

# The Fundamentals

*A Testimony to the Truth*

Volume 1

Compliments of  
Two Christian Laymen

TESTIMONY PUBLISHING COMPANY  
(Not Inc.)

808 La Salle Ave., Chicago, Ill., U. S. A.

P. 100

## CHAPTER V.

### THE PROOF OF THE LIVING GOD,

AS FOUND IN THE PRAYER LIFE OF GEORGE MÜLLER, OF BRISTOL.

BY REV. ARTHUR T. PIERSON, D. D.

In Psalm 68:4, we are bidden to “extol Him who rideth upon the heavens by His name, JAH, and to rejoice before Him;” and in the next verse, He is declared to be “a father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, in His holy habitation.”

The name, “Jah,” here only found, is not simply an abbreviation of “Jehovah;” but the *present tense* of the Hebrew verb *to be*; and expresses the idea that this Jehovah is the *Living, Present God*; and, as the heavens are always over our heads, He is always a present Helper, especially to those who, like the widow and the orphan, lack other providers and protectors.

George Müller, of Bristol, undertook to demonstrate to the unbelieving world that God is such a living, present God, and that He proves it by answering prayer; and that the test of this fact might be definite and conclusive, he undertook to gather, feed, house, clothe, and also to teach and train, all available orphans, who were legitimate children, but deprived of both parents by death and destitute.

#### SIXTY- FIVE YEARS OF PROOF.

This work, which he began in 1833, in a very small and humble way, by giving to a few children, gathered out of the streets, a bit of bread for breakfast, and then teaching them for about an hour and a half to read the Scriptures, he carried on for sixty-five years, with growing numbers until there were under his care, and in the orphan houses which he built, twenty-two hundred orphans with their helpers; and yet, during all

that time, Mr. Müller's *sole dependence was Jah, the Living, Present God*. He appealed to no man for help; and did not even allow any need to be known before it had been supplied, even his intimate co-workers being forbidden to mention any existing want, outside the walls of the institution. His aim and purpose were to effectually apply the test of prayer to the unseen God, in such a way as to leave no doubt that, in these very days in which we live it is perfectly safe to cut loose from every human dependence and cast ourselves in faith upon the promises of a faithful Jehovah. To make the demonstration more absolutely convincing, for some years he withheld even the annual report of the work from the public, although it covered only work *already done*, lest some should think such a report an indirect appeal for future aid.

A human life thus filled with the presence and power of God is one of God's choicest gifts to His church and to the world.

#### DEMONSTRATION AND ILLUSTRATION.

Things unseen and eternal are, to the average man, distant and indistinct, while what is seen and temporal is vivid and real. Practically, any object in nature that can be seen or felt is thus more actual to most men than the Living God. Every man who walks with God, and finds Him a present Help in every time of need, who puts His promises to the practical proof and verifies them in actual experience; every believer, who, with the key of faith, unlocks God's mysteries and with the key of prayer unlocks God's treasures, thus furnishes to the race demonstration and illustration of the fact that "He is, and is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

George Müller was such an argument and example—a man of like passions, and tempted in all points, as we are, but who believed God and was established by believing; who prayed earnestly that he might live a life and do a work, which should be a convincing proof that God hears prayer, and that

it is safe to trust Him at all times; and who furnished just such a witness as he desired. Like Enoch, he truly walked with God, and had abundant testimony borne to him that he pleased God. And, when on the tenth day of March, 1898, it was told us of George Müller, that "he was not," we knew that "God had taken him": it seemed more like a translation than like death.

#### THE MAN HIMSELF.

To those familiar with his long life story, or who intimately knew him and felt the power of personal contact, he was one of God's ripest saints, and himself a living proof that a life of faith is possible; that God may be known, communed with, found, and become a conscious companion in the daily life. He proved for himself and for all others who will receive his witness, that to those who are willing to take God at His word and to yield self to His will, He is "the same yesterday and today and forever;" that the days of divine intervention and deliverance are past only so far as the days of faith and obedience are past; that believing prayer works still the wonders of which our fathers told in the days of old.

All we can do in the limited space now at our disposal, is to present a brief summary of George Müller's work, the details of which are spread through the five volumes of his carefully written "Journal," and the facts of which have never been denied or doubted, being embodied in five massive stone buildings on Ashley Down, and incarnated in thousands of living orphans who have been, or still are, the beneficiaries upon the bounty of the Lord, as administered by this great intercessor.

#### HIS LIFE PURPOSE.

One sentence from Mr. Müller's pen marks the purpose which was the very pivot of his whole being: "I have joyfully dedicated my whole life to the object of exemplifying how much may be accomplished by prayer and faith." This

prepared both for the development of the character of him who had such singleness of aim and for the development of the work in which that aim found action. Mr. Müller's oldest friend, Robert C. Chapman, of Barnstaple, beautifully says that "when a man's chief business is to serve and please the Lord, all his circumstances becomes his servants;" a maxim verified in Mr. Müller's life work.

#### NO VISIBLE SUPPORT.

Mr. James Wright, Mr. Müller's son-in-law and successor, said, in reviewing the sixty-five years of work, "It is written (Job 26:7) 'He hangeth the earth upon *nothing*'—that is, no *visible* support. And so we exult in the fact that 'The Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad' hangs, as it has ever hung, since its commencement, 'upon nothing,' that is, upon no *visible* support. It hangs upon no human patron, upon no endowment or funded property, but solely upon the good pleasure of the blessed God."

Blessed lesson to learn: that to depend upon the invisible God is not to hang "upon nothing," though it be upon nothing *visible*. The power and permanence of the invisible forces that hold up the earth after sixty centuries of human history are sufficiently shown by the fact that this great globe still swings securely in space and is whirled through its vast orbit, and without variation of a second still moves with divine exactness in its appointed path. Mr. Müller therefore trusted the same invisible God to sustain with His unseen power all the work which faith suspended upon His truth and love and unfailing word of promise, though to the natural eye all these may seem as nothing.

#### SUMMARY OF WORK DONE.

In the comprehensive summary contained in the fifty-ninth report, remarkable growth is apparent during the sixty-four years since the outset of the work in 1834.

During the year ending May 26, 1898, the number of day schools was seven and of pupils 354; the number of children in attendance from the beginning 81,501. The number of home Sunday Schools, twelve, and of children in them 1,341; but, from the beginning, 32,944.

The number of Sunday Schools *aided* in England and Wales, twenty-five. The amount expended in connection with home schools, £736. 13s. 10d.; from the outset, £109,992. 19s. 10d.

The Bibles and parts thereof circulated, 15,411; from the beginning 1,989,266. Money expended for this purpose the past year £439; from the first, £41,090. 13s. 3d.

Missionary laborers aided, 115. Money expended £2,082. 9s. 6d.; from the outset, £261,859. 7s. 4d.

Circulation of books and tracts, 3,101,338; money spent £1,100. 1s. 3d.; and from the first, £47,188. 11s. 10d.

The number of orphans on Ashley Down 1,620, and from the first 10,024.

Money spent that year, £22,523. 13s. 1d., and from the beginning £988,829.

To carry conviction into action sometimes requires a costly sacrifice; but, whatever Mr. Müller's fidelity to conviction cost in one way, he had stupendous results of his life work to contemplate even while he lived.

#### GIVING WITH PRAYING.

Let any one look at these figures and facts, and remember that one poor man who had been solely dependent on the help of God and only in answer to prayer, could look back, over more than three score years and see how he had built five large orphan houses, and taken under his care over ten thousand orphans, expending for them within twelve thousand pounds of a round million! This same man had given aid to day schools and Sunday Schools, in Britain and other lands, where nearly one hundred and fifty thousand children have been

taught, at a cost of over one hundred and ten thousand pounds more. He had also circulated nearly two million Bibles and parts thereof, at cost of over forty thousand pounds; and over three million books and tracts, at a cost of nearly fifty thousand pounds more. Besides all this, he had spent over two hundred and sixty thousand pounds to aid missionary laborers in various lands. The sum total of the money thus expended during sixty years thus reached very nearly the astonishing aggregate of one and a half million of pounds sterling (\$7,500,000). Mr. Müller's own gifts to the service of the Lord found, only after his death, full record and recognition. In the annual reports, an entry recurring with strange frequency, suggested a giver that must have reached a very ripe age: "from a servant of the Lord Jesus, who, constrained by the love of Christ, seeks to lay up treasure in heaven." If that entry be carefully followed throughout and there be added the personal gifts made by Mr. Müller to various benevolent objects, the aggregate sum from this "servant" reaches, up to March 1, 1898, a *total of eighty-one thousand, four hundred and ninety pounds, eighteen shillings and eight pence*. After his death, it first became known that this "servant of the Lord Jesus" was no other than *George Müller* himself who thus donated, from money given to him or left to him for his own use by legacies, an amount equal to more than *one-fifteenth* of the entire sum expended from the beginning upon all five departments of the work (£1,448,959). This is a record of personal giving to which we know no parallel.

#### HIS INVESTMENTS.

Mr. Müller had received increasingly large sums from the Lord which he *invested* well and most profitably, so that for over sixty years he never lost a penny through a bad speculation! But his investments were not in lands, or banks, or railways, but in the *work of God*. He made "friends of the mammon of unrighteousness," and, when he failed, they re-



ceived him into everlasting habitations. He continued year after year to make provision for himself, his beloved wife and daughter only by laying up treasure in heaven. Such a giver had a right to exhort others to systematic beneficence. He gave as not one in a million gives—not a tithe, not any fixed proportion of annual income, but *all that was left after the simplest and most necessary supply of actual wants*. While most disciples regard themselves as doing their duty if, after they have given a portion to the Lord, they spend all the rest on themselves, God led George Müller to reverse this rule and reserve only the most frugal sum for personal needs that the entire remainder might be given to him that needeth. An utter *revolution* in our habits of giving would be necessary were such a rule adopted. Mr. Müller's own words are: "My aim never was, how much I could *obtain*, but rather how much I could *give*." Yet this was not done in the spirit of an ascetic, for he had no such spirit.

#### HIS STEWARDSHIP.

He kept continually before him *his stewardship* of God's property; and sought to make the most of the one brief life on earth and to use for the best and largest good the property held by him in trust. The things of God were deep realities, and, projecting every action and decision and motive into the light of the judgment seat of Christ, he asked himself how it would appear to him in the light of that tribunal. Thus he sought prayerfully and conscientiously so to live and labor, so to deny himself, and, by love, serve his Master, and his fellow-men that he should not be "ashamed before Him at His coming." But not in a spirit of *fear*; for if any man of his generation knew the perfect love that casts out fear it was he. He felt that God is love and love is of God. He saw that love manifested in the greatest of gifts—His only begotten Son; at Calvary he knew and believed the love that God hath to us; he received it into his own heart; it became an abiding presence



manifested in obedience and benevolence; and, subduing him more and more, it became perfected so as to expel all tormenting fear and impart a holy confidence and delight in God.

## FAVORITE TEXTS.

Among the texts which strongly impressed and moulded Mr. Müller's habits of giving was Luke 6:38: "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom." He believed this promise and he verified it. His testimony is, "I had *given*, and God had caused to be *given to me again*, and bountifully." Again he read, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." He says that he *believed* what he found in the word of God and by His grace sought to *act accordingly*, and thus again records that he was blessed abundantly and his peace and joy in the Holy Spirit increased more and more.

It will not be a surprise, therefore, that, as has been already noted, Mr. Müller's entire personal estate at his death, as sworn to, when the will was admitted to probate, was only £169. 9s. 4d., of which books, household furniture, etc., were reckoned at over 100 pounds, the only money in his possession being a trifle over sixty pounds, and even this only awaiting disbursement as God's steward.

## THE SECRET OF IT ALL.

To summarize Mr. Müller's service we must understand his great secret. Such a life and such a work are the result of one habit more than all else—daily and frequent communion with God. He was unwearied in supplications and intercessions. In every new need and crisis, the one resort was the *prayer of faith*. He first satisfied himself that he was in the way of duty, then he fixed his mind on the unchanging word of promise; then, in the boldness of a suppliant who comes to a throne of grace in the name of Jesus

Christ, and pleads the assurance of the immutable Promiser, he presented every petition. He was an unwearied intercessor. No delay discouraged him. This is seen particularly in the case of individuals for whose conversion or special guidance into the paths of full obedience he prayed. On his prayer list were the names of some for whom he had besought God daily by name, for from one to ten years before the answer was given. There were two parties, for whose reconciliation to God he prayed, day by day, *for over sixty years*, and who had not at the time of his death, turned unto God; but he said, "I have not a doubt that I shall meet them both in heaven; for my Heavenly Father would not lay upon my heart a burden of prayer for them for over three score years, if He had not concerning them purposes of mercy."

This is a sufficient example of his almost unparalleled perseverance and importunity in intercession. However long the delay, he held on, as with both hands clasping the very horns of the altar; and his childlike spirit reasoned simply but confidently that the very fact of his own spirit being so long drawn out in prayer for one object, and of the Lord's enabling him so to continue patiently and believingly to wait on Him for the blessing, was a promise and prophecy of the answer; and so he waited on, so assured of the ultimate result that he praised God in advance, as having already received that for which he asked.

One of the parties for whom for so many years he had unceasingly prayed, shortly after his departure, died in faith, having received the promises and embraced them and confessed Jesus as his Lord.

#### THE PRIVILEGE OF ALL.

Mr. Müller frequently in his Journal and reports warned his fellow disciples not to regard him as a *miracle worker*, or his experience as so exceptional as to have little application to the ordinary spheres of life and service. With patient

repetition he affirms that, in all essentials, such an experience is the privilege of all believers. God calls disciples to various forms of work, but all alike to the same *faith*. To say, therefore, "I am not called to build orphan houses, etc., and have no right to expect answers to my prayers as Mr. Müller did," is wrong and unbelieving. Every child of God is first to get into the sphere appointed of God, and therein to exercise full trust, and live by faith upon God's sure word of promise.

Throughout all the thousands of pages written by his pen, he teaches that this experience of God's faithfulness is both the reward of past faith and prayer and the preparation of the servant of God for larger work, more efficient service, and more convincing witness to his Lord.

#### SUPERNATURAL POWER.

No one can understand this work who does not see in it the *supernatural power of God*; without that, it is an enigma, defying solution; with that, all the mystery is an open mystery. He himself felt, from first to last, that this supernatural factor was the whole key to the work, and without that it would have been to himself a problem inexplicable. How pathetically he often compared himself and his work for God to the "burning bush in the wilderness," which always aflame and always threatened with apparent destruction, was not consumed, so that not a few turned aside, wondering to see this great sight. And why was it not burnt? Because Jehovah of Hosts who was in the bush dwelt in the man and in his work; or, as Wesley said with almost his last breath, "Best of all God is with us."

This simile of the burning bush is the more apt, when we consider the *rapid growth of the work*. At first so very small as to seem almost insignificant, and conducted in one small rented house, accommodating thirty orphans; then enlarged until other rented premises became necessary; then one, two, three, four and even five immense structures being

built until three hundred, seven hundred, eleven hundred and fifty, and finally two thousand and fifty inmates could find shelter within them; seldom has the world seen any such vast and rapid enlargement. Then look at the outlay! At first a trifling expenditure of perhaps four hundred pounds for the first year of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution, and of five hundred pounds for the first twelve months of the orphan work, and in the last year of Mr. Müller's life a grand total of over twenty-six thousand pounds for all the purposes of the work.

The cost of the houses built on Ashley Down might have staggered even a man of large capital, but this poor man only cried and the Lord helped him. The first house cost fifteen thousand pounds, the second over twenty-one thousand, the third over twenty-three thousand, and the fourth and fifth from fifty thousand to sixty thousand more—so that the total cost reached about one hundred and fifteen thousand pounds. Besides all this there was a yearly expenditure which rose as high as twenty-five thousand for the orphans alone, irrespective of those occasional outlays made needful for emergencies, such as improved sanitary precautions.

Here is a burning bush indeed, always in seeming danger of being consumed, yet still standing on Ashley Down, and still preserved because the same presence of Jehovah burns in it. Not a branch of this many sided work has utterly perished, while the whole work still challenges unbelievers to turn aside and see the great sight, and take off their shoes from their feet; for is not all ground holy where God abides and manifests Himself?

#### ABUNDANT IN LABORS.

In attempting a survey of this great life work we must not forget how much of it was wholly outside of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution; namely, all that service which Mr. Müller was permitted to render to the church of Christ

and the world at large, as preacher, pastor, witness for truth and author of books and tracts.

His preaching period covered the whole time from 1826 to 1898, the year of his departure—over seventy years; and with an average through the whole period of probably three sermons a week, or over ten thousand for his lifetime, which is probably a low estimate, for, during his missionary tours, which covered over two hundred thousand miles and were spread through seventeen years, he spoke on an average once a day, even at his already advanced age.

Probably those brought to the knowledge of Christ by his preaching would reach into the thousands, exclusive of orphans converted at Ashley Down. Then when we take into account the vast numbers addressed and impressed by his addresses given in all parts of the United Kingdom, on the continent of Europe, and in America, Asia and Australia, and the still vaster numbers who have read his narrative, his books and tracts, or who have in various other ways felt the quickening power of his example and life, we shall get some inadequate conception of the range and scope of the influence wielded by his tongue and pen, his labors and his life. Much of the best influence defies all tabulated statistics and evades all mathematical estimate—it is like the fragrance of the alabaster flask which fills all the house, but escapes our grosser senses of sight, hearing and touch. This part of George Müller's work belongs to a realm where we cannot penetrate. But God sees, knows and rewards it.

#### A DOUBTER'S DOUBTS.

Yet there are those who doubt or deny the sufficiency of even this proof, though so full and convincing. In a prominent daily newspaper, a correspondent, discussing the efficacy of prayer, thus referred to the experience of George Müller:

"I resided in that country during most of the seventies, when he was often described as the best-advertised man in

the Three Kingdoms. By a large number of religious people he was more spoken of than were Gladstone and Disraeli, and accordingly it is not miraculous that, although he said he had never once solicited aid on behalf of his charitable enterprise, money in a continuous stream flowed into his treasury. Even to non-religious persons in Great Britain his name was quite as familiar as that of Moody.

"Doubtless Müller was quite sincere in his convictions, but, by the very peculiarity of his method, his wants were advertised throughout the world most conspicuously, thus receiving the benefit of a far larger publicity than would otherwise have obtained, and it being known that he was praying for money, money, of course, came in to him.

"But were Müller's prayers answered invariably? According to a memoir by a personal friend, which has lately been published, this was far from having been the case, and he often felt aggrieved at what he considered a slight on the part of the Almighty, one of whose 'pets' (to quote Mr. Savage) he evidently imagined himself to be. For example, he prayed for two of his 'unconverted' friends for nearly fifty years without avail. There was absolutely nothing in his career which could not be accounted for as the result of purely natural causes.

"If it was possible to admit that what he looked upon as answers to his prayers were due to special interventions of Providence in his behalf (in other words, to favoritism), the question would inevitably arise, Why have the prayers of thousands of other Christian people, whose faith is quite as strong as Müller's, been disregarded? What are we to think of the little band of enthusiasts who left this country for Jerusalem a few months ago to see Christ 'appear in the clouds,' and who, at last accounts, were reported to be starving, with no immediate prospect of a return to their homes?"

"LECTOR."

"Lector" takes an easy way to evade the force of Mr. Müller's life witness. He contends that "the peculiarity" of his method, and the great "publicity" thus obtained, made him the "best advertised man in the Three Kingdoms," and so money poured in upon him from all quarters. Thus the



most conspicuous testimony to a prayer-hearing God, furnished by any one individual in the century, is dismissed with one sweep of the pen, affirming that "there was absolutely nothing in his career which could not be accounted for as the result of purely natural causes."

THE DOUBTER ANSWERED.

In answer I beg to submit twelve facts, all abundantly attested:

1. For sixty years and more he carried on a work for God, involving at times an average annual expenditure of \$125,000, and never once, privately or publicly, made any direct appeal for money.

2. Of all his large staff of helpers no one is ever allowed to mention to an outside party any want of the work, however pressing the emergency.

3. Thousands of times correspondents inquired as to the existing wants, but in no case did they receive information, even though at a crisis of need, the object being to prove that it is safe to trust in God alone.

4. Reports of the work, annually published, have no doubt largely prompted gifts; but even these cannot account for the remarkable way in which the work has been supported. In order to show that dependence was not placed on these reports, they were not issued in one case, for over two years, yet there was no cessation of supplies.

5. The coincidences between the need and the supply can be accounted for on no law of chance or awakened public interest. In thousands of cases the exact sum or supply required has been received at the exact time needed, and when donors could have had no knowledge of the facts.

6. The facts spread over too long a time and too broad a field of details to be accounted a wide advertising system. Mr. Müller recorded thousands of cases of prayer for definite blessings, with equally definite answers.



7. Many interpositions and deliverances were independent of any human gifts or aid, as when a break in the heating apparatus necessitated a new boiler. No sooner had the repairs begun than a cold north wind set in which risked the health and even the lives of over four hundred orphans living in the house, which there was no other mode of heating. Mr. Müller carried the case to the Father of the fatherless, and the wind shifted to the south and blew soft and warm till the repairs were complete.

8. Hundreds of cases occurred, in course of sixty-five years, when there was not food for the next meal, yet God only was appealed to, and never but twice was it needful to postpone a meal, and then only for half an hour! Even direct and systematic appeals to the public could not have brought supplies for hundreds of orphans and helpers with such regularity for all those years.

9. Again, the supplies always kept pace with growing wants. Mr. Müller began on a very small scale, and the orphan work was only the last of five departments of the work of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution. Can it be accounted for on any purely natural basis that the popular heart and purse, without even full information of the progress of the five-fold enterprise, responded regularly to its claims?

10. Again, many a crisis, absolutely unknown to contributors, was met successfully by adequate supplies, without which, at that very time, the work must have ceased. Once, when a single penny was lacking after all available funds were gathered, that one penny was found in the contribution box, and it was all there was.

11. Again, Mr. Müller found that his relations with God always determined the measure of his help from man; unless his fellowship with his Heavenly Father was closely maintained, all else went wrong. The more absolute his dependence on God, his separation unto Him and his faith in Him,

the more abundant and manifest His deliverances, so that, as he became more independent of man, he received the more from God through man.

12. Since his death in 1898, the work has been carried on by his successors and helpers on the same principles and with the same results. Though his strong personality is removed, the same God honors the same mode of doing His work, independent of the human instruments.

Mr. Müller's life purpose was to furnish to the world and the Church a simple example of the fact that a man can not only live, but work on a large scale, by faith in the living God; that he has only to trust and pray and obey and God will prove his own faithfulness. The reports were published with sole reference to the work already done, and because donors were entitled to such knowledge of the way in which their money was expended. He never used his reports as appeals for help in work yet to be begun or carried on. Nor was his personal presence or influence necessary, for he traveled for eighteen years in forty-two countries, mentioning his work only at urgent request; and during all this time the work went on just as when at home.

#### A CHALLENGE TO UNBELIEF.

One thing is obvious—there is a wide field still open for experiment. Let those who honestly believe that so great a life work may be entirely accounted for on a natural basis give us a practical proof. Let an institution be founded in some of our great cities similar to that in Bristol. Let there be no direct appeal made to anyone beyond the circulation of annual reports; or let there be the widest advertising of the fact that such a work is carried on, and that dependence is on public aid without direct solicitation. Of course, there must be no prayer, and no acknowledgment of God, lest someone think it to be religious and unscientific, and pious people should be moved to respond! Unbelievers outnumber Chris-

tian disciples five to one and the constituency is therefore very large. Let us have the experiment conducted, not on the faith basis, but in strictly scientific method! When we see an infidel carrying on such a work, building five great orphan houses and sustaining over 2,000 orphans from day to day without any direct appeal to human help, yet finding all supplies coming in without even a failure in sixty years, we shall be ready to reconsider our present conviction that it was because the living God heard and helped George Müller, that he who began with a capital of one shilling, took care of more than ten thousand orphans, aided hundreds of missionaries, scattered millions of Bibles and tracts, and in the course of his long life expended about \$7,500,000 for God and humanity; and then died with all his possessions valued at less than eight hundred dollars.