

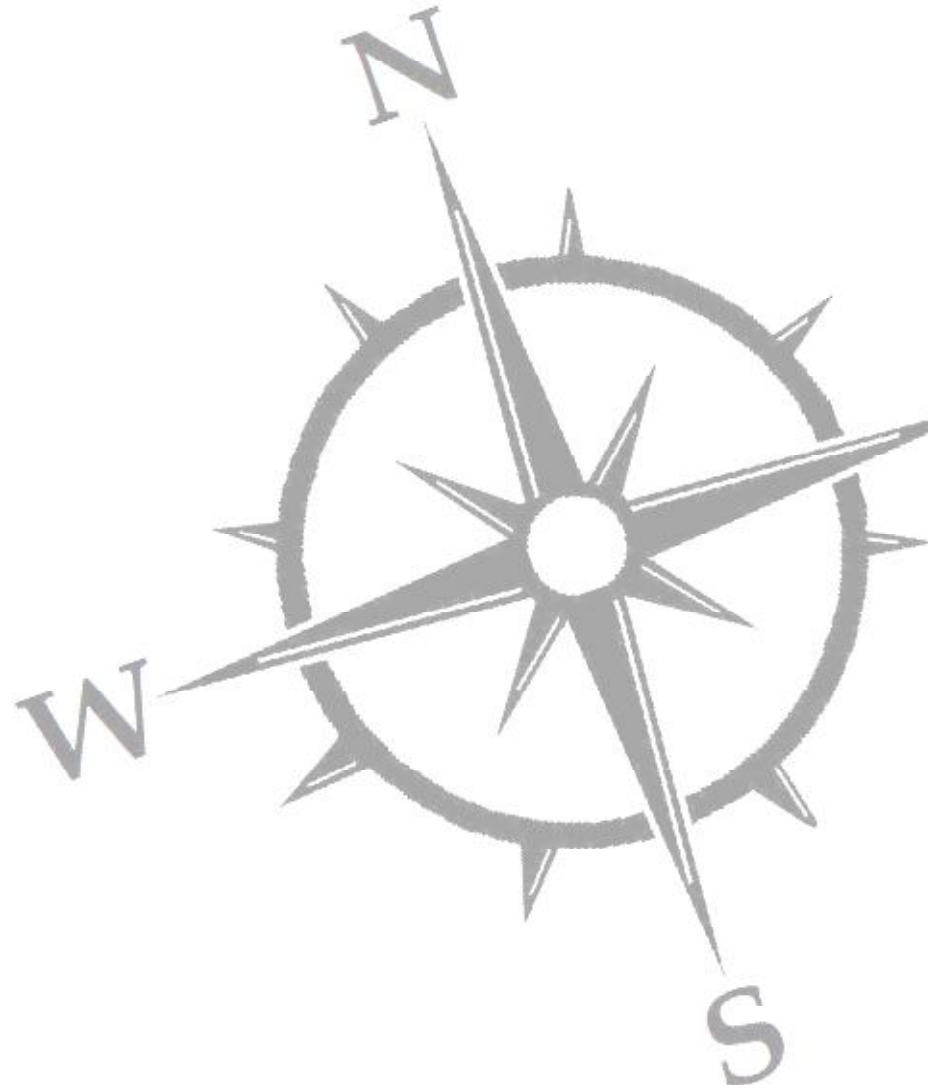
The Life of George Muller

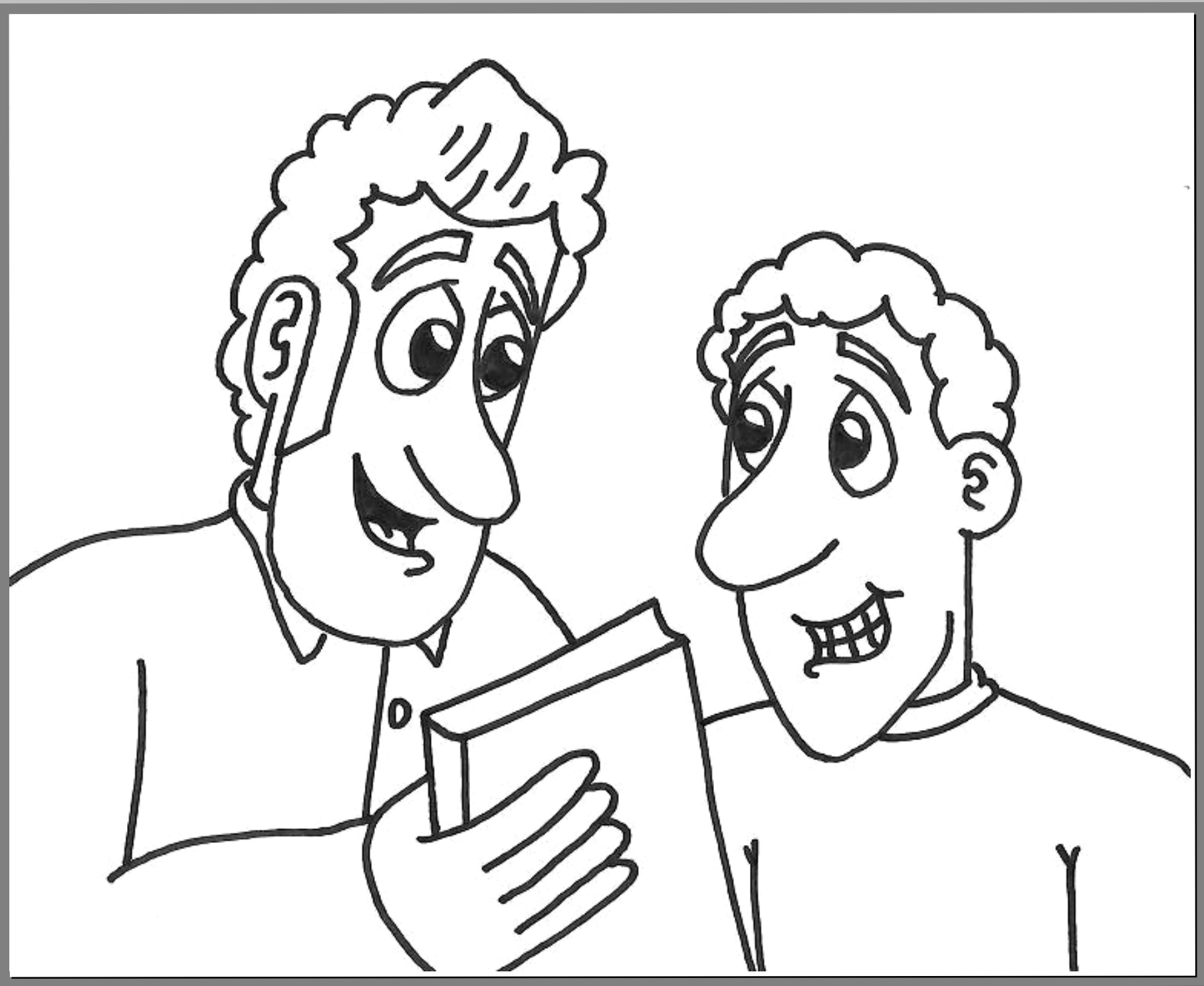
(1805-1898)

Lesson: 1.10 – Finishing Missionary Spotlight Series

This story reminds us that even if we start out our Christian life well, it is very important that we finish well. We must be faithful in serving the Lord throughout our whole life. George Muller had served the Lord all of his life, but finishing the race is just as important as running hard the rest of the race.

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” - 2 Timothy 4:7







Who remembers where we left off last week?

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

"Mary, you don't look well," I said to my wife as she came downstairs. Mary admitted that she felt very dizzy that morning and decided to go back to bed. I knew something was wrong. In the twenty-one years that the orphanages at Ashley Downs had been opened, my wife had never spent a day sick in bed. I called the doctor. An hour later, the doctor told me that Mary was very sick with something called Rheumatic fever. He gave her some medicine to keep her comfortable but said that it would not make her better. The following day, February 6, 1870, Mary passed away. Thousands of people came to her funeral. Afterward, thousands of letters poured in from adults who had lived at the orphanage as children. I was very sad to lose my wife, but all these letters of how much Mary had meant to

others were an encouragement to me. Mary and I had been married for thirty-nine years.

Number Five Orphan House had only been open for one week when all of this occurred. Before she passed away, Mary and I had talked many times about who would take over for me. I was now sixty-five years old and should probably plan for who would follow after me. Mary and I had agreed that Jim Wright would be the best choice. I had known Jim for 25 years and already had him running the Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad. It took some convincing, but Jim and his wife Annie finally agreed. But right after they agreed, Annie got very sick and passed away. Thankfully though, my grown-up daughter Lydia stepped in and took over for many of the things Mary used to do. Surprisingly, Lydia and Jim fell in love and were later married.

Seeing how happy Lydia was, I decided soon after that I should get married again too. I had known a lady named Susannah Sanger for about 25 years since she had started coming to the church. Susannah was a lot like Mary had been. So in November 1871, Susannah and I were married.

With Jim and Lydia now running things, I decided now would be a good time to begin preaching a bit. I had been asked to speak in many places but had never had time because of all the needs of running the orphanage. In the spring of 1875, Susannah and I began a short preaching tour around England. I was able to preach for Charles Spurgeon in the famous Metropolitan Tabernacle and several other churches

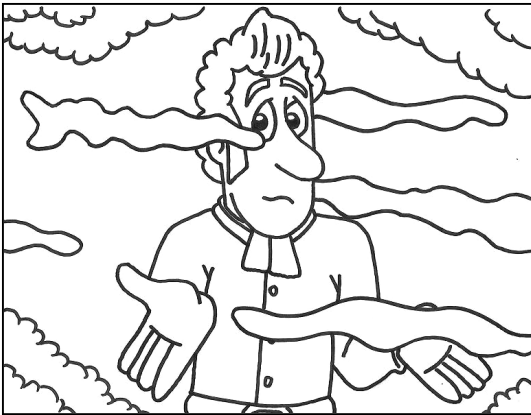
throughout England. Everywhere I went people wanted to know if it was true about me never asking anyone for help, but just letting God provide. I loved to tell the stories over and over again.

Things went so well that after we got back, we went on another tour to Scotland. We then went on a third preaching tour to many other parts of Europe. Many large crowds gathered to hear about what God had done in Bristol. In Switzerland, a crowd of 2,000 people came to listen.

In the Spring of 1877, I found myself back at the University of Halle. I had been a student here 52 years before. It was great to see the school again and Franke's Orphanage still across the street. Many memories came back of how I had wasted some much time in town, about the time I went with Beta to the Bible meeting, and how Dr. Tholuck had encouraged me to go to England as a missionary.

When Susannah and I got back home to Bristol, there was a letter there inviting me to come to North America to speak. In August, we boarded the *Sardinian* heading to Quebec, Canada. I took every chance I could to give the folks on board Bible tracts and talk to them about the gospel. They did not seem to listen until one night off the coast of Newfoundland. A thick fog had settled, making the ship have to move very slowly to avoid crashing into the rocky coastline. This slow pace was going to make me miss my first stop on my preaching tour. I found the Captain and told him that I needed to be in Quebec by Saturday afternoon. The Captain laughed. "That's not possible Mr. Muller!





Whoever is waiting for you will just have to understand that there was nothing that I could do about this fog."

"If you cannot find a way to get me there on time, I'll have to ask God to do it. Come on down to my cabin with me and we'll pray together," I said. "What's the point of praying Mr. Muller? Take a look over the side here. The fog is so thick I can't even see the front of the ship," the captain argued. "I don't need to look. You see my eye is not on the weather, but on the One who controls the weather," I said. We went below and knelt in my cabin. I prayed and asked God to do the impossible and lift the fog so that we could make it to Quebec in time. When I was done, the captain started to pray, but I could tell he didn't want to. I put my hand on his shoulder and told him that there was no need for him to pray. He didn't believe that God could lift the fog and I believed that God already had. The captain walked over to my cabin door and opened it. He turned around with his face white as a ghost. "The fog is gone...just like you prayed," he said in a whisper.

We made it on time and our tour in America was wonderful. I spoke at D.L. Moody's church in Chicago. In January of 1878, I also got the chance to visit President Hayes and his wife. That same year I met up with a widow whom I had met over 50 years before. She had been the first orphan who had come to our orphanage on Wilson Street.

Over the next several years, Susannah and I went on several more tours all over the world to speak and share what God had done. We went to many places like New Zealand, China, Italy, Hong Kong, and Australia. In New Zealand, we met up with a wonderful pastor who was known throughout New Zealand. His name was William Ready. Yes, this was the same William Ready that had left out orphanage all those years before to become a flour miller.

While we were on a train in New Zealand, a man sitting across from us read from his newspaper "The Reverend George Muller has come to New Zealand to share all about how God listens and answers prayer." The man continued "I would give anything to meet and talk with this man." I smiled and told the man, "You are looking right at him. I am George Muller." For the next several hours we talked with all the people on the train about what God was doing and had done in Bristol.

Several months later, while Susannah and I were on another tour in India, we got some sad news that my daughter Lydia had passed away. It was a sad time and we hurried home to be with Jim and to help him with the orphanages.

Susannah and I later would go on two

more preaching tours. However, by 1892, when I was 88 years old, I could see that I needed to slow down a little bit. "How many ninety-year-olds do you know who are preaching every Sunday, receiving hundreds of visitors, and writing reports?" Susannah would ask me. The truth was I did not know any, but God had blessed me. I felt healthier now than I had when I was half my age.

A couple of years later, in 1894, Susannah passed away suddenly. We had been married for twenty-three years. Again, I was very sad to have lost another wife.

Since I now lived alone, I decided to sell the house that I had lived in for over sixty years and move into one of the rooms in the orphanage at Number Three Orphan House. I loved to be around the children and I think they enjoyed having me around. I would walk through the gardens around the orphanages, talk with the children, and tell them stories about the orphanage. From time to time, adults would come back to visit who had been orphans there long ago. Some of them even brought their children and grandchildren back to see Ashley Downs.

In the summer of 1897, Queen Victoria celebrated her Diamond Jubilee, meaning that she had reigned in England for 50 years! It was weird to think that she had not even been queen when we opened our first orphan house on Wilson Street over sixty years before. I remembered taking Mary, Lydia, and some of the orphans to the parade that day to celebrate her becoming queen.

Today is March 9, 1898. I told Jim Wright this afternoon that I had some trouble





getting dressed this morning. But I guess that is probably expected for a man who is 92 years old. Jim said that he would find someone to help me right away. I just shook my head and told Jim "After tomorrow, Jim...send me a helper after tomorrow."

(Summary of the life of George Muller)

Tomorrow never came for George Muller. He passed away in his sleep that night in 1898 at 92 years old. His funeral was the biggest funeral Bristol had ever seen. Businesses closed and thousands of people lined the streets to catch one last glimpse of George's casket as it passed through the streets from Ashley Downs to the cemetery to be buried next to his two wives.

Bristol had lost a great pastor and thousands of orphans lost the only father they had ever known. George had taught the world that they could trust God alone to provide for every need that they might have.

God had taken a greedy selfish boy who stole and cheated to get what he wanted and turned him into a man who relied on God to

meet all of his needs.

George Muller had started an orphanage in Bristol over sixty years before with only fifty cents in his pocket. Since that time, God had allowed over eight million dollars to pass through George's hands. His Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad had provided education to over 122,000 children in its schools. Over one million Bibles and New Testaments had been given away for free and thousands of dollars had been given away to support missions and missionaries around the world.

One particular mission work that George gave to was the China Inland Mission, founded by Hudson Taylor, who had become a good friend of George's. During one very difficult time in China, George sent enough money to support all the missionaries in the China Inland Mission!

George's orphanages had cared for over 10,000 orphans during his lifetime. It was said that at least 3,000 of those orphans accepted Jesus as their Savior while they were in the orphanage.

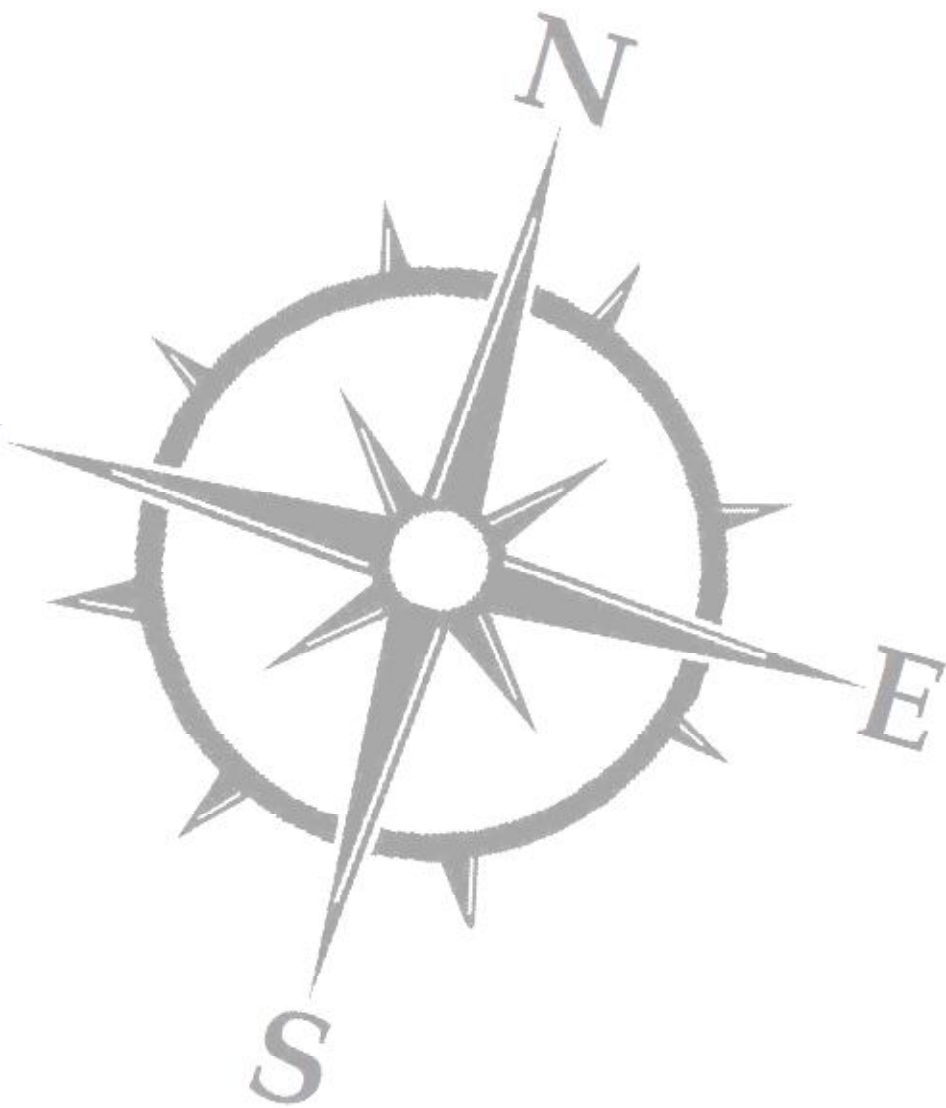
George had traveled over 200,000 miles around the world and preached to over 3 million people telling them all that they too could trust God to provide for their needs.

George had read through his Bible over 200 times by the end of his life and saw over 50,000 specific answers to prayer....requests that he told no one else about...he told them to God alone.

George Muller's life can be summed up in his own words: "Be assured, if you walk with Him and look to Him, and expect help from Him, He will never fail you."

Would you be willing for God to use you to do great and wonderful things like He used George Muller?

*(For additional information, discussion questions, and materials on this lesson please refer to lesson 1.10 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:

Benge, Janet and Geoff. *George Muller: The Guardian of Bristol's Orphans*. YWAM publishing, 1999

Langmead, Clive. (n.d.) *Robber of the Cruel Streets: The Prayerful Life of George Müller of Bristol*. Retrieved from <http://www.christianity.com/church/church-history/timeline/1801-1900/george-m%C3%BCller-god-alone-our-patron-11630344.html>

Lawson, J. Gilcrest. (1911) George Muller. *Deeper Experiences of Famous Christians*. Retrieved from <http://www.wholesomewords.org/biography/bmuller2.html>

N.A. (1895) *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller written by Himself*. . Retrieved from <http://www.wholesomewords.org/pdf/muellerNarrative.pdf>

Pierson, Arthur T. (1899) *George Muller of Bristol: And His Witness to a Prayer-Hearing God*. Retrieved from http://www.biblebelievers.com/george_muller/

Reese, Ed. (n.d.) The Life and Ministry of George Muller. *The Christian Hall of Fame Series*. Retrieved from <http://www.truthfulwords.org/biography/muller.txt>

Sims, A. (1939) *An Hour With George Müller: the Man of Faith to Whom God Gave Millions*. Retrieved from <http://www.wholesomewords.org/biography/bmuller8.html>

