here Jesus say to them the same thing He said to Peter when he was under the influence of Satan’s “Save thyself” motto: “You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.” (Matt. 16:23)

How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him {follow Jesus through the cross and into His eternal Kingdom-life}; but if Baal is God, follow him {go on living for your own pleasures}. (1 Kings 18:21 NIV)

The Lord wants to use each one of us to further the work of His kingdom through our prayers. But we must live as George Muller did if we are to share in the power of Christ’s throne. *With his life still fresh on our mind, may we all submit to dying to ourselves, our opinions, our plans and everything else that prevents the Spirit of Christ from directing our every step.* Once this absolute surrender has been made, let us then look to the Lord to reveal what He wants to accomplish through our lives using the power of prayer.

For this reason we also, since the day we heard of it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy. (Col. 1:9-11)

## **SCRIPTURE TEXTS THAT MOLDED GEORGE MULLER**

O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. (Psa. 34:8 KJV)

Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. {his strength}. (Jer. 17:5 KJV)

But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him. (Psa. 4:3 KJV)

Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? (John 11:40 KJV)

Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD. (Psa. 27:14 KJV)

And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee (Psa. 9:10 KJV)

And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. (Heb. 6:15 KJV)

For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. (Psa. 84:11 KJV)