

# **Autobiography of George Muller Study Guide**

**Autobiography of George Muller by George Müller**

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## Plot Summary

George Muller begins his autobiography from his early childhood, at which time he confesses to being a shallow and misbehaving child. In fact, the death of his own mother fails to cause much pause in his selfish actions. He goes along with his father's wishes to enter seminary, because a life of a minister in Germany promises a life of relative comfort and allows him to provide for his father in his later years. His first years of education away from his father find Muller often in trouble.

However, when a classmate invites him to a neighbor's bible study in his home, Muller begins to desire a sincere Christian lifestyle. He shares his newfound type of faith with his former friends, who laugh. This fails to deter Muller, however, and his devotion deepens. He feels led to become a foreign missionary, a life of uncertainty, financially. Muller's father threatens to disown his son if Muller continues with this plan. However, Muller's devotion now lies with his god, and he pursues several possible assignments before moving to England.

Once in England, Muller, soon along with his new wife, begins to feel guilty for receiving a salary for their work for the Lord. Muller feels that such financial accommodations fail to allow him to live by faith. Thus, he severs ties with the mission's agency and cancels pew rental in his first church. Muller records his journey of living by faith to strengthen the faith of weak believers and possibly bring others to share his faith.

After several years in the ministry, Muller meets a fellow minister named Craik, and the two men move to Bristol to begin the Scriptural Knowledge Institution. The Institution serves many purposes, from religious education to literacy. They also ship bibles and support foreign missionaries. The bulk of their ministry, however, involves housing England's rising population of orphans. Without such ministries, the orphans frequently find themselves in immoral situations of overcrowded prisons.

Without ever asking for money or publishing the need of the ministry, Muller and his ministry operate the growing orphans' houses for decades in the area around Bristol, England. The orphan houses begin as one rented house for several dozen children. By the end of this record, Muller has built three houses that serve the spiritual and physical needs of more than one thousand orphaned children. He attributes his success to his willingness, along with countless others, to follow the Lord's will and grow their faith, even through hard times.

# Introduction

## Introduction Summary and Analysis

The unnamed editor of this edition begins the introduction with a about question prayers of faith. He points out that if people really believe what they think about prayer, why don't they trust God to answer prayers on a daily basis?

The writer offers an example of prayers of faith in George Muller. Muller, the writer explains, preaches throughout southern England before starting several orphanages. Through all of Miller's work, he depends on no one but God to provide his daily needs.

Muller stands as a tall, slender man who dressed simply in black, with a white tie. He learned several languages, all having to do with his education and Biblical study. He relies on only the Bible for personal study, and his library consists only of several translations and a handful of support materials. Finally, Muller lives simply, relying on personal Bible study and extensive prayers in every day language. The writer ends with a hope that the autobiography of Muller challenges others in their own prayer life, concerning faith.



# Chapter 1, An Unlikely Preacher

## Chapter 1, An Unlikely Preacher Summary and Analysis

Muller begins with a very brief description of his childhood. He lives in the kingdom of Prussia during his childhood and early adult years. His father chooses the career of clergyman for him at age eleven and sends him away to begin studies. The choice comes from a desire for a comfortable life, not out of any devotion to God. Muller instantly rebels against a life of piety.

Not even the death of his mother three years later causes him to take life seriously. All through his childhood schooling Muller lives as a troublemaker. He lies to his superiors and wastes all his study time on frivolous pursuits. During the summer, he travels well beyond his means, finally landing in jail for failure to pay a hotel bill.

After his father bails him out, Muller returns to school. He begins to show signs of change outwardly and gains the approval of the administration. However, Muller admits that the new habits are only a facade to gain a more comfortable standing in the school.

During an illness following this time, Muller desires a more sincere religious life, but seems to lack direction. He admits that in his vast library, he owns no Bible. After recovery, however, he quickly returns to his hypocritical lifestyle.

At twenty years old, Muller enters university and begins preaching in Lutheran churches. He begins to desire a true change, if only to ensure that he gains an assignment as a minister soon. He realizes that the company he keeps inhibits change and seeks new companions, but the man he chooses seeks a more rebellious lifestyle, so no change comes about. Muller finishes the summer after his first year at University as rebellious and miserable as ever.



# Chapter 2, The Prodigal's Return

## Chapter 2, The Prodigal's Return Summary and Analysis

Muller points out God's mercy even in his rebellious days. He confesses that he rarely went to church and read none of the Bible habitually. Finally, though, his new friend, Beta, introduces him to a small, home-based Bible study.

Muller recognizes the group as a source of what he seeks. He attends apologetically, but with avid curiosity. From the first meeting, Muller feels and acts differently. Letters about missionaries make a significant impact on his life as well. He admits to Beta that not even their summer travels caused this type of joy in his heart.

He attended the studies daily and read the missionary letters with new interest. Even in his spiritual immaturity, he feels called to the field of missions. He writes to his father, expecting joyful support, but gains scathing anger instead. His father begs him to reconsider and promises to disown him if he gives up a comfortable clergyman's life for the unknown of service abroad. Muller presses on.

One administrator at University, Dr. Tholuck, aids Muller in gaining work as a language tutor to make up for the loss of his father's financial support. Muller also begins extensive religious activities, such as sharing his faith with others, in hopes of gaining more converts to Christianity. He passed out much Christian literature and attended prayer meetings in a nearby town.

At these meeting, Muller gains his first opportunity to preach two services. In the first, he tries to memorize another's well-laid out sermon. He feels dissatisfied and, for the afternoon service, gives a more simply and personal message. He feels satisfied with the change and vows to preach this way in the future.

In his personal life, Muller attends church services whenever possible, and studies religious material extensively. Looking back, he shares two regrets. First, that he relies so heavily on extra-biblical texts. Secondly, he realizes in maturity that his early prayer life, though sincere, was weak and low in faith. That would soon change.



# Chapter 3, Stepping out into Ministry

## Chapter 3, Stepping out into Ministry Summary and Analysis

Muller begins to feel called to minister to Polish Jews and starts studying Hebrew with earnest. Dr. Tholuck approaches him about just such a position and the unprompted suggestion seems to solidify the move in Muller's mind. However, political unrest in Bucharest prohibits the missionary society from sending any new missionaries.

Finally, however, Muller obtains an assignment, instead in London, England. He passes the interview process and receives a six months appointment with probation. However, he must first obtain exemption from his one year of obligatory military service. Several avenues fail and, just when he fears he will lose the appointment and enter the military, he obtains a medical excuse, as the physician deems him too unfit for service. The exception is good for life.

The missionary society supports Muller as he studies in England, in poor health. However, Muller feels compelled to reach the Jews right away. He begins distributing tracts and wins several converts. At the end of the year, Muller dissolves his relations with the society, feeling that God alone should direct his movements. He then begins, independently, to seek preaching engagements. Success, of a sort, soon follows. He preaches throughout the area.





# Chapter 4, Preaching, Studying, and Growth

## Chapter 4, Preaching, Studying, and Growth Summary and Analysis

Often, Muller preaches in the areas of Exmouth and Teignmouth. He receives provisions from various fellow believers as he travels. Shortly, a small congregation at Teignmouth calls him to be their pastor. He accepts and begins perfecting in method of study and style of preaching.

Muller feels that, rather than study for a sermon, he should study for his own betterment and pray that a sermon comes in addition. Moreover, he rejects all of man's wisdom in favor of God and the Bible alone. Sometimes, he says, he enters the pulpit without a sermon yet, but trusts God, in faith, to give him the right words in the right time.

Expository preaching, or taking a passage and explaining it, serves Muller best. He explains how he varies his preaching by sometimes expounding at length on various aspects of a short passage and other times reads a longer part of an epistle and expounding generally on the themes.

Muller also comes to trust God in the form of the Holy Spirit to guide him in life and in his preaching. He feels that the Spirit speaks to him and expresses the will of God concerning matters great and small.



# Chapter 5, Learning to Live by Faith

## Chapter 5, Learning to Live by Faith Summary and Analysis

In October of 1830, Muller marries Mary Groves. The couple begins to live by faith, daily. The only pay Muller accepts from the church is that of a voluntary giving box placed in the church chapel. Muller begins to describe how God provides daily their needs. Often, they go to bed with little, only to have some person bring money or supplies that Muller never asked for.

A few times that first year, Muller feels like doubting God's provision, yet supplies keep coming in. Though money often came in just at the last moment, the Muller's never knew real need. They simplified their living and sold unnecessary possessions to further live by faith. Yet, they saw all this as the will of the Lord.

Muller asks no man for money and never asks the lay leaders of the church to check the giving box. When money needs arise, Muller and his wife pray, sometimes for money, and sometimes to move a particular person's heart regarding a need. According to Muller's accounts, the Lord never fails to meet a need.

In answer to a question as to whether such faith causes one to concentrate too much on daily, temporal needs. However, Muller promises that the opposite occurs, that he feels closer to God and the spiritual realm than ever before.

The Muller family also resists going into debt for anything. They prefer to live simply than borrow from another man. Muller serves God faithfully, even going against doctor's recommendations to take it easy for his own health. Muller attributes all this provisions to his growing faith in God, especially through prayer. At years end, he claims to have more than if he had received a salary.



# Chapter 6, Beginning the Ministry at Bristol

## Chapter 6, Beginning the Ministry at Bristol Summary and Analysis

Muller begins to feel that God desires him to move from Teignmouth and an opportunity quickly arises to go to Bristol. Muller spends much time in prayer concerning this move. After much prayer, he feels at peace with the move and prepares his congregation at Teignmouth for the change. He feels that perhaps God intends for him to grow small congregations and move on, as is often the goal of missionaries.

The congregation responds with tearful support, begging the Muller's to visit often. Muller joins Brother Craik in Bristol and they assume the responsibilities of two congregations, at Gideon Chapel and Bethesda Chapel. After some struggles, they obtain lodging for both Craik and the Mullers.

Muller begins a rigorous schedule of preaching and study. He also announces the birth of his first child, a daughter, though he gives no name. His days quickly fill with preaching and calling on his congregations. However, Craik and Muller quickly become burdened to do more to help the poor. Along with prayers for his own needs, Muller begins praying that God send money to help the poor. He frequently takes the opportunity to share his limited finances with those in need.

One hundred fifty-three people join the work at Bristol during the first year. Muller reports that in four years since trusting God for everything, they never went in need. Though they have little yet, the Muller's continue trusting God for their lives and ministry in the future.



# Chapter 7, The Scriptural Knowledge Institution

## Chapter 7, The Scriptural Knowledge Institution Summary and Analysis

In the beginning of 1834, Muller begins to feel led to start a mission's agency. At length, he justifies his decision not to join with an existing organization. In short, he feels the majority of the existing organization are corrupt, because they seek money from unbelievers and allow people who oppose their work to keep their records. In addition, Muller feels the Bible never commands modern men to reach every soul, but to reach as many as possible. A perfect society will only occur after the return of Jesus Christ.

Finally, Craik and Muller form The Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad. In their first public meeting, they lay the guidelines as only allowing believers to run the organization. They also promise never to seek money from secular sources, though such donations will be accepted if given voluntarily. Also, they vow never to incur debt in order to expand and never to measure success by numbers.

The goals of the institution, as stated by Muller are to assist in religious school, to supply Bibles to believers and to assist missionary work. Muller begins praying extensively for God's provision concerning supplies for the Institution. Money comes in, though often just in time. Muller's prayer life at this time consists of hours spent in supplication before God.

The Scriptural Knowledge Institution enjoys much success, as they are able to help many people. However, Muller begins to feel burdened about the poor orphans. Muller continues to minister in Bristol and, as the ministry grows, he feels the pressure on his time. Briefly, in January of 1835, Muller feels called to India as a missionary. Other work serves to keep him in England. In June of the same year, his infant son dies. Soon after, Muller's own health fails and he eventually retires to the Isle of Wight for recovery, after several donations provide for his travels.

Muller returns to Bristol after several months feeling renewed. He vows to serve God with renewed vigor and prays for further guidance in the future.



# Chapter 8, Proving God's Faithfulness

## Chapter 8, Proving God's Faithfulness Summary and Analysis

In Chapter Eight, Muller feel sled to start his firs orphan house, not only to provide for the number of orphans that attend classes with the Institution, but also to prove God's ability to provide for all man's needs on a daily basis, without any specific requests for support.

Muller meets various members of his congregation and discovers that, largely, they rely upon their own power to supply their needs. He tries to convince men that if they would work less and trust God more, their finances and their health could improve. Few appear to believe. Still others maintain a practice of spiritual devotion in their persona lives, but secular practices in their business dealings. Muller hopes that men can look to the orphan house as proof that God provides.

Craik joins Muller in support of opening the orphan house and in the beginning of December; the first offerings begin to come in for its support. Muller feels encouraged by not only the support, but also its origins. He shares of an instance when a poor seamstress shares her meager inheritance. For the remainder of her life, the Lord never fails to provide for the woman's needs. In April of 1836, the orphan house opens, after much support in the way of monetary and material donations.

Muller closes the chapter with a prayer for money to pay taxes. Yet, he shows no doubt that God will provide in due time.



# Chapter 9, The Ministry Expands

## Chapter 9, The Ministry Expands Summary and Analysis

Muller shares how, in preparing the orphan houses, Muller prays about every aspect. He confesses that, at first he fails to pray for orphans, and none applies. He repents of this to God and soon the house fills with needy children. From the start, Muller considers expanding, so the ministry can support more children of varying ages.

When illness once again causes Muller's confinement, he begins writing a testimony of his life so far, which he describes only as "a narrative of the Lord's dealing with me." He desires to publish it without debt, which signifies that he must raise 1,000 pounds.

Muller continues to testify of the Lord's provisions at just the right times. In October, the institution opens a sixth day school and an infant orphan house. On November 5, Muller shares that a man gives 100 pounds, which is just the amount, from just the man that Muller prayed for in January. In May of 1837, Muller publishes his narrative, without debt.

Muller begins to feel more pressure on his schedule and desires for more help with the two congregations that he and Craik lead. Muller feels that, without rest and time to pray, the ministry will begin to suffer. He outlines that the congregation requires visits from the pastoral leadership.

At the end of the year, Muller's Institution consists of several school and three orphan houses. He prays for more help in the pastoral leadership of the congregations. He ends the chapter with a prayer to be used of God even more in the future. In spite of the vow to never count success in numbers, Muller ends each year with a summary of each ministry, its size and influence.



# Chapter 10, Persevering Under Trial

## Chapter 10, Persevering Under Trial Summary and Analysis

The beginning of 1838 finds Muller in the poorest of health yet recorded. He misses several month of Sunday preaching engagements. He finds the time of confinement as a blessed opportunity to pray for the needs of the ministries.

In July of this year, the orphan houses fall into dire want. They begin to live day to day, in that they buy bread daily instead of weekly. Muller begins to share the need with the staff and they meet regularly for prayer, though the meetings often end in rejoicing.

Through September, no offering of significance come in, yet the orphan never go without nutritional food. The employees themselves give sacrificially, and one woman even gives up her salary for a year.

This time seems to be the direst to date, yet Muller reports feelings of peace. He prays boldly, pointing out in his prayer that a failure in the orphan houses allows unbelievers to scoff at God's provision. More disheartening is the doubt on the part of weak Christians. Finally, Muller claims Biblical promises concerning the fatherless. He says that he feels more at peace now than at times when they had more money on hand.



# Chapter 11, Trusting God for Every Need

## Chapter 11, Trusting God for Every Need Summary and Analysis

Muller continues to record the dire need for provisions, but he expresses no doubt that his God will provide. When money arrives, halfway through September, Muller gives God praise and speculates that perhaps the giver's reluctance attributed to the delay. However, by the end of the month, they find themselves without money and in need of rent for the orphan houses.

Muller keeps the staff up to date on the financial situation, as they meet daily for prayer. However, those outside of the work know nothing of the need, as Muller desires it to be. Furthermore, the children know nothing of the situation, as far as Muller reports. One could speculate that they may suspect the truth, but no one reports the truth to them.

The rent for September comes in, but for October, they continue to suffer need for coal and medicine, among other, daily supplies. Nearly each day, they begin the day in need, receive meager supplies for the day and end the day without a surplus. In one instance, Muller meets a man on an unplanned walk in the park and receives five pounds for the institution. He credits this blessing to the guidance of the Lord. Another day, money arrives even during the staff's daily prayers. Sometimes the money arrives with specific allocations, other times Muller decides where the greatest need lies. When money arrives expressly for Muller, he accepts it gratefully, but unallocated funds go to either the orphans or the other staff.

At the end of November, Muller rejoices in several sizable donations, but writes that the whole ministry still lies in want. He decides to put off the yearly meeting, so as not to appear to be begging for money. He trusts that, in a few weeks, they can give a positive report. Within days, on December 9, he records that the Scriptural Knowledge institution educates 463 children in Sunday school and 120 adults in literacy. 86 orphans live in the three houses. Days later, he receives a donation expressly given for December's rent on the orphan houses. When money comes in after a delay, Muller records that he feels their prayers were answered even before they knew.

The end of the year brings bad news, in the death of Muller's brother. He reports uncertainty about his brother's eternal destiny, but renews his promise to pray for his father. At the year's close, Muller reports on the generosity of God in every aspect of his life.





# Chapter 12, Asking and Receiving

## Chapter 12, Asking and Receiving Summary and Analysis

The year 1839 opens with reports of prayer meetings lasting several hours, to praise God for his provisions in the orphan houses. Muller's first burden of the year is to do more to help the poor in the community, a surprising revelation, given the scope of his current work. However, he feels divinely instructed to do more.

As money continues to be in short supply for the orphan houses, Muller asks the headmaster to revisit him later in the day. Muller immediately goes to prayer. Indeed, at the close of the day, a generous package, postage paid, arrives with not only money, but also cloths, clothing and other supplies, and items to be sold for money.

Once again, in March, the orphans' houses suffer need. Muller records the willingness of the staff to do without in order to provide for the children. In April Muller records how a reformed "drunkard" now saves the money he used to spend on drinking and gives it to the orphan houses. Also in April, money arrives from India for the needs of the houses, including the salaries of the staff. Furthermore, a local woman sells her own possessions to give the proceeds to the orphan houses. Muller records that she never expressed regret for her generous decision.

Through the summer of the year, Muller records little, but in September, he takes a trip to Trowbridge, for the sake of his health. After just two days, he returns to Bristol, feeling renewed in body and mind. He renews a habit to rise early in the morning. He shares that, though he had been resting in deference to his health, he found that the added rest proved detrimental, not helpful. Not only does it prove unhealthy, but Muller also seems the rest as a waste of time. He equates too much sleep as a type of gluttony, just as too much food. Should a person desire to adapt this habit, Muller encourages immediate action.

One more entry remains for the year, giving the yearly summary. Ninety-six orphans now live in the orphans' houses. Numerous people attend other classes and many bibles were sent over the last year. Muller attributes everything to the staff's habit of prayer to God.



# Chapter 13, Looking to the Lord

## Chapter 13, Looking to the Lord Summary and Analysis

On January 1, 1840, Muller receives an offering for the orphans from a woman whom he knows owes money. He resolves to return the envelope, unopened, so the woman may pay her creditors instead. That same day, Muller receives another offering of five pounds. IN January and February, Muller returns to Germany to visit both friends and his ailing father. He decides to make the trip immediately, due to his own failing health. Upon returning, he remarks that the ministries of the Scriptural Knowledge institution flourish.

Soon after this, a man writes asking about needs of the ministry, Muller replies by stating that, should the man feel led to give, he may, but Muller does not feel led to explain the financial situation of the instruction. The man sent 100 pounds, which Muller used to begin an infant school and buying Bibles, among other, daily supplies.

On April 7, Muller learns of the death of his father on March 30. Muller reports that, though he earnestly prayed for his father's conversion, he received no sign of it. By the beginning of May, the orphan houses stand "penniless." However, Muller reports on new members at the church, a subject that comes up infrequently in his journaling. Among those new members are several of the orphans. Towards the end of May, Muller records a prayer meeting for dire need, only to report that evening of some provision. Muller feels that need only arises "to test our faith."

In August, a fellow Christian stays with Muller on his way to visit his father. The man shares a prayer for a friendly meeting with his parents and the conversion of his father. Muller records that, he immediately receives a cordial greeting, though the father's conversion comes after more than ten years of praying. In this way, Muller often returns to update various events recorded in his journal.

In August, Muller records that, though no money comes in for the staff's salaries, he does not feel indebted, because the staff understands the situation. Days later, Muller confesses that the orphan houses need three pounds just to meet the needs of the day. Some of the dinner arrives by the hand of an ill woman, who shared that, though she feels badly, she could not delay to bring the money. Even in the midst of the neediest times, Muller writes that the prayer meetings draw the staff closer together. Money continues to come in from unexpected places.

In November, when a trip to Trowbridge must be delayed, Muller immediately begins to look for reasons why the Lord caused him to stay. He records the opportunity to share his beliefs with another man, who shows a conversion experience.



When reflecting on the year, Muller vows the orphans never needed for supplies and faith remains as strong as ever. From the beginning, Muller points out, such lean days were expected. Contrary to the beliefs of others, Muller says they think little of their needs, even though the needs often arise. Such claims seem incompatible with the contents of his dairy, which records the needs to the exclusion of all else, in most cases. The end of the year report shows an increase in all areas. Often, Muller writes believers expect little from work with children, and Muller offers evidence of rich blessing due to his work with the orphans.



# Chapter 14, Faith Strengthened by Exercise

## Chapter 14, Faith Strengthened by Exercise Summary and Analysis

In January of 1841, Muller writes that money is needed for the printing of the previous year's report. He knows that, if the report fails to appear soon, people will now the money is lacking. Within days, the money comes in. Surprisingly, a man offers up to one thousand pounds to send an eligible person as a missionary to the East Indies, but no candidate arises.

In March, Muller records an encouraging story of conversion, for those suffering from unbelieving family. Baron von Kamp of Prussia employed several poor weavers in order to help both poor themselves and the ailing economy. Not only did the baron provide work, at his own expense, but also ministered to the spiritual needs of the workers. What's more, he traveled the country, speaking for the needs of the poor and even of prisoners. Eventually, the Baron took in a young man named Thomas as his ward. The young man, a proclaimed skeptic, sought to argue with the kind Baron. Due to the Baron's continued, undeserved kindness toward the man, after many months, the young man converted to the Baron's Christian beliefs.

Later the same week, Muller writes of his greatest daily need being that of his spiritual man. He writes how he spends time in his prayers and study every day.

No other entries exist from May to October, when Muller once again records their dire need, but states that the scriptures are more valuable than money. Again in November, Muller records their needs, even after a generous donation. He states, however, after quoting some scripture from the New Testament, that Christian should never seek earthly wealth, no matter what their financial situation is. Muller speaks of heavenly treasures, as that gained when investing in others. He points out the superiority of such gains, as they offer longer rewards.

The close of the year omits the usual roll call of people in the institution's various ministries. However, Muller records, after reviewing his diary for the year, answers to various prayers. He records both spiritual conversions and financial successes.



# Chapter 15, Daily Prayer and Timely Answers

## Chapter 15, Daily Prayer and Timely Answers Summary and Analysis

Muller begins 1842 by recording a lengthy prayer meeting among the staff of the orphan houses. For many hours, they voluntarily prayed and thanked God for the blessings of the previous year. For many entries, Muller records bountiful blessings at the orphan houses and for the first month of the year, he records no need. However, living day to day soon takes its toll. Early in February, a time of need arises. Often, supplies come in only just in time for meals, with no extra left over. Several times, Muller admits that the financial outlook is the bleakest ever. This pattern continues for several months.

In fact, in May, Muller names the previous seventeen months as the most strenuous ever since opening the orphan houses. However, he maintains that God never fails those who claim his promises. Muller uses this experience to encourage readers who may be going through difficult times. He likens his situation to a business deal. A Christian can, according to Muller, liken his relationship to God to a business partnership, in which God makes a perfect partner. When a man feels insufficient in life, he turns to his partner, God, who possesses perfect wisdom about every decision. Muller gains significant comfort from this belief.



# Chapter 16, Food for Growing Faith

## Chapter 16, Food for Growing Faith Summary and Analysis

Chapter Sixteen breaks from the diary form of previous chapter. Instead, Muller utilizes a longer narrative form to address "growing faith," as the title suggests. Muller confesses that he fails to possess innate faith; instead, he feels that his faith grows through trials in his life. Furthermore, he admonishes believers that each person possesses the same faith; that which allows him to live day to day and run the orphan houses is not different from the faith that any Christian receives on their own, heartfelt conversion.

Even with such faith, Muller honestly admits times of discouragement in his life. He shares, for the first time, trials that befall the orphan houses other than finances, such as rumors or illness. He voices his habit of trusting God, especially when times looked their worst. Muller also points out that his faith in God applies not only to large needs, such as the finances of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution, but to his personal, everyday needs as well. He tells how he prays in faith for things such as lot keys.

Yet, Muller feels that God provides the faith Muller needs to believe. Such an argument seems circular in a way that often occurs with religious thought. Muller however, encourages his reader to seek the same kind of faith. Doing so, however, ensures hard times in life, because such trials grow one's faith. Muller exhorts the believer to accept such times as opportunities.

In order to grow one's faith, especially through trials, Muller gives several guidelines. First, he emphasizes the importance of knowing the Bible. Scriptures, he says, provide believers with a basis for encouragement during tough times. In addition, Muller suggests avoiding habits contrary to the teachings of the Bible. This goes along with the previous point because one can only follow Biblical principles after one becomes familiar with Biblical writings. Third, Muller points out that trying times grow faith and one should, therefore, not shirk from such times. Instead, a believer should trust God to provide during such times, based on what the believer learns from studying the scriptures. Lastly, Muller admonishes the reader to allow God to work in one's life, in his timing, and not try to circumvent divine plans. To do so would undermine the lesson to be learned by the believer.

In this rare and lengthy narrative, Muller sums up what he has learned of faith in his life so far. He makes no promises to the believer, but does give attainable guidelines for any man to attempt the same level of spiritual success that Muller enjoys.



# Chapter 17, A Time for Prosperity

## Chapter 17, A Time for Prosperity Summary and Analysis

At the end of 1842, Muller records a time of calm in the finances of the orphan houses. They receive enough to meet their needs, but no extra. Muller once again refuses to buy items on credit, as it is an apparent norm in this society. He states that to do so would show faith in lenders rather than faith in God. Such actions would, he fears, weaken the faith that he has grown in times of want. Furthermore, he repeats his desire to set forth an example of what daily faith in God can provide for a believer. Some weeks later, Muller records money coming in just as the staff concludes a prayer meeting for the need.

This theme continues in the New Year. In February Muller records that "god's timing is always perfect" when a letter arrives containing provisions for the day. Then, in March, he records a lengthy story about a woman wishing to give 500 pounds to the cause. Muller admonishes her to pray, so they can both be sure that she will not later regret the decision. This conversation originally occurred in October of 1842. More than one month passes before Muller receives the money. When it arrives, he also begins considering the opening of another orphan house, because the applications far exceed the current room. Muller prays for more than three weeks about the decision before approaching a woman whose house he believes he could rent. She informs Muller that her family has decided against renting the house, but perhaps they will reconsider, given Muller's intentions. Muller records that in July, orphans moved into the new house.

The next subject discussed by Muller is that of a believer's occupation. He admonishes that every believer should have an occupation that not only agrees with biblical values, but also pleases God. Each believer can seek divine appointment, even when he holds a job that has no apparent spiritual value, such as a tradesman. Any occupation carries blessings from God, if the person holding the job lives in the perfect will of God.



# Chapter 18, God Builds a Miracle

## Chapter 18, God Builds a Miracle Summary and Analysis

Muller begins Chapter 19 with a blanket statement, rather than a diary entry. He explains his reason for an avoidance of building a large building for the orphans. To do so, he feels, ties up funds desperately needed elsewhere. At this point, the reader readily sees that extra money for such a building project never came across Muller's desk. However, after what Muller sees a rational complaint from a neighbor of the orphans' houses, the consideration for more adequate facilities takes hold. Muller sets about to consider the pros and cons of a major building project.

For pros, Muller lists that the neighbors harbor logical complaints and to remain could represent blight on his Christian reputation, thus injuring his cause. He also quotes scripture about moderation and points out that such taxing on the public utilities in no way shows such moderation. The current grounds also lack playground and garden facilities to properly enrich the lives of the orphans. Furthermore, a country setting could prove healthier and more enriching.

However, Muller objectively lists negatives of a move as well. He sees their current location as a gift from God, whereby moving would appear ungrateful. He mentions renting more space to solve some of the current problems. A third but large objection is the sheer cost of such a project for an institution already strapped for cash.

After several hours in prayer, Muller feels led of God to pursue the project of building. In regards to the financial burden, he feels such a project only holds more opportunity to show God's power of provision. After thirty-six days of prayer about the matter, Muller records a single donation of one thousand pounds, the largest ever received he feels encouraged that the Lord intends for him to build a facility in the Bristol countryside for upwards of 300 orphans.

In February of 1846, Muller buys land at Ashley Down, outside of Bristol for a reasonable price. An architect offers his services free of charge and the project seems to be starting. However, low funds hold it up. Muller records honest disappointment when, after 400 days of prayer, the building has not begun. However, He affirms his faith that God intends for this project to continue. He also vows to complete it debt free.





# Chapter 19, Answering God's Call to Service

## Chapter 19, Answering God's Call to Service Summary and Analysis

In the beginning of 1847, Muller prays once again for money, feeling that the building of the new orphan house will begin soon. Within hours, a gift of two thousand pounds arrives. Muller puts the donations of the last 14 months at over nine thousand pounds. Muller also shares his desire to aid missionaries who labor with no regular salary. Though he feels comfortable in such a life himself, he fears that such struggles limit those in foreign fields.

March, however, brings economic hardship for the entire area. Muller admonishes his reader that, when one's visible means decrease; this brings the opportunity for one's faith to increase. In spite of such trying times, Muller rejoices that God supplies all the needs of the orphans' houses, despite rises costs for food and fuel. In July, the construction begins and the diary entries end until February of the next year.

Muller once again addresses a frequent question that he fields from friends and foes alike. Many ask him if he tires of constantly worrying about his finances. On the contrary, Muller feels that his finances represent the least of his worries. He claims that sickness among the orphans provides more worry than finances alone. Furthermore, finding qualified and dedicated staff for the growing ministry also consumes much of Muller's thoughts and prayers.

As he gains more time and experience in his ministry, and as the ministry grows to affect more people, Muller admits that his problems grow and multiply. However, he confesses that he feels more comfortable with dealing with the problems, mostly because he feels that he does just what God desires of him. He admonishes readers to strive to do the will of God no matter their profession. No believer who surrenders this fully to God's will, according to Muller, fails to gain immeasurable rewards. By the end of April, Muller records the offerings towards the orphan house as over eleven thousand pounds since he first began to pray about the matter, an amount that pays for both the land and the building large enough to house four hundred orphans.



# Chapter 20, The Exciting Life of Stewardship

## Chapter 20, The Exciting Life of Stewardship Summary and Analysis

A large part of chapter twenty contains a lengthy lesson from Muller about one's career choice, involving the theme of God's will for one's life. He encourages all people to use whatever they have to the best of their ability for the work of God. The specific topic of this lesson is stewardship. Given this philosophy, a Christian should not feel ownership for any thing. Instead, all that a man possesses belongs to God. Moreover, God loans this to man to see what a man will do with his will. The more a man gives to the Lord, the more the Lord will give to the man. Muller warns against participating in such giving only for personal gain, however.

The very next entry of Muller's diary tells of some record expenses for the orphan houses. Muller, however, rejoices in the opportunity to participate in such business. He quotes Biblical passages about feeling more blessed to give rather than receive. The growing expenses serve as proof of the ministries growth. That growth evidences the blessings of God. Finally, in June the orphans move into the new orphan house at Ashley Down. Muller shares, unbelievably, that the balance sheets of the ministry show a significant surplus, even after purchasing furnishings for the 400 bed orphan house.

Returning to the theme of stewardship in the final entry of this chapter, Muller tells of a fifty-pound donation received of a man. The giver regretfully informs Muller that the gift represents the last of his wealth to share, yet he sends it to the ministry. Muller notes, in a postscript, that the man in fact gave often after this occurrence, thus proving that if a man gives unto the Lord, he receives likewise.



# Chapter 21, A New Victory of Faith

## Chapter 21, A New Victory of Faith Summary and Analysis

The reader notices a one-year gap between chapters 20 and 21, the largest in the book so far. Such lapses in record seem to signify success for Muller's ministry, as he never fails to record times of trials and glances over times of ease and bounty.

Already, with the new orphan house at capacity, Muller begins to consider expansion. At first, he fears that he fails to possess the personal ability to oversee such a large operation. What's more, he fears that dreams of expansion serve only to distract him from his already full schedule. Therefore, maybe they are only a device of Satan, meant to cripple the ministry.

As he did before the first expansion, Muller makes the matter a subject of much prayer. He also lists pros and cons in his diary, to further inspect the benefits and motivations of the idea. Unlike the first expansion, Muller receives no preliminary offerings to encourage him in the direct of expansion. However, applications from needy orphans increase his desire to do more.

Even without monetary confirmation, Muller expands his vision to include space for 700 more orphans. He feels confident that the Lord intends to supply for this dream and writes that he can comfortably wait years to see the dream become reality. This decision seems to be more personal to Muller than any in his recent history.



# Chapter 22, Receiving More to Give More

## Chapter 22, Receiving More to Give More Summary and Analysis

Muller once again returns to the subject of a man's occupation. Every man should, according to Muller, strive to conduct a business that strives, because to do so enlarges what a man can do for the work of the Lord. A man should not accept times of ease in business, but should see such times as opportunities to improve and expand. Secondly, Muller said many businesses fail due to lack of starting capital, a rather mundane topic for Muller to discuss. However, he quickly relates it to his own habits. A man should wait patiently on god to send the necessary capital, rather than rushing ahead and trusting in his own abilities and the generosity of lenders.

On the subject of the new orphan house, Muller admits that his present situation offers no encouragements. Yet, in May of 1852, money has begun to come in. He trusts God implicitly for the needed finances. The growing number of children on the waiting list further encourages him to continue. In the close of the chapter, he records the conversion of several older orphans, just before they leave the house. This reminds the reader of the real purpose of Muller's work.



# Chapter 23, More Work and Greater Miracles

## Chapter 23, More Work and Greater Miracles Summary and Analysis

As more money and larger sums come in for the orphan houses, Muller writes that such occurrences never surprise him. He rejoices and praises God, but surprise would signify a lack of faith, which he never shows. He appears humbled to be used in such a grand fashion, but never doubts that his God can achieve such large operations.

Muller continues with two seemingly differing ideas. First, he admonishes Christians not only to believe, but also to work. Muller offers that opportunities often require great work on the part of men and great blessings on the part of God. Secondly, however, he calls for patience in the Lord, again telling the reader to refrain from running ahead of the Lord. Muller states that waiting often seems more difficult than attempting to work, often doing so too soon.

On a rare personal note, Muller closes the chapter by writing of a time of dire illness for his only child, a daughter. She falls ill with typhus, and Muller's only defense is to spend much time in prayer. She makes a recovery and Muller attributes this to God's goodness towards men who trust in him.



# Chapter 24, Continued Prosperity and Growth

## Chapter 24, Continued Prosperity and Growth Summary and Analysis

Muller shows evidence of his faith in God by looking for land for the new house even before he receives the money. He does not intend to purchase on credit; instead, he believes the money is so sure that he can settle on the land. His burden for the orphans stems from awaiting list of more than 700 orphans waiting for an opening. He briefly describes the vast population of orphans in the country, in comparison to the small number of appropriate houses. Muller counts it a privilege to work in such a ministry. In order for a man to feel this way, Muller lists several personality requirements. First, a man must be willing to work; he must also be willing to receive aid large and small, giving no more respect to the larger sums. A man must understand stewardship as Muller does and use god's resources wisely.

In May of 1856, Muller records the twenty-fourth anniversary of his coming to Bristol. He rejoices in the number of orphans helped by the ministry in this time.

Time quickly skips ahead in this chapter to November of 1857, when Muller opens a second orphan house along side the first at Ashley Down. Soon after, though, the boiler breaks. Fearing long, costly repairs and bad weather, Muller makes it a matter of prayer. To his delight, but not surprise, the weather remains mild and the workers willingly work through the night to fix the heat and restore the orphan house to workable condition.



# Chapter 25, The Spirit's Work Among Us

## Chapter 25, The Spirit's Work Among Us Summary and Analysis

In his final chapter, Muller records the construction of a third orphan house, bringing the ministries' capacity to over one thousand orphans. They have ministered to the physical and spiritual needs of thousands of orphans in more than twenty years.

Muller also tells of the untimely death of an orphan, Caroline Bailey. She is the only orphan mentioned by name in the whole book. However, nearly a year after her death due to illness, a spiritual awakening continues in the orphan houses, bringing many spiritual questions and conversions, which cause Muller much joy. Muller closes his book with a letter from a previous orphan, offering thanks to Muller and God for the opportunities afforded him at the orphan house. Muller gives all glory to God for all the good that comes from the work in Bristol. He believes his testimony will accomplish his goal of encouraging faith in believers and unbelievers alike.



# Conclusion

## Conclusion Summary and Analysis

H. Lincoln Wayland concludes this edition by telling the reader that not even Muller could guess the impact of his testimony on the faith of generations of Christians to come. Wayland exhorts readers to live a life patterned after the faith of Muller, in order to receive a full and fulfilling existence.

Wayland closes by stating, "George Muller was a living demonstration of the reality of the Scripture," But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:10)."





# Characters

## George Muller

This book is the autobiography of George Muller, a German preacher who moves to England with the intentions of working for a missionary agency. However, once there, he feels uncomfortable receiving pay for what he feels is the work God has called him to complete. He stops his partnership with the agency, thus beginning his independent journey of faith.

Muller Records his life in hopes that his example may encourage others to fearlessly stretch their faith, often through times of trials. After a few years of such ministry, Muller becomes acquainted with Craik. The two men move to Bristol and begin the Scriptural Knowledge institution, a religious educational agency that proves multi-faceted. They offer religious courses for children and adults, along with literacy classes. Moreover, they ship bibles and support various foreign missionaries.

The largest part of the ministry quickly becomes the orphan houses, a personal and professional burden of George Muller. What begins as one house grows into three before Muller expands the work to Ashley Down and builds what becomes three orphan houses that hold over one thousand orphans. Through the whole experience, Muller never asks for money. What's more, he never shares the finances problems with anyone outside of the staff of the orphan houses. Yet, money always comes in just as needed. Muller records this as an example to both unbelievers and weak Christians.

## Orphans

Without question, the orphans receive more space in the book than any other person does, including Muller himself does. Though he says little about any particular orphan, he mentions their case in reference to nearly every decision he makes.

At this time, in England, poverty and its side effects cause many children to be homeless. Sometimes the family cannot afford to care for the child, and sometimes the parents die from disease or starvation. Thousands of children flood the cities. Older children seek work. Muller laments that the orphans' houses operate over capacity before he opens his own ministry. What's more, entry to a proper orphan house proves difficult, as the child must have a sponsor, usually of some wealth. The children who lack a sponsor or the money end up in prisons or on the street. The first orphan house fills up immediately, with a long waiting list developing. Each time the ministry expands, the need surpasses the available beds. This trend continues throughout this account.

Despite the orphan situation, as described in various places by Muller, it is the spiritual condition of the church that motivates Muller to open the orphan houses. He desires to support the ministry by prayer and faith alone, in order to mature the same in his congregations.



A few times, when the financial situation becomes dire, Muller records small offerings given by the orphans. He rejoices in any size donation. Other accounts of the orphans include some letters of those who grew out of the orphans houses and went on to lead productive lives in some area of trade. They credit Muller's orphan houses to their success. Finally, Muller records spiritual conversion by the student with the most joy. Muller never requires the children to claim his beliefs in order to gain admittance. Instead, he provides them with much religious education, in hopes that they convert voluntarily. It seems that many, though not all do convert.

## **Muller's Father**

Muller's father, unnamed, sends his son into the clergy profession in hopes of providing a comfortable life, so that his son can care for his parents in his later years. However, Mr. Muller disowns his son when Muller decides to pursue a career in foreign mission work. Muller records the death of his father in April 1840.

## **Muller's Mother**

At age fourteen, Muller's mother passes away due to illness. However, Muller remembers little mourning on his part. He remarks that the loss makes no impact on his rebellious lifestyle.

## **Beta**

Finally, in college, Muller seeks out new companionship in Beta, a quiet and studious peer. However, Beta seeks Muller in hopes of gaining a more exciting lifestyle. Beta finds Kayser's bible study and invites Muller to attend, thus changing the course of Muller's life.

## **Kayser**

Brother Kayser, as Muller calls him, leads the Bible Study which changes Muller's outlook during college. Kayser openly accepts the young Muller. Later in life, Kayser becomes a missionary to Africa.

## **Dr. Tholuck**

Dr. Tholuck comes to Halle as a professor of divinity. Through him, Muller becomes acquainted with other devoted Christians. Also, Dr. Tholuck aids Muller in finding work as a German tutor after his father disowns Muller. It is also Tholuck that writes to the missionary society on Muller's behalf. First, he encourages Muller to consider Bucharest, but political unrest in that area redirects Muller to England, where he then remains.



## Holy Spirit

To Muller, the Holy Spirit exists as a real entity that speaks to his heart. The more he studies and prays, the more real the presence of the Holy Spirit becomes. He feels that the Holy Spirit also aids Muller in preaching, when Muller decides to adopt a freer and more personal approach to preaching. Lastly, the Holy Spirit leads Muller in all his decisions about moving and expanding. Muller's faith is largely tied to his relationship with the Holy Spirit.

## Mary Groves

In October of 1830, Muller marries Mary Groves, which causes him much joy. She supports him in his decision to live completely by faith and give up his regular salary from the church. He prays alongside her and rejoices in the answers.

## Craik

Muller meets Brother Craik in England. The two travel to various speaking engagements together.

## Daughter 1

Muller only reports with thanksgiving on the birth of his first daughter. No name is given.

## Son 1

Muller only reports on his son after the infant falls ill. Despite prayers for healing, the infant dies. Muller reports tears of joy as he believes the infant lives in heaven.

## Muller's Brother

Nothing is mentioned of Muller's brother, aside from a brief description in the beginning, saying they lived sinfully in their youth, and in 1839, when Muller learns of his brother's death. He prays that God receives glory through this and resolves to pray more for his father.

## Baron von Kamp

Muller tells, in an entry during March of 1841, of a Baron from Prussia who, feeling led of God, found work for hundreds of poor laborers in his area, at his own expense. Further, he traveled the country, spreading news of the plight of the poor and imprisoned. He eventually came to be the support of one student, Thomas, a

proclaimed skeptic. Through his continued kindness towards the undeserving young man, Thomas converts to Christianity.

## **Thomas**

A young student, Thomas, becomes the ward of Baron von Kamp in Prussia. Through months of undeserved kindness, Thomas converts from skepticism to Christianity. Muller shares the story to encourage those who suffer ridicules from unbelieving loved ones.

## **Caroline Bailey**

Caroline Bailey is the only orphan Muller writes about by name, and only after her death from illness. He records the event because her death had a spiritual impact on the residents of the orphan houses, causing what many would deem a revival or awakening. Many other orphans professed conversion experiences following the passing of Ms. Bailey.



# Objects/Places

## Kroppenstaedt, Prussia

Muller gives his birthplace as Kroppenstaedt, in the Kingdom of Prussia in 1805. At the age of eight, he moved to Halberstadt to study to become a clergyman.

## Faith

Early in life, Muller knows nothing of faith. However, it becomes the most important force in his life once he moves to England. He prays by faith for the littlest aspects of his daily needs. At certain periods, he prays daily for bread and other simple needs. Living thus reminds him to live by faith in all things, trusting God for larger aspects such as guidance and health.

## Lord's Supper

Muller confesses that, early in life, he fails to see the significance of the Lord's Supper, or communion. He takes communion infrequently and, though he often feels guilty about his sinful life, he never makes a permanent change. After attending bible study in college, however, his outlook on spiritual matters changes drastically.

## Halberstadt

Muller begin his religious studies in Halberstadt. There, he offers little effort in spiritual matters.

## Magdeburg

From Halberstadt, Muller's father obtains a place for him to study near Magdeburg. He hopes to leave behind sinful influences, but soon finds friends just like those he left.

## Nordhausen

At Nordhausen, muller lives in the principal's house. He impresses the administrator with an outward showing of a studious and pious life. Muller confesses, though, that inwardly he feels as rebellious as before.



## University of Halle

At age twenty, Muller enters the University of Halle and gains permissions to preach in the Lutheran church. He desires to change his ways now, because he fears he will never gain a pastorate otherwise. However, he once again gains worldly friends and lives a frivolous life, until joining the bible study at Kayser's house his second year.

## Switzerland

After his first year of university, Muller achieves a life's desire to visit Switzerland. After he finds true Christianity, however, he tells his friend Beta that God's peace outshines the joy he felt even in Switzerland.

## Bible

Early in life, the Bible means little to Muller. Ironically, even while studying religious studies in preparations to become a minister, he fails to even own a Bible. He does, however, boast a large library of over 300 other works.

During his immature Christian days, he begins to read the Bible with interest, but also reads many other religious works, such as biographies. Finally, in his later years, he relies only on the Bible, sometimes reading it in Hebrew or Greek.

## Teignmouth, England

Muller gains his first pastorate in Teignmouth, with a congregation of eighteen. He preaches simple message without apology, which some like and some dislike so much that they leave. Muller remains undeterred. Here he marries Mary Groves.

Also, Muller decides that the churches practice of renting pews is unbiblical, because it puts the poor at a disadvantage. Thus, he does away with the practice and, in doing so, also removes his own salary. At the instance of men in the church, a box is set in the church for anonymous donations to the Pastor's expenses. Muller lives solely on these and other unsolicited donations.

## Bristol, England

Muller moves to Bristol with Craik and the two men begin leadership of two congregations there. They soon expand their ministries to include the Scriptural Knowledge Institution, which consists of bible classes, foreign missions work and, eventually, several orphan houses.



## The Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad

Craik and Muller start this institution from a desire to aid in missions without involving themselves in agencies they feel to be corrupt. The Institution consists of Bible classes, foreign missions support and the orphan houses. They vow never to seek money from nonbelievers and never to gauge success based on numbers alone.

### Isle of Wight

When Muller falls severely ill at Bristol, he begins to desire time away, but finances prohibit the trip. Fellow believers invite him to their property on the Isle of Wight and several other friends send money earmarked for Muller's recovery, allowing him several months in the country, where he makes a full recovery.

### Clifton

An employee of the Orphan Houses stops at Muller's on his way to Clifton, to pick up some recently orphaned children. Muller admonishes him to visit again on his way home, as no money exists for his needs. When he calls again, still no money remains, but soon another employee gives some money of his own.

### Trowbridge

During a time of illness in 1839, Muller receives money expressly for his own time away, for recuperation. He travels alone to Trowbridge for a time of rest. There, he wishes for a chair at which to pray. Without asking any man, he finds a chair in his room the next day. While at Trowbridge, he resolves to arise earlier in the morning, to pray, and finds such habits strengthen his body and spirit.

### Ashely Down

When neighbors of the orphan houses on Wilson Street make what Muller sees as valid complaints about the noise and trouble of the orphans, Muller begins to consider relocating. He quickly sees the advantages to living in the country. After several perspective plots fail to work out, he settles on a reasonably priced tract of land outside of Bristol, England called Ashely Down. Over the next several years, he expands the work to three orphan houses that hold over one thousand orphans.



# Themes

## Faith

Muller attributes much of his life to his attitude towards faith in God. To Muller, faith means trusting that God possesses the strength to surpass one's problems and believing that God desires to bless the believer concerning such needs. Though many Christians desire to have large quantities of faith, in which they live apart from worry for their daily needs, Muller writes that such faith only grows out of very trying times in a Christian's life.

It becomes a large part of Muller's life to prove God's faithfulness towards man and, thus, encourage others to grow their own faith towards God. Her first personally begins to live a life of faith, as he describes. He takes no regular salary from his church and never asks for finances from others. He only prays to God and trusts the God will impress his need upon the hearts of others. Thus, Muller lives for several years.

After opening the Scriptural Knowledge Institution, Muller carries this practice over into his professional life. He feels that, though such extreme habits of faith may not suit every Christian, his example can serve to strengthen the relationship that every reader has with his faith in God.

Muller points out repeatedly that a life of faith never excludes the believer from hard work. In fact, Muller admonishes his readers to work as much as they can and trust God to do his part as well. Care should be exercised; however, to ensure that the believer does not work beyond what God would will fro the believer's life. Muller believes there is a wrong way to do the right thing, which involves doing charitable deeds outside of faith in God's power.

## The Will of God

Several times in the course of his autobiography, Muller addresses the will of God for every believer. Muller points out that there is obviously a will of God for a minster's life. Every man, however, should strive to ensure that his choice of profession lines up with God's will for that person's life. It seems that Muller believes that every person must seek this will out for him or herself, through much prayer and person meditation.

Muller gives several guidelines for ensuring that one's lifestyle and profession line up with god's will. One should never seek a profession that, morally, disagrees with the doctrines of Christianity. Moreover, one should refrain from conducting business in a way that causes one's self or others to behave immorally or even outside of their means.

Thus, not only clergy, but also every person possesses the potential to hold an important job in the work of God. Muller supports the idea that the work of God needs





not only honest clergy, but also honest tradesmen's and honest business owners. A man (as Muller always refers to men only) should strive to make their business not only honest, but also successful. Muller's own ministry stands as proof that several charities and ministries rely on the generous donations of successful businessmen. Successful businesses rise from hard work and honest dealings which not only produce success in their own right, but also appeal to the will of God, which the Lord himself reward with blessing, both spiritual and temporal.

## Charity

Muller frequently focuses on the subject of charity, not only that he receives from others, but that he feels God would have him supply to the needy. Muller's heart for helping the needy orphans of England shows a remarkable example of charity. He sees a huge problem within society, where thousands of orphans live either homeless or in prisons. The houses that exist inhibit many orphans due to complicated enrollment processes. Yet, even those houses fill quickly. Muller never shirks from such duties, however. He simply puts his faith in God and, after receiving what he feels to be divine direction, he, along with many supports, strives to help some.

Muller likens the growth of the orphans' houses to his own faith. He starts small, helping just over fifty orphans. In just over twenty years, the ministry grows to over one thousands orphans housed in three houses. Muller's heart frequently shows for the reader, as he agonizes over what to do with applications for admission far exceed available room.

The charity of others alone supports the tremendous work of the orphan houses. Friends, congregants and total strangers offer monies large and small, often just after Muller spends time in earnest prayer. Muller likens such sacrifice to the death of Jesus Christ, as Muller sees Jesus' death as the ultimate example of sacrifice, paying for man's eternal soul. Often those who give the largest percentage of their own wealth point to the sacrifice of Jesus, as given in the Bible, and say giving mere money pales in comparison.

If Muller's ministries only helped the thousands of orphans, it would stand out as a ministry on a grand scale. However, he frequently shares burdens to aid others in need. He prays for money to give bread to the poor of his town. The Scriptural Knowledge Institution sends bibles and monies to missionaries around the work, most often in India, to share both Christianity and meet the daily needs of the poor in those countries.

Often, Muller ignores his own needs and even his health to give to others. Yet, always he claims to be living a contented and rich life. His desire, in recording this life, is to lead others to seek the same for themselves.



# Style

## Perspective

Muller tells his story from a first person point of view, giving his own personal and honest feelings, without the thoughts of others. Occasionally, Muller includes short bits of dialogue between himself and supporters of his ministry, as he remembers them.

In the beginning of the autobiography, Muller obviously looks into his past to give the reader an honest look at his own background. He honestly records his rebellion in his youth, making no excuse for the way in which he treats his father and mother. He even admits to disrespectful behavior upon the passing of his mother in his youth. This perspective serves to provide a contrast between the young Muller and the man he becomes.

After beginning the orphan houses, however, the book takes on more of a diary feel, with periods of daily entries. Sometimes, however, gaps appear, when the reader assumes that nothing the Muller deems noteworthy occurs. In addition, as one would assume of any diary, certain dates may be left out to avoid becoming redundant, as anyone's life is apt to do. Sometimes, though, Muller reflects back on previous entries, to record answers to prayer or other types of updates.

Concerning his religion, Muller offers a most unapologetic devotion. His desire for others to adopt his type of religion motivates much of the book itself. He feels that, should others see the truth of God in his life, they surely will want the same for themselves. He undertakes a life of living by faith in order to persuade unbelievers to accept his religion and to strengthen the devotion of those who already believe.

Aiding the countries surplus of orphans, in fact, is as secondary purpose to opening the houses. Muller desires to have a ministry supported by faith, that its example may strengthen the faith of his congregations. What's more, he takes in orphans regardless of their beliefs, but provides daily bible study and education in hopes that they convert. Many, though no all, do convert and Muller records several periods of revival in the orphan houses.

## Tone

Muller maintains a semi-formal tone throughout his record. Though he definitely writes with the language of an educated man, the book maintains the personal feel of a diary. He often writes to educate and persuade, but does so in a friendly and heartfelt manner. Muller exhibits a desire to have people live by faith, but asks them to do nothing that he does not already do himself.

The reader may find Muller's command of English remarkable. One easily forgets that Muller first lived and received education in Germany. Grammar and usage appear to be



that of a native-born writer. This also surprises the reader, given that Muller admits, in his later years, that the whole of his personal library contains only the bible in three languages and a few commentaries on the same. This fact never limits his study time, though. In fact, he admits that, as he pares down his library, he spends more time reading his bible and communing with God.

The reader may find the most difficulty with the language when Muller writes extensively about his religion. Such passages rely heavily on the reader's knowledge of some religious vocabulary, such as fellowship and communion. Muller makes his religion an integral part of his daily life. Therefore, such language constantly appears within the text. Often, though, the text itself defines such religious vocabulary.

## Structure

Muller writes this autobiography in twenty-five titled chapters. The titles of the chapters give some clue to the events covered in each. They all have a spiritual aspect contained. Many chapters cover the space of an entire year, others only part of a year. Toward the end of the book, some chapters cover several years.

The diary itself begins with a lengthy flashback, giving Muller's history. Before his heartfelt conversion in college, he attended religious schools, even intended to be a minister, for the comfortable lifestyle it provides. He recalls events that led him to England and finally to pastor two churches in Bristol, with his fellow minister Craik.

Upon arriving in Bristol, and about the time Muller opens the first orphan house, the book takes on its diary feel, with short entries labeled with individual dates. Sometimes, as any diary may do, the entries feel monotonous. Muller records the events in this way, in order to offer an honest and moving record of the provision of God. He begins the record without proof that such provision with appear, aside from his faith.

In addition, this addition contains an introduction and conclusion by H Lincoln Wayland, who emphasizes Muller's dedication and his impact on Christian believers even in present time. The autobiography covers 237 pages.



## Quotes

It was George Muller's greatest hope that this record of God's faithfulness to him would encourage believers to develop faith like his own— the faith without which it is impossible to please God; the faith that works by love and purifies the heart; the faith that removes mountains of obstacles out of our path; the faith that takes hold of God's strength and is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. p. 8

Studying, reading novel and indulging in sinful practices were my favorites past times. p. 10

I was glad when my father obtained an appointment for me at a school me Magdeburg because I thought that if I left my sinful companions, I would live a different life. But I grew still more idle and continued to live in all sorts of sin. p. 11

On the day itself, I promised God that I would become a better person, thinking that somehow God would induce me to reform. But after one or two days, I forgot everything and was as bad as before. p. 12

I sought his friendship because I thought it would lead me to a moral life, and he gladly became my friend because he though it would bring him some good times. p. 14

I read the Scriptures, prayed often, loved the brethren, went to church with the right motive, and openly professed Christ although my fellow students laughed at me. p. 17

The Lord richly made up to me the little I had given up for His sake. p. 19

Despite my slowness to grasp spiritual principles, however, God showed His great patience toward me and helped me to grow steadily in Him. p. 21

I had the honor of being reproached and ill-treated for the name of Jesus. The Lord gave me grace, however, and I was never kept from the work by any danger or prospect of suffering. p. 28

About this time, I began to have conscientious objections against receiving a salary by renting pews. p. 36

God blessed us abundantly as He taught us to trust in Him alone. When we were down to our last few shillings, we told Him about our needs and depended on Him to provide. He never failed us. p. 37

At the end of the year, we looked back and realized that all our needs had been met more abundantly than if I had received a regular salary. p. 43

Do not attempt to imitate me in this matter if you do not have the faith. But if you do, it will most assuredly be honored by God. p. 45



I must offer a word of warning to believers. Often the work of the Lord itself may tempt us away from communion with Him. p. 47

We are not sufficient in our own ability for these things, but our sufficiency is from God. p. 52

I said to myself, "If only the lord would give me the means to help them!" About an hour later, I receive sixty pounds which I used to buy bread for the poor. p. 53

At the close of each of these four years, although my income has been comparatively great, I have had only a few shilling left. My needs are met each day by the help of God. p. 54

We would by no means judge them if they do not see that their practices are contrary to Scripture. But since we see them to be so ourselves, we could not with a clear conscience remain. p. 58

I fully realize that the dear infant is much better off with the Lord Jesus than with us, and when I weep, I weep for joy. p. 66

Today it has been impressed on my heart no longer merely to think about establishing an orphan house but actually to begin making plans. p. 70

When I continued questioning her in order that I might see whether she had counted the cost, she said to me, "The Lord Jesus gave His last drop of blood for me. Should I not give Him the hundred pounds?" p. 76

The narrative of some of the Lord's dealing with me is now ready to be published. I have asked the Lord to give me what is lacking of the one thousand pounds. p. 84

That proved to me that it was in the heart of God from the beginning to help us. But because He delights in the prayers of His children, He allowed us to pray so long. p. 101

I finally decided that, whatever my body might suffer, I would no longer let the most precious part of the day pass away while I was in bed. p. 117

"— work as if everything depending on your diligence, and trust int he blessing of the Lord to bring success." p. 222

Individuals who have chosen not tot live for the present time but for eternity will have the opportunity to help me care for these children. p. 225



## Topics for Discussion

Compare and contrast young Muller with the older man he became.

Is this record only valuable to Christians? Explain.

What most surprises you about Muller's work?

What have you learned about English society during the nineteenth century?

Write a sample diary entry for Muller's wife.

Why do you think Muller mentions so little of his family?

How would this story differ if the location changed? Name a location and give several differences.

How did an orphan's life change after coming to live in Muller's orphan houses?

Why, after years of telling no one of his financial needs, does Muller decide to publish such a detailed description of it?

Was Muller's father proud of him at any point? Explain.

What part did Muller's education play in his life?

Was Muller a success? Explain.