
4

NEW STEPS AND STAGES OF PREPARATION

I returned to Halle, and now prepared with earnestness for the work of the Lord. I set before me the sufferings which might await me. I counted the cost. And he, who once so fully served Satan, was now willing, constrained by the love of Christ, rather to suffer affliction for the, sake of Jesus, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. I also prayed with a degree of earnestness concerning my future work.

One day, at the end of October, the above-mentioned brother, Hermann Ball, missionary to the Jews, attended the Lord's day evening meeting in my room, on his way through Halle, and stated that he feared, on account of his health, he should be obliged to give up labouring among the Jews. When I heard this, I felt a peculiar desire to fill up his place. About this very time also I became exceedingly fond of the Hebrew language, which I had cared about very little up to that time, and which I had merely studied now and then, from a sense of duty. But now I studied it, for many weeks, with the greatest eagerness and delight. Whilst I thus from time to time felt a desire to fill up Brother Ball's place as a missionary to the Jews, (about which, however, I did not seriously think, because Dr. Tholuck daily expected a letter from London, finally to settle the particulars respecting my going to Bucharest); and whilst I thus greatly delighted in the study of Hebrew: I called in the evening of Nov. 17th on Dr. Tholuck. In the course of conversation he asked me, whether I had ever had a desire to be a missionary to the Jews, as I might be connected with the London Missionary Society, for promoting Christianity among them, for which he was an agent. I was struck with the question, and told him what had passed in my mind, but added that it was not proper to think any thing about that, as I was going to Bucharest; to which he agreed...

Soon after my arrival in England, I heard one of the brethren in the seminary speak about a Mr. Groves, a dentist in Exeter, who, for the Lord's sake, had given up his profession, which brought him in about fifteen hundred pounds a year, and who intended to go as a missionary to Persia, with his wife and children, simply trusting in the Lord for temporal supplies. This made such an impression on me, and delighted me so, that I not only marked it down in my journal, but also wrote about it to my German friends...

Müller, George. A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller. Vol. 1. London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1860. Print.

Convinced that the Lord had chosen him for service, Müller was on the lookout for where the Lord might have him go. In 1827 Müller heard that the Continental Society of Britain was seeking a minister to go to Bucharest. Feeling led in this direction Müller set about preparing for this field. However, the door to Bucharest was quickly closed. War was raging in Bucharest between the Russians and the Turks and the mission to that country was put on hold indefinitely. Was this simply a bad coincidence or part of the Master's plan? Can you think of any times in your life where doors have been open or closed to you due to some major event that seems completely unrelated to you?

The door to Bucharest being closed, Müller could have simply given up and concluded that the Lord had not chosen him for ministerial work, but he did not. Convinced that the Lord had a calling for him, Müller continued to be open to where the Lord might lead. Again an opportunity presented itself, this time through the London Missionary Society. The LMS was looking for someone to be a missionary to the Jews and learning that Müller was available, they invited him to come to London to prepare for that work. It seemed a door was opening, but there was a significant obstacle, Prussian males were required to serve in the military and Müller had not yet done his time. No passport would be granted to go to London until this military service had been completed. Have there been any major obstacles that the Lord has placed in your life that had to be overcome?

This obstacle of military service was eventually removed by Müller's being found physically unfit for the rigors of military life. How has God removed obstacles in your life? Did he remove them in the way you expected or wanted?

All hindrances being removed, Müller left for London early in 1829. While in London he gave himself wholeheartedly to preparing for the work that he believed the Lord had called him to, spending upwards of 12 hours

On December 24th I went to the Church Missionary Institution at Islington, in the hope of benefiting the students there, if it were the Lord's will. I returned very happy, as I almost invariably was at that time, and went to bed full of joy. Next morning, (being that of Christmas day), I awoke in a very different state of heart from what I had experienced for many weeks past. I had no enjoyment, and felt cold and lifeless in prayer. At our usual morning meeting, however, one of the brethren exhorted me to continue to pray, saying, that the Lord surely would again smile on me, though now for a season, for wise purposes, he seemed to have withdrawn himself. I did so. At the Lord's table, in the morning, a measure of enjoyment returned. Afterwards I dined in a family, in company with the brother just referred to. My former enjoyment gradually returned. Towards evening the Lord gave me an opportunity of speaking about his return, and I had great enjoyment in doing so. At eight o'clock I was asked to expound at family-prayer, and was much assisted by the Lord. About half an hour after the exposition was over, I was requested to come out of the room to see one of the servants, and the mother of another of the servants, who had been present at family-prayer. I found them in tears, and both deeply impressed and under concern about their souls. I then went home, at least as happy as on the previous evening. I have related this circumstance, because I am aware that it is a common temptation of Satan to make us give up the reading of the Word and prayer when our enjoyment is gone; as if it were of no use to read the Scriptures when we do not enjoy them, and as if it were of no use to pray when we have no spirit of prayer; whilst the truth is, in order to enjoy the Word, we ought to continue to read it, and the way to obtain a spirit of prayer is, to continue praying; for the less we read the word of God, the less we desire to read it, and the less we pray, the less we desire to pray.

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NEXT LESSON

THE PULPIT AND THE PASTORATE

After I had preached about three weeks at Exmouth and its neighbourhood, I went to Teignmouth, with the intention of staying there ten days, to preach the Word among the brethren with whom I had become acquainted during the previous summer, and thus to tell them of the Lord's goodness to me. One of the brethren said almost immediately on my arrival at Teignmouth, I wish you would become our minister, as the present one is going to leave us.

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