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THE GROWTH OF GOD'S OWN PLANT

November 1. To-day, our means being completely gone, we had them supplied in the following manner:—some time since some silver spoons were given to us, which we never used, from the consideration, that for servants of Christ it was better, for the sake of example, to use cheaper ones, and for that reason we had sold our plate at Teignmouth. Yet up to this day those spoons remained unsold. But now, as we wanted money, we disposed of them, considering that the kind giver would not be displeased at our doing so to supply our need.

November 4. I spent the greater part of the morning in reading the word and in prayer, and asked also for our daily bread, for we have scarcely any money left.— We obtained to-day two large school-rooms, which we much needed. Thus the Lord graciously helps us concerning the Institution, and gives us faith to go forward in the work, enlarging the field more and more, (though we have but little money) yet so that we do not contract debts.

November 5. I spent almost the whole of the day in prayer and reading the Word. I prayed also again for the supply of our own temporal wants, but the Lord has not as yet appeared. Still my eyes are up to him.

November 8. Saturday. The Lord has graciously again supplied our temporal wants during this week, though at the commencement of it we had but little left. I have prayed much this week for money, more than any other week, as far as I remember, since we have been in Bristol. The Lord has not answered our prayers by causing means to be sent in the way of a gift, but has supplied us through our selling what we did not need, or by our being paid what was owed to us.

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

Having decided to follow Francké's example and begin an orphan house in Bristol, Müller and Craik announced the plan to the brethren on December 9th. Pierson comments that, "*He was taking a step not to be retraced without both much humiliation to himself and reproach to his Master.*" In what ways would this new venture result in "*much humiliation to himself and reproach to his Master*" if it did not succeed?

What were the three chief reasons for the establishment of an orphan house?

How do these reasons related to the purposes of the Scriptural Knowledge Institute?

Having detailed his prayers to God for resources, a house, and workers for the orphan house, what was the one thing Müller forgot to pray for?

Why had he not prayed for this need?

Are there things in your life that you have not prayed for because you simply assumed that God would provide them? Ought we not pray for these things as well as others?

With the creation of the orphan houses, how did the other ministries of the Scriptural Knowledge Institute fare?

Why was Müller initially tempted to not circulate his narrative?

In 1837, Müller came to the conviction that two things were necessary for him to have continued and increasing fruitfulness. What were they?

Why would most people consider the first conviction above to be counterintuitive with regards to a fruitful ministry? Why is it so important?

How does the second relate to the first?

It was also during this period that Müller was again afflicted with an infirmity in the flesh. Having often struggle with the weakness of the flesh, he had concluded that, “*whenever undue carefulness is expended on the body, it is very hard to avoid undue carelessness as to the soul; and that it is therefore much safer comparatively to disregard the body, that one may give himself wholly to the culture of his spiritual health and the care of the Lord’s work.*” Is this wise advice? How does it compare to the present-day mindset?

In connection with this, Pierson notes that, “*There are not a few, even among God’s saints, whose bodily weaknesses and distresses so engross them that their sole business seems to be to nurse the body, keep it alive and promote its comfort. As Dr. Watts would have said, this is living ‘at a poor dying rate.’*” Who is Dr. Watts? What is meant by living “*at a poor dying rate*”?

What purpose might God have had in so afflicted George Müller at the outset of his great life’s work?

Calling attention to three entries in Müller’s journal, Pierson notes three characteristics of a man who will surely grow in grace. What are those three characteristics?

As Müller practiced these characteristics and others he became more and more consumed with a desire for God to be glorified. What can we do to make God more essentially glorious?

What then is meant by glorifying or bringing glory to God?

The following is an exert from Müller's journal around March of 1835 for encouragement to persevere in humbly glorifying God before unbelievers:

During my stay at Basle I attended one day a meeting, at which a venerable pious clergyman expounded the Greek New Testament to several brethren, who purposed to give themselves to missionary service. The passage to which this dear aged brother had then come, in the original of the New Testament, was 1 Peter 3:1, 2, which, in our English translation, reads thus: "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear." After this aged brother had expounded the passage, he related a circumstance which had occurred in his own days, and under his own eyes, at Basle, which has appeared to me so encouraging for those children of God who have unbelieving relatives, and especially for sisters in the Lord who have unbelieving husbands; and which, at the same time, is such a beautiful illustration of 1 Peter 3:1.; that I judge it desirable to insert the narrative of this fact here. I will do so as exactly as I remember it. There lived at Basle an opulent citizen, whose wife was a believer, but he himself feared not the Lord. His practice was, to spend his evenings in a wine-house, where he would often tarry till eleven, twelve, or even one o'clock. On such occasions his wife always used to send her servants to bed, and sat up herself, to await the return of her husband. When at last he came, she used to receive him most kindly, never reproach him in the least, either at the time or afterwards, nor complain at all on account of his late hours, by which she was kept from seasonable rest. Moreover, if it should be needful to assist him in undressing himself, when he had drunk to excess, she would do this also in a very kind and meek way. Thus it went on for a long time. One evening this gentleman was again, as usual, in a wine-house, and having tarried there with his merry companions till midnight, he said to them: "I bet, that if we go to my house, we shall find my wife sitting up and waiting for me, and she herself will come to the door and receive us very kindly; and if I ask her to prepare us a supper, she will do it at once without the least murmur, or unkind expression,

or look." His companions in sin did not believe his statement. At last, however, after some more conversation about this strange statement, (as it appeared to them,) it was agreed that they would all go, to see this kind wife. Accordingly they went, and, after they had knocked, found the door immediately opened by the lady herself, and they were all courteously and kindly received by her. The party having entered, the master of the house asked his wife to prepare supper for them, which she, in the meekest way, at once agreed to do; and after awhile, supper was served by herself, without the least sign of dissatisfaction, or murmur, or complaint. Having now prepared all for the company, she retired from the party to her room. When she had left the party, one of the gentlemen said: "What a wicked and cruel man you are, thus to torment so kind a wife." He then took his hat and stick, and, without touching a morsel of the supper, went away. Another made a similar remark, and left, without touching the supper. Thus one after another left, till they were all gone, without tasting the supper. The master of the house was now left alone, and the Spirit of God brought before him all his dreadful wickedness, and especially his great sins towards his wife; and the party had not left the house half an hour, before he went to his wife's room, requesting her to pray for him, told her that he felt himself a great sinner, and asked her forgiveness for all his behaviour towards her. From that time he became a disciple of the Lord Jesus.

Observe here, dear reader, the following points in particular, which I affectionately commend to your consideration: 1, The wife acted in accordance with 1 Peter 3:1. She kept her place as being in subjection, and the Lord owned it. 2, She reproached not her husband, but meekly and kindly served him when he used to come home. 3, She did not allow the servants to sit up for their master, but sat up herself, thus honouring him as her head and superior, and concealed also, as far as she was able, her husband's shame from the servants. 4, In all probability a part of those hours, during which she had to sit up, was spent in prayer for her husband, or in reading the word of God, to gather fresh strength for all the trials connected with her position. But whether this was the case or not, it is certain that thus, under similar circumstances, the time might be spent, and it would then indeed be spent profitably. 5, Be not discouraged if you have to suffer from unconverted relatives. Perhaps very shortly the Lord may give you the desire of your heart, and answer your prayer for them; but in the mean time seek to commend the truth, not by reproaching them on account of their behaviour towards you, but by manifesting towards them the meekness, gentleness, and kindness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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

NEXT LESSON:

THE WORD OF GOD AND PRAYER

HABIT both shows and makes the man, for it is at once historic and prophetic, the mirror of the man as he is and the mould of the man as he is to be. At this point, therefore, special attention may properly be given to the two marked habits which had principally to do with the man we are studying.

*Pierson, Arthur T. *George Müller of Bristol*. London: James Nisbet & Co., Limited, 1899. Print.*