

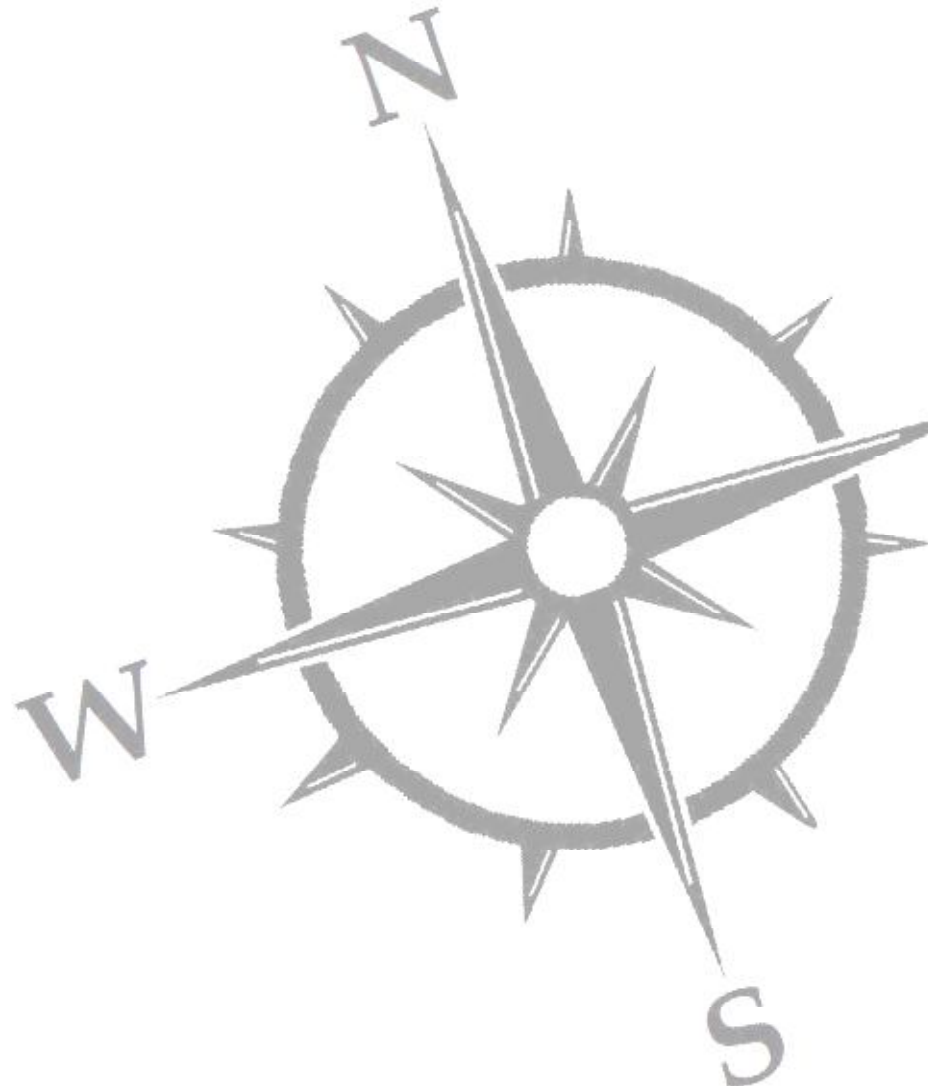
The Life of George Muller

(1805-1898)

Lesson: 1.5 – Guidance Missionary Spotlight Series

This story shows how God leads missionaries throughout their lives. God protects them and provides for them. God will lead His children, but it is our job to follow Him. God had prepared George to serve Him in England. George Muller now had to make some very important decisions and needed God to guide him with what was about to happen in his life.

"For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death." - Psalm 48:14







Who remembers where we left off last week?

(Read the last paragraph from last week's lesson to begin this lesson as a review).

I had been accepted to be a missionary in England, but there was just one problem that I had forgotten about. Prussia required everyone to serve in the Prussian army for one year before they could leave the country. If I served in the army for a year, I would miss my chance to go to England. I decided that I would pray about it and for God to find a way for me to get around that law somehow so that I could go to England.

Soon afterward, I became very sick and almost died, but God brought me through. God had not shown me a way around having to serve in the army, so about a month after being sick, I enrolled for my year of service with the army. The army doctor brought me in and examined me. He asked me a lot of questions and checked and rechecked me a couple of times. Then he

went out of the room. I could hear him whispering to someone behind the curtain. "What are they talking about?" I wondered. "Is something wrong with me?"

Finally, after what seemed like a long time, the doctor came back in with a frown on his face. "Mr. Muller, I'm sorry to have to tell you this," he said, "but I do not feel that you are healthy enough to be in the army. I have no choice but to excuse you from serving." I could not believe my ears. I had to fight to keep myself from smiling and laughing. I was free to travel or to do whatever it was that I wanted.

In March of 1829, I stood on board a ship headed for England. When I arrived, I met with the director of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews. He explained that for the next six months, I would be doing a lot of studying so that I could read and write in Hebrew, which is the language I would need to learn to be able to communicate with the Jews. From there, he said I would be sent to work with the Jews located either in Russia or in other places in Europe.

While studying Hebrew, I heard about some men who encouraged me. One man named Anthony Groves was a dentist. He had given up a successful career as a dentist in England to go to Persia as a missionary. What impressed me was that Anthony went without any support and simply trusted the Lord to provide for him. He sounded like someone I would have liked to meet, but sadly he had already left England for Persia. I hoped it wouldn't be long before I was heading out just like him.

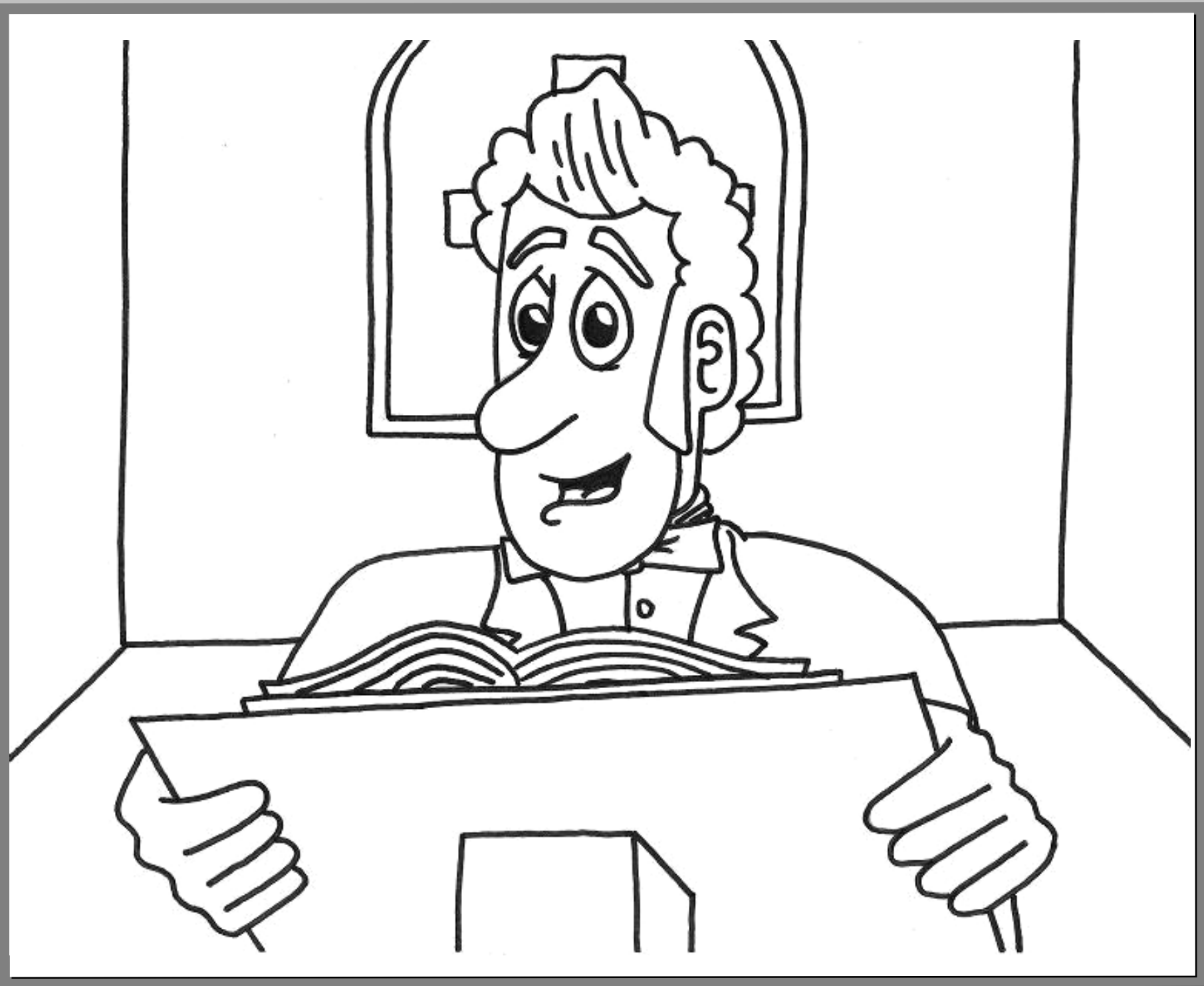
About two months after arriving in England, my stomach problems started up again. The doctor who visited me told me he was sure I was about to die. He told me to get out of the damp, smoggy air in London and to move somewhere close to the coast. I finally decided to go to a place called Teignmouth in southern England.

I met a man named Henry Craik while I was in Teignmouth. Henry's life had been much like mine. Both of us were the same age, we had both been saved during our college years, and we had both worked as tutors to get through college. I was amazed to learn that as a tutor, Henry had tutored Anthony Groves' children. We spent a lot of time talking about Anthony and the way he had become a missionary.

Henry and I began meeting and studying the Bible together. I had stayed in Teignmouth for ten days and was feeling much better and decided to get back to London.

Something else began to bother me. Why should I wait to go somewhere else to preach to the Jews when there were thousands of Jews all around me in London? As I passed out tracts to the Jews in London, I also saw how many non-Jewish people went past me who had probably never heard about Jesus either. I prayed and decided that I should write the missionary society and ask to be released from their program. They finally agreed, but told me that they were sad to lose me and that I had been the best student they had ever had.

Here I was, with nowhere to go, no missionary board supporting me, no job, and





only five pounds in my pocket. I had a smile on my face though, because I was sure this was what God wanted me to do.

Three months later, I stood in the pulpit of a church called the Ebenezer Chapel in Teignmouth. I had gone back to visit Henry, and he had arranged for me to speak in a couple of the churches in the area. Ebenezer Chapel had just asked me to become their pastor. I agreed but told them I must be free to go where God wants me to go.

I then began preaching in many churches around Teignmouth. There was one particular church that I liked to visit in a nearby town. In that town, there lived a woman named Mary Groves who ran a boarding house. Mary was not a giggly kind of girl, nor was she very pretty like Ermagarde had been. She had one of the biggest noses I had ever seen, but there was something about Mary that I grew to love. Mary was very smart, and we spent hours talking about missions. It took me several conversations to realize that she was the sister of Anthony Groves, the dentist/missionary I had admired so much. It

wasn't long before I asked Mary to marry me. On October 7, 1830, Mary and I were married.

As we loaded up the stagecoach to head back to Teignmouth, I noticed that two of the trunks were much heavier than the others. Mary told me that she had been given all the silver and china plates by her parents. A week later, Mary had my old house looking better than it had ever looked before. I returned late one evening from preaching. Mary met me at the door excited to show me the house. "I cleaned all day, and I arranged and rearranged everything until it was just right," she told me. I looked around the room, and my heart sank. My house was looking just like the rest of the houses around England...filled with trinkets.

"It needs to go...all of it," I said. "But why?" Mary asked. "I travel all around telling people to follow what the Bible says, and I come to a house filled with...things. Didn't Jesus say to sell all we have and give to the poor? Didn't your brother give up everything?" I asked.

"Yes, but that is different. He is a missionary," Mary said. "Don't forget, my dear, that I too am a missionary from Prussia to England," I replied.

The next day, when I came home, I saw that Mary had sold all of our china, silver, and tapestries.

Soon something else began to bother me. I was paid a nice salary of 55 pounds a year. Most of this money came from something that the people of England did called pew renting. The richest people in the church rented the most expensive pews in the

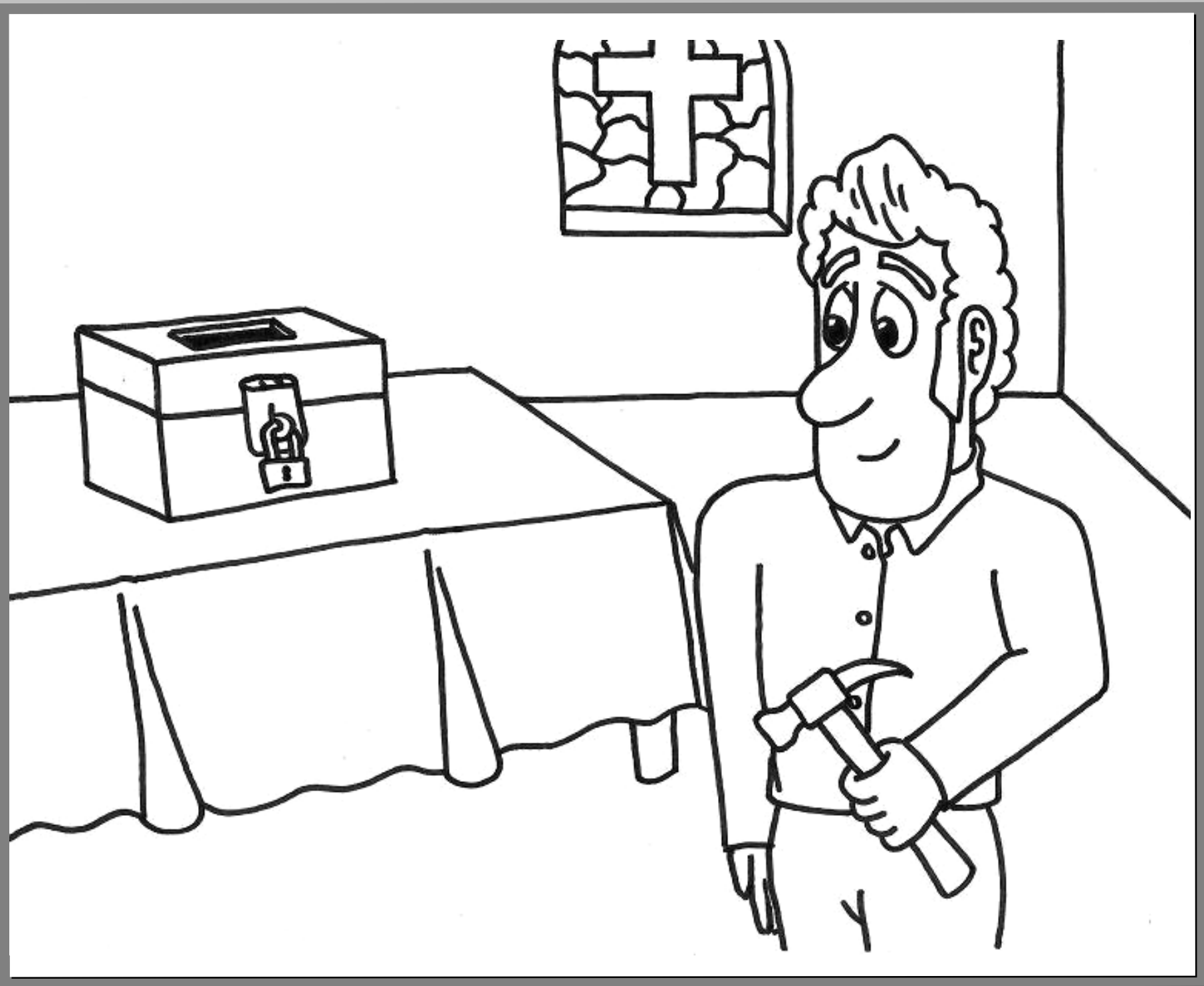
front and the poorer people had to sit more towards the back. I thought that the church should not be dividing people up by how much money they had. I remembered how the book of James told us not to favor the rich because of their money. I told Mary about it as we went for a walk. "I think the congregation should give us money as God shows them to, not because they are buying the best seats in the house." Again, my wonderful wife was nervous about my plans, but she was willing to trust God to provide for us.

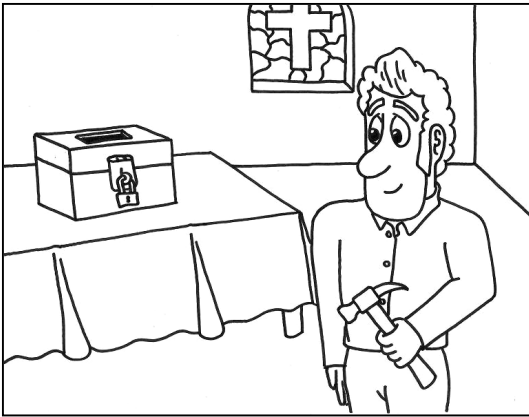
The next night, Mary and I went for a walk, and we stopped by the church on our way home. I pulled a small wooden box out of the bag that I was carrying, and we nailed it in place. I also put a little sign by the box that told the people that we wanted them to give as the Lord showed them, and that we would trust God to supply our needs.

Then Mary and I knelt by the back pew and prayed. We asked God to take care of us and to give us faith to keep up with the new plan that we had come up with.

As we walked home, I suddenly smiled. I had felt just like this years before when had I told my dad that I wouldn't take money from him for school anymore. Once again, I was free. I was free to trust God for all of my needs and not man.

I soon saw that this was not going to be as easy as I thought. 1831 was kind of a tough year for us. Some of the congregation continued to put the same amount of money in the box that they had always given before, but others stopped giving altogether since it wasn't buying them anything anymore.





There were many times we were tempted to share our financial needs with the church or to ask the congregation for some money, but God always saw us through.

One time, we were down to our last couple of coins for the week. The next day was the day when the deacon would open the box for us. I was very tempted to ask him to open the box early for me. Instead, I decided to pray and ask God to provide for us. I finished up at the church, and I walked home. When I got home, I was going through a stack of letters on the table. One letter was from a church member who had sent us a little something extra in case we needed it. It was just enough to get us through until the following day.

Another night, as Mary and I sat down to dinner, we again had no money left and no food in the cupboards. We decided to bow our heads and pray and thank the Lord for what He would provide. Right as we said "Amen" there was a knock at the door. A friend from a nearby town just happened to have sent us a ham.

Another time there was a knock at the

door and a stranger was on the doorstep. He handed my wife a freshly baked loaf of bread and then walked away.

Time and time again the Lord provided. Sometimes it would be church members who dropped by to give food or money. Other times it would come from total strangers. Sometimes letters would arrive in the mail with money in them, but each time, just when it was needed the most, God always provided exactly what we needed.

Often, while I was away preaching, the churches I was preaching at offered to pay me. I would tell them that I was not there for money but to share God's Word with them. The people would often find clever ways to hide some money in my Bible or my wife's purse when we weren't looking.

By the end of that year, the Lord had taught us many things. First, He would provide for us. We never missed a single meal during that whole year. Secondly, we learned to give away any extra money that God had given us to help others around us.

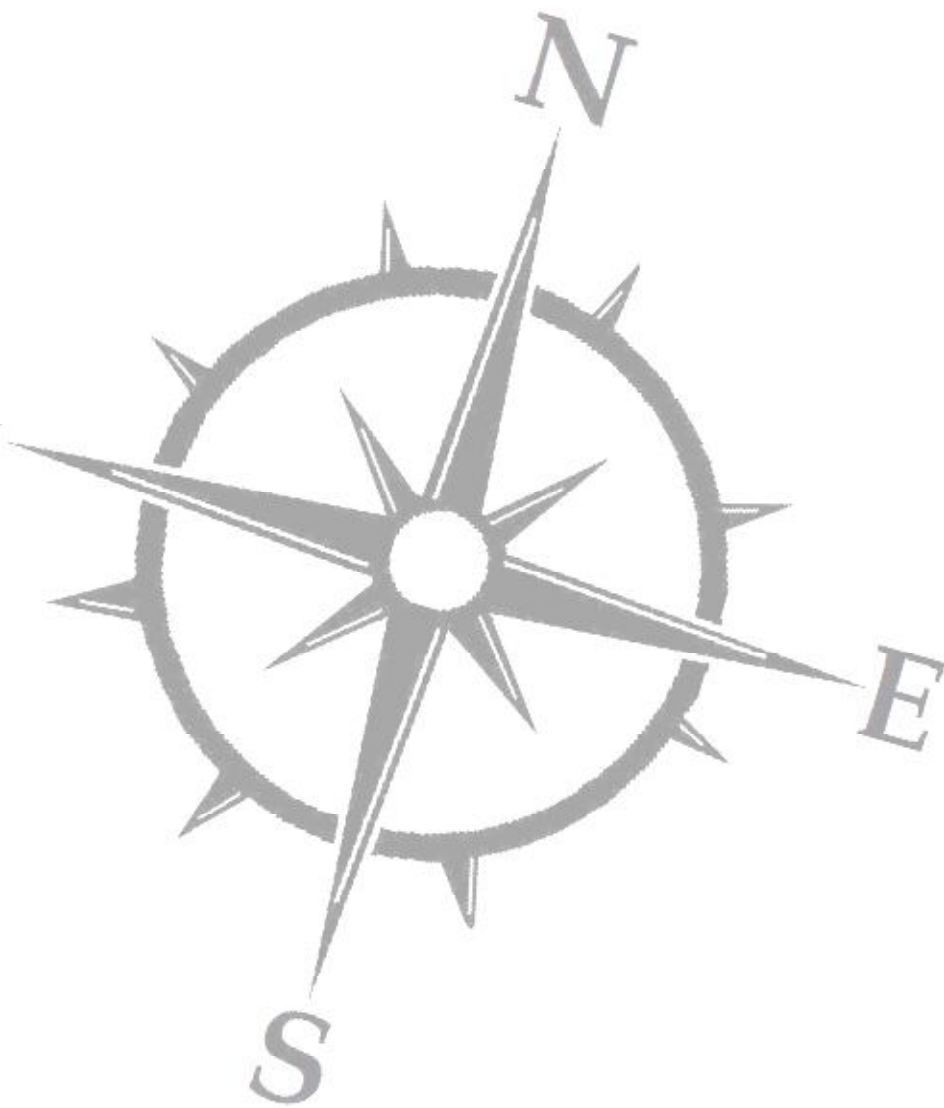
I had come to Teignmouth a little over a year before with no job, no money, and only one friend. Now I was the pastor of a church. Our church had grown from eighteen people when I first came, to now having over fifty people. God had given me a wife, and we were going to have a baby soon. God had taught me that He would provide all the money we needed.

Yes, everything was going great in Teignmouth...until one day in 1832 when I came home and found a letter addressed to me sitting on the table. I opened it not knowing that everything was about to

change.

What do think was in that letter? Would things be better or worse? To find out, come back next time.

*(For additional information, discussion questions, and materials on this lesson please refer to lesson 1.5 on **page 136** in your England Expedition - Leader's Guide).*



References

For further reading or to obtain more information on this portion of the life of this missionary, please consult the following sources from which we obtained our information:

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