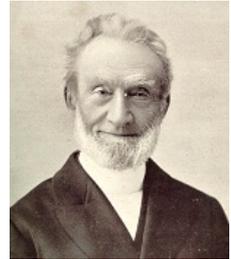


Reasons which led Mr. Mueller to Establish an Orphan House

This is Appendix E from the book, *George Mueller of Bristol* by A.T. Pierson. George Mueller explains his primary reason for starting the orphan houses. Mueller's life and example testifies to the power of a living God to take care of His children when they are brought into trouble through trusting in Him. This is an important lesson for the children of God who "will see every earthly support cut off" (The Desire of Ages, p. 121) in the future.

I had constantly cases brought before me which proved that one of the especial things which the children of God needed in our day was to have their faith strengthened.



For instance: I might visit a brother who worked fourteen or even sixteen hours a day at his trade, the necessary result of which was that not only his body suffered, but his soul was lean, and he had no enjoyment in the things of God. Under such circumstances I might point out to him that he ought to work less, in order that his bodily health might not suffer, and that he might gather strength for his inner man by reading the word of God, or by meditation over it, and by prayer. The reply, however, I generally found to be something like this:

But if I work less, I do not earn enough for the support of my family. Even now, whilst I work so much, I have scarcely enough. The wages are so low, that I must work hard in order to obtain what I need.

There was no trust in God. No real belief in the truth of that word:

Matthew 6

³³ Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you.

I might reply something like this:

My dear brother, it is not your work which supports your family, but the Lord; and He who has fed you and your family when you could not work at all, on account of illness, would surely provide for you and yours if, for the sake of obtaining food for your inner man, you were to work only for so many hours a day as would allow you proper time for retirement.

And is it not the case now, that you begin the work of the day after having had only a few hurried moments for prayer and when you leave off your work in the evening, and mean then to read a little of the word of God, are you not too much worn out in body and mind to enjoy it, and do you not often fall asleep whilst reading the Scriptures or whilst on your knees in prayer?

The brother would allow it was so; he would allow that my advice was good but still I read in his countenance, even if he should not have actually said so,

“How should I get on if I were to carry out your advice?”

I longed, therefore, to have something to point the brother to, as a visible proof that our God and Father is the same faithful God as ever He was; as willing as ever to PROVE Himself to be the LIVING GOD, in our day as formerly, to all who put their trust in Him.

Again, sometimes I found children of God tried in mind by the prospect of old age, when they might be unable to work any longer, and therefore were harassed by the fear of having to go into the poor-house.

If in such a case I pointed out to them how their Heavenly Father has always helped those who put their trust in Him, they might not, perhaps, always say that times have changed; but yet it was evident enough that God was not looked upon by them as the LIVING God.

My spirit was oft times bowed down by this, and I longed to see something before the children of God whereby they

might see that He does not forsake, even in our day those who rely upon Him.

Another class of persons were brethren in business, who suffered in their soul and brought guilt on their consciences, by carrying on their business almost in the same way as unconverted persons do. The competition in trade, the bad times, the over-peopled country, were given as reasons why, if the business were carried on simply according to the word of God it could not be expected to do well.

Such a brother, perhaps, would express the wish that he might be differently situated; but very rarely did I see that there was a stand made for God, that there was the holy determination to trust in the living God, and to depend on Him, in order that a good conscience might be maintained.

To this class likewise I desired to show, by a visible proof, that God is unchangeably the same.

Then there was another class of persons, individuals who were in professions in which they could not continue with a good conscience, or persons who were in an unscriptural position with reference to spiritual things; but both classes feared, on account of the consequences, to give up the profession in which they could not abide with God, or to leave their position, lest they should be thrown out of employment.

My spirit longed to be instrumental in giving them not only instances from the word of God of His willingness and ability to help all those who rely upon Him, but to show them by proofs that He is the same in our day.

I well knew that the word of God ought to be enough, and it was, by grace, enough to me; but still, I considered that I ought to lend a helping hand to my brethren, if by any means, by this visible proof to the unchangeable faithfulness of the Lord I might strengthen their hands in God; for I remembered what a great blessing my own soul had received through the

Lord's dealings with His servant, A. H. Francké, who, in dependence upon the living God alone, established an immense orphan house, which I had seen many times with my own eyes.

I, therefore, judged myself bound to be the servant of the Church of God, in the particular point on which I had obtained mercy namely, in being able to take God by His word and to rely upon it.

All these exercises of my soul, which resulted from the fact that so many believers, with whom I became acquainted were harassed and distressed in mind, or brought guilt on their consciences, on account of not trusting in the Lord; were used by God to awaken in my heart the desire of setting before the church at large, and before the world, a proof that He has not in the least changed and this seemed to me best done by the establishing of an orphan house. It needed to be something which could be seen, even by the natural eye.

Now if I, a poor man simply by prayer and faith, obtained, without asking any individual, the means for establishing and carrying on an orphan house, there would be something which, with the Lord's blessing, might be instrumental in strengthening the faith of the children of God, besides being a testimony to the consciences of the unconverted of the reality of the things of God.

This, then, was the **primary reason** for establishing the orphan house.