

Copied by Stephen Ross for [www.wholesomewords.org](http://www.wholesomewords.org) from *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller written by Himself*. First Part, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1895.

## **A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller written by Himself.**

I was born at Kroppenstaedt, near Halberstadt, in the kingdom of Prussia, on September 27<sup>th</sup>, 1805. In January 1810 my parents removed to Heimersleben, about four miles from Kroppenstaedt, where my father was appointed collector in the excise. As a warning to parents I mention, that my father preferred me to my brother, which was very injurious to both of us. To me, as tending to produce in my mind a feeling of self-elevation; and to my brother, by creating in him a dislike both towards my father and me.

My father, who educated his children on worldly principles, gave us much money, considering our age; not in order that we might spend it, but, as he said, to accustom us to possess money without spending it. The result was, that it led me and my brother into many sins. For I repeatedly spent a part of the money in a childish way, and afterwards, when my father looked over my little treasure, I sought to deceive him in making up the accounts, either by not putting down all the money which he had given me, or by professing to have more money in hand than was the case, and counting it out accordingly before him. Now, though this deceit was found out at last, and I was punished, yet I remained the same. For before I was ten years old I repeatedly took of the government money which was intrusted to my father, and which he had to make up; till one day, as he had repeatedly missed money, he detected my theft, by depositing a counted sum in the room where I was, and leaving me to myself for a while. Being thus left alone, I took some of the money, and hid it under my foot in my shoe. When my father, after his return, had counted and missed the money, I was searched and my theft detected.

Though I was punished on this and other occasions, yet I do not remember that at any time, when my sins were found out, it made any other impression upon me than to make me think how I might do the thing the next time more cleverly, so as not to be detected. Hence it came, that this was not the last time that I was guilty of stealing.

### **At School**

When I was between ten and eleven years of age, I was sent to Halberstadt, to the cathedral classical school, there to be prepared for the university; for my father's desire was, that I should become a clergyman: not, indeed, that thus I might serve God, but that I might have a comfortable living. My time was now spent in studying, reading novels, and indulging, though so young, in sinful practices. Thus it continued till I was fourteen years old, when my mother was suddenly removed. The night she was dying, I, not knowing of her illness, was playing at cards till two in the morning, and on the next day, being the Lord's day, I went with some of my companions in sin to a tavern, and then we went about the streets, half intoxicated.

## Confirmation

The following day I attended, for the first time, the religious instruction, which I was to receive previous to my confirmation. This likewise was attended to in a careless manner; and when I returned to my lodgings, my father had arrived to fetch my brother and me home to our mother's funeral. This bereavement made no lasting impression on my mind. I grew worse and worse. Three or four days before I was confirmed, (and thus admitted to partake of the Lord's supper,) I was guilty of gross immorality; and the very day before my confirmation, when I was in the vestry with the clergyman to confess my sins, (according to the usual practice,) after a formal manner, I defrauded him; for I handed over to him only the twelfth part of the fee which my father had given me for him.

In this state of heart, without prayer, without true repentance, without faith, without knowledge of the plan of salvation, I was confirmed, and took the Lord's supper, on the Sunday after Easter 1820. Yet I was not without some feeling about the solemnity of the thing, and I stayed at home in the afternoon and evening, whilst the other boys and girls, who had been confirmed with me, walked about in the fields I also made resolutions to turn from those vices in which I was living, and to study more. But as I had no regard to God, and attempted the thing in my own strength, all soon came to nothing, and I still grew worse.

Six weeks after my confirmation I went for a fortnight to Brunswick, to a sister of my father, where I became attached to a young female, who was a Roman catholic. My time till Midsummer 1821 was spent partly in study, but in a great degree in playing the piano-forte and guitar, reading novels, frequenting taverns, forming resolutions to become different, yet breaking them almost as fast as they were made. My money was often spent on my sinful pleasures, through which I was now and then brought into trouble, so that once, to satisfy my hunger, I stole a piece of coarse bread, the allowance of a soldier who was quartered in the house where I lodged. What a bitter, bitter thing is the service of Satan, even in this world!!

At Midsummer 1821 my father obtained an appointment at Schoenebeck, near Magdeburg, and I embraced the opportunity of entreating him to remove me to the cathedral classical school of Magdeburg; for I thought, that, if I could but leave my companions in sin, and get out, of certain snares, and be placed under other tutors, I should then live a different life. But as my dependence in this matter also was not upon God, I fell into a still worse state. My father consented, and I was allowed to leave Halberstadt, and to stay at Heimersleben till Michaelmas. During that time I superintended, according to my father's wish, certain alterations, which were to be made in his house there, for the sake of letting it profitably. Being thus quite my own master, I grew still more idle, and lived as much as before in all sorts of sin.

When Michaelmas came, I persuaded my father to leave me at Heimersleben till Easter, and to let me read the classics with a clergyman living in the same place. As Dr. Nagel was a very learned man, and also in the habit of having pupils under his care, and a friend of my father, my request was granted. I was now living on the premises belonging to my father, under little real control, and intrusted with a considerable sum of money, which I had to collect for my father, from persons who owed it to him. My habits soon led me to spend a considerable part of this money, giving receipts for different sums, yet leaving my father to suppose I had not received them.

## Imprisoned

In November I went on a pleasure excursion to Magdeburg, where I spent six days in much sin; and though my absence from home had been found out by my father, before I returned from thence; yet I took all the money I could obtain, and went to Brunswick, after I had, through a number of lies, obtained permission from my tutor. The reason of my going to Brunswick was, the attachment I had formed eighteen months previously to the young female residing there. I spent a week at Brunswick, in an expensive hotel. At the end of the week my money was expended. This, as well as the want of a passport, prevented my staying any longer in the hotel; but as I still wished to remain at Brunswick, I went to my uncle, the husband of my father's sister, and made some excuse for not having gone to him in the first instance. My uncle, seeing I suppose my unsteady life, intimated after a week, that he did not wish me to remain with him any longer.

I then went, without money, to another hotel, in a village near Brunswick, where I spent another week in an expensive way of living. At last, the owner of the hotel suspecting that I had no money, asked for payment, and I was obliged to leave my best clothes as a security, and could scarcely thus escape from being arrested. I then walked about six miles, to Wolfenbittel, went to an inn, and began again to live as if I had plenty of money. Here I stayed two days, looking out for an opportunity to run away; for I had now nothing remaining to leave as a pledge. But the window of my room was too high to allow of my escaping, by getting down at night. On the second or third morning I went quietly out of the yard, and then ran off; but being suspected and observed, and therefore seen to go off, I was immediately called after, and so had to return.

I now confessed my case, but found no mercy. I was arrested, and taken between two soldiers to a police officer. Being suspected by him to be a vagabond or thief, I was examined for about three hours, and then sent to gaol. I now found myself at the age of sixteen, an inmate of the same dwelling with thieves and murderers, and treated accordingly. My superior manners profited nothing. For though, as a particular favour, I received the first evening some meat with my bread, I had the next day the common allowance of the prisoners,--very coarse bread and water, and for dinner vegetables, but no meat. My situation was most wretched. I was locked up in this place day and night, without permission to leave my cell. The dinner was such that on the first day I completely loathed it; and left it untouched. The second day I took a little, the third day all, and the fourth and following days I would fain have had more. On the second day I asked the keeper for a Bible, not to consider its blessed contents, but to pass away the time. However, I received none. Here then I was; no creature with me; no book, no work in my hands, and large iron rails before my narrow window.

During the second night I was awakened out of my sleep by the rattling of the bolts and keys. Three men came into my room. When I asked them in my fright what it meant, they laughed at me, continuing quietly to try the iron rails, to see whether I could escape.-- After a few days I found out, that a thief was imprisoned next to me, and, as far as a thick wooden partition would allow of it, I conversed with him; and shortly after the governor of the prison allowed him, as a favour to me, to share my cell. We now passed away our time in relating our adventures, and I was by this time so wicked, that I was not satisfied with relating things of which I had been really guilty, but I even invented stories, to show him what a famous fellow I was.

I waited in vain day after day to be liberated.--After about ten or twelve days my fellow prisoner and I disagreed, and thus we two wretched beings, to increase our wretchedness,

spent day after day without conversing together.--I was in prison from December 18th, 1821, till January 12th, 1822, when the keeper came and told me to go with him to the police office. Here I found, that the Commissioner, before whom I had been tried, had first written to my uncle at Brunswick, and when he had written in reply, that it was better to acquaint my father with my conduct, the Commissioner had done so; and thus I was kept in prison till my father sent the money which was needed for my traveling expenses, to pay my debt in the inn, and for my maintenance in the prison. So ungrateful was I now, for certain little kindnesses shown to me by my fellow-prisoner, that, although I had promised to call on his sister, to deliver a message from him, I omitted to do so; and so little had I been benefited by this my chastisement, that, though I was going home to meet an angry father, only two hours after I had left the town where I had been imprisoned, I chose an avowedly wicked person as my traveling companion for a great part of my journey.

### **Outward Reformation**

My father, who arrived two days after I had reached Heimersleben, after having severely beaten me, took me home to Schoenebeck, intending to keep me there till Easter, and then to send me to a classical school at Halle, that I might be under strict discipline and the continual inspection of a tutor. In the meantime I took pupils, whom I instructed in Latin, French, arithmetic, and German Grammar. I now endeavoured, by diligence in study, to regain the favour of my father. My habits were, as to outward appearance, exemplary. I made progress in my own studies, benefited my pupils, and was soon liked by every body around me, and in a short time my father had forgotten all. But all this time I was in heart as bad as ever; for I was still in secret habitually guilty of great sins.

Easter came, and on account of my good behaviour, my diligence in study, and also because I was no expense to my father, but earned much more than I cost him, I easily persuaded him to let me stay at home till Michaelmas. But after that period he would not consent to my remaining any longer with him, and therefore I left home, pretending to go to Halle to be examined. But having a hearty dislike to the strict discipline of which I had heard, and knowing also that I should meet there young men attending the university with whom I was acquainted, enjoying all the liberty of German students, whilst I myself was still at school: for these and other reasons I went to Nordhausen, and had myself examined by the director of the gymnasium, to be received into that school. I then went home, but never told my father a word of all this deception, till the day before my departure, which obliged me to invent a whole chain of lies. He was then very angry; but at last, through my entreaties and persuasion, he gave way and allowed me to go. This was in the beginning of October, 1822.

I continued at Nordhausen two years and six months, till Easter, 1825. During this time I studied with considerable diligence the Latin classics, French, history, my own language, &c.; but did little in Hebrew, Greek, and the Mathematics. I lived in the house of the director, and got, through my conduct, highly into his favour, so much so, that I was held up by him in the first class as an example to the rest, and he used to take me regularly with him in his walks, to converse with me in Latin. I used now to rise regularly at four, winter and summer, and generally studied all the day, with little exception, till ten at night.

But whilst I was thus outwardly gaining the esteem of my fellow-creatures, I did not care in the least about God, but lived secretly in much sin, in consequence of which I was taken ill, and for thirteen weeks confined to my room. During my illness I had no real

sorrow of heart, yet being under certain natural impressions of religion, I read through Klopstock's works without weariness. I cared nothing about the word of God. I had about three hundred books of my own, but no Bible. I practically set a far higher value upon the writings of Horace and Cicero, Voltaire and Moliere, than upon the volume of inspiration. Now and then I felt that I ought to become a different person, and I tried to amend my conduct, particularly when I went to the Lord's supper, as I used to do twice every year, with the other young men. The day previous to attending that ordinance, I used to refrain from certain things; and on the day itself I was serious, and also swore once or twice to God, with the emblem of the broken body in my mouth, to become better, thinking that for the oath's sake I should be induced to reform. But after one or two days were over, all was forgotten, and I was as bad as before.

### **Sinful Ways**

I had now grown so wicked, that I could habitually tell lies without blushing. And further, to show how fearfully wicked I was, I will mention, out of many others, only one great sin, of which I was guilty, before I left this place. Through my dissipated life I had contracted debts, which I had no means of discharging; for my father could allow me only about as much as I needed for my regular maintenance. One day, after having received a sum of money from him, and having purposely shown it to some of my companions, I afterwards feigned that it was stolen, having myself by force injured the lock of my trunk, and having also designedly forced open my guitar case. I also feigned myself greatly frightened at what had happened, ran into the director's room with my coat off, and told him that my money was stolen. I was greatly pitied. Some friends also gave me now as much money as I pretended to have lost, and the circumstance afforded me a ground upon which to ask my creditors to wait longer. But this matter turned out bitterly; for the director, having ground to suspect me, though he could not prove anything, never fully restored me to his confidence.

As it regards my own feeling, though I was very wicked, yet this desperate act of depravity was too much, even for my hardened conscience; for it never afterwards allowed me to feel easy in the presence of the director's wife, who, like a kind mother, had waited on me in my illness, and on whom I had now so willfully brought trouble. How long-suffering was God at this time, not to destroy me at once! And how merciful that he did not suffer me to be tried before the police, who easily would have detected that the whole was a fabrication! I was heartily glad for many reasons, but particularly on account of this latter circumstance, to be able soon after to exchange the school for the university.

### **Enters Halle University**

I had now obtained what I had fondly looked forward to. I became a member of the university, and that with very honourable testimonials. I had thus obtained permission to preach in the Lutheran Establishment, but I was as truly unhappy, and as far from God as ever. I had made strong resolutions, now at last, to change my course of life, for two reasons: first, because, without it, I thought no parish would choose me as their pastor; and secondly, that without a considerable knowledge of divinity I should never get a good living, as the obtaining of a valuable cure, in Prussia, generally depends upon the degree which the candidates of the ministry obtain in passing the examination. But the moment I entered Halle, the university town, all my resolutions came to nothing.--Being now more than ever my own master, and without any control as long as I did not fight a duel, molest the people in the streets, &c., I renewed my profligate life afresh, though

now a student of *divinity*. When my money was spent, I pawned my watch and a part of my linen and clothes, or borrowed in other ways. Yet in the midst of it all I had a desire to renounce this wretched life, for I had no enjoyment in it, and had sense enough left to see, that the end one day or other would be miserable; for I should never get a living. But I had no sorrow of heart on account of offending God.

### **Friendship with Beta**

One day when I was in a tavern with some of my wild fellow-students, I saw among them one of my former school-fellows, named Beta, whom I had known four years before at Halberstadt, but whom at that time had despised, because he was so quiet and serious. It now appeared well to me to choose him as my friend, thinking that if I could but have better companions, I should by that means improve my own conduct. I entered into familiar discourse with him, and we were soon much knit to one another. "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm." Jeremiah xvii. 5.

This Beta was a backslider. When formerly he was so quiet at school, I have reason to believe it was because the Spirit of God was working on his heart; but now, having departed from the Lord, he tried to put off the ways of God more and more, and to enjoy the world of which he had known but little before. I sought his friendship because I thought it would lead me to a steady life; and he gladly formed an acquaintance with me, as he told me afterwards, because he thought it would bring him into gay society. Thus my poor foolish heart was again deceived. And yet, God, in His abundant mercy, made him, after all, in a way which was never thought of by me, the instrument of doing me good, not merely for time, but for eternity.

About this period, June 1825, I was again taken ill in consequence of my profligate and vicious life. My state of health would therefore no longer allow me to go on in the same course, but my desires were still unchanged. About the end of July I recovered. After this, my conduct was outwardly rather better; but this arose only from want of money. At the commencement of August, Beta and I with two other students, drove about the country, for four days. All the money for this expensive pleasure had been obtained by pledging some of our remaining articles.

### **Trip to Switzerland**

When we returned, instead of being truly sorry on account of this sin, we thought of fresh pleasures, and, as my love for traveling was stronger than ever, through what I had seen on this last journey, I proposed to my friends to set off for Switzerland. The obstacles in the way, the want of money, and the want of the passports, were removed by me. For, through forged letters from our parents, we procured passports; and through pledging all we could, particularly our books, we obtained as much money as we thought would be enough. Beta was one of the party.

On August 18th we left Halle. It will be enough to say that we went as far as Mount Rigi in Switzerland, by the way of Erfurt, Frankfort, Heidelberg, Stuttgart, Zurich, and returned by the way of Constance, Ulm, and Nuremberg. Forty-three days we were, day after day, traveling, almost always on foot. I had now obtained the desire of my heart. I had seen Switzerland. But still I was far from being happy. The Lord most graciously preserved us from many calamitous circumstances, which, but for His gracious providence, might have overtaken us. But I did not see His hand at that time, as I have seen it since. Sickness of one or more of us, or separation from one another, which might

have so easily befallen us, would have brought us, being so far from home, and having but just as much money as was absolutely needed, into a most miserable condition. I was on this journey like Judas; for, having the common purse, I was a thief. I managed so, that the journey cost me but two-thirds of what it cost my friends. Oh! how wicked was I now. At last all of us became tired of seeing even the most beautiful views; and whilst at first, after having seen certain scenes, I had been saying with Horace, at the end of the day, in my pagan heart, "Vixi," (I have lived), I was now glad to get home again.

September 29th we reached Halle, from whence each of us, for the remainder of the vacation, went to his father's house. I had now, by many lies, to satisfy my father concerning the traveling expenses, and succeeded in deceiving him. During the three weeks I stayed at home I determined to live differently for the future. Once more the Lord showed me what resolutions come to, when made in man's strength. I was different for a few days; but when the vacation was over, and fresh students came, and, with them, fresh money, all was soon forgotten.

At that time Halle was frequented by 1260 students, about 900 of whom studied divinity, all of which 900 were allowed to preach, although, I have reason to believe, not nine of them feared the Lord.

### **Conversion**

The time was now come when God would have mercy upon me. His love had been set upon such a wretch as I was before the world was made. His love had sent His Son to bear the punishment due to me on account of my sins, and to fulfill the law which I had broken times without number. And now at a time when I was as careless about Him as ever, He sent His Spirit into my heart. I had no Bible, and had not read in it for years. I went to church but seldom; but, from custom, I took the Lord's supper twice a year. I had never heard the gospel preached, up to the beginning of November 1825. I had never met with a person who told me that he meant, by the help of God, to live according to the Holy Scriptures. In short, I had not the least idea, that there were any persons really different from myself, except in degree.

One Saturday afternoon, about the middle of November 1825, I had taken a walk with my friend Beta. On our return he said to me, that he was in the habit of going on Saturday evenings to the house of a Christian, where there was a meeting. On further enquiry he told me that they read the Bible, sang, prayed, and read a printed sermon. No sooner had I heard this, than it was to me as if I had found something after which I had been seeking all my life long. I immediately wished to go with my friend, who was not at once willing to take me; for knowing me as a gay young man, he thought I should not like this meeting. At last, however, he said he would call for me.--I would here mention, that Beta seems to have had conviction of sin, and probably also a degree of acquaintance with the Lord, when about fifteen years old. Afterwards, being in a cold and worldly state, he joined me in this sinful Journey to Switzerland. On his return, however, being extremely miserable, and convinced of his guilt, he made a full confession of his sin to his father; and whilst with him, sought the acquaintance of a Christian brother, named Richter. This Dr. Richter, who himself had studied a few years before at Halle, gave him, on his return to the university, a letter of introduction to a believing tradesman, of the name of Wagner. It was this brother, concerning whom Beta spoke to me, and in whose house the meeting was held.

We went together in the evening. As I did not know the manners of believers, and the joy they have in seeing poor sinners, even in any measure caring about the things of God, I made an apology for coming. The kind answer of this dear brother I shall never forget. He said: "Come as often as you please; house and heart are open to you." We sat down and sang a hymn. Then brother Kayser, now a missionary in Africa, in connection with the London Missionary Society, who was then living at Halle, fell on his knees, and asked a blessing on our meeting. This kneeling down made a deep impression upon me; for I had never either seen any one on his knees, nor had I ever myself prayed on my knees. He then read a chapter and a printed sermon; for no regular meetings for expounding the Scriptures were allowed in Prussia, except an ordained clergyman was present. At the close we sang another hymn, and then the master of the house prayed. Whilst he prayed, my feeling was something like this: "I could not pray as well, though I am much more learned than this illiterate man." The whole made a deep impression on me. I was happy; though, if I had been asked, why I was happy, I could not have clearly explained it.

When we walked home, I said to Beta, "All we have seen on our journey to Switzerland, and all our former pleasures, are as nothing in comparison with this evening." Whether I fell on my knees when I returned home, I do not remember; but this I know, that I lay peaceful and happy in my bed. This shows that the Lord may begin His work in different ways. For I have not the least doubt, that on that evening, He began a work of grace in me, though I obtained joy without any deep sorrow of heart, and with scarcely any knowledge. That evening was the turning point in my life.--The next day, and Monday, and once or twice besides, I went again to the house of this brother, where I read the Scriptures with him and another brother; for it was too long for me to wait till Saturday came again.

Now my life became very different, though not so, that all sins were given up at once. My wicked companions were given up; the going to taverns was entirely discontinued; the habitual practice of telling falsehoods was no longer indulged in, but still a few times after this I spoke an untruth.--At the time when this change took place, I was engaged in translating a novel out of French into German, for the press, in order to obtain the means of gratifying my desire to see Paris, &c. This plan about the journey was now given up, though I had not light enough to give up the work in which I was engaged, but finished it. The Lord, however, most remarkably put various obstacles in the way and did not allow me to sell the manuscript. At last, seeing that *the whole* was wrong, I determined never to sell it, and was enabled to abide by this determination. The manuscript was burnt.

I now no longer lived habitually in sin, though I was still often overcome, and sometimes even by open sins, though far less frequently than before, and not without sorrow of heart. I read the Scriptures, prayed often, loved the brethren, went to church from right motives, and stood on the side of Christ; though laughed at by my fellow-students.

It had pleased God to teach me something of the meaning of that precious truth: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." I understood something of the reason why the Lord Jesus died on the cross, and suffered such agonies in the Garden of Gethsemane: even that thus, bearing the punishment due to us, we might not have to bear it ourselves. And, therefore, apprehending in some measure the love of Jesus for my soul, I was constrained to love Him in return. What all the exhortations and precepts of my father and others could not effect; what all my own resolutions could not bring about, even to renounce a life of sin and profligacy: I was enabled to do, constrained by the love of



Jesus. The individual who desires to have his sins forgiven, must seek for it through the blood of Jesus. The individual who desires to get power over sin, must likewise seek it through the blood of Jesus.

In January 1826, I began to read missionary papers, and was greatly stirred up to become a missionary myself. I prayed frequently concerning this matter, and thus made more decided progress for a few weeks. But soon, alas! I was drawn aside. I used frequently to meet a young female, who also came to the meetings on Saturday evenings; and being the only pious female of my own age, whom I knew, I soon felt myself greatly attached to her. This led away my heart from missionary work, for I had reason to believe that her parents would not allow her to go with me. My prayers now became cold and formal, and at length were almost entirely given up. My joy in the Lord left me. In this state I continued for about six weeks. At the end of that time, about Easter 1826, I saw a devoted young brother, named Hermann Ball, a learned man, and of wealthy parents, who, constrained by the love of Christ, preferred labouring in Poland among the Jews as a missionary, to having a comfortable living near his relations. His example made a deep impression on me. I was led to apply his case to my own, and to compare myself with him; for I had given up the work of the Lord, and, I may say, the Lord Himself, for the sake of a girl. The result of this comparison was, that I was enabled to give up this connexion, which I had entered into without prayer, and which thus had led me away from the Lord. When I was enabled to be decided, the Lord smiled on me, and I was, for the first time in my life, able fully and unreservedly to give up myself to Him.

It was at this time that I began truly to enjoy the peace of God, which passeth all understanding. In this my joy I wrote to my father and brother, entreating them to seek the Lord, and telling them how happy I was; thinking, that if the way to happiness were but set before them, they would gladly embrace it. To my great surprise an angry answer was returned.--About this period the Lord sent a believer, Dr. Tholuck, as professor of divinity to Halle, in consequence of which a few believing students came from other universities. Thus also, through becoming acquainted with other brethren, the Lord led me on.

With the revival of the work of grace in my heart, after the snare above referred to had been broken, my former desire, to give myself to missionary service, returned, and I went at last to my father to obtain his permission, without which I could not be received into any of the German missionary institutions. My father was greatly displeased, and particularly reproached me, saying that he had expended so much money on my education, in hope that he might comfortably spend his last days with me in a parsonage, and that he now saw all these prospects come to nothing. He was angry, and told me he would no longer consider me as his son. But the Lord gave me grace to remain steadfast. He then entreated me, and wept before me; yet even this by far harder trial the Lord enabled me to bear. Before I went away I took an opportunity of reminding my brother of my former wicked life, and told him that now, having been thus blessed by God, I could not but live for Him. After I had left my father, though I wanted more money than at any previous period of my life, as I had to remain two years longer in the university, I determined, never to take any more from him; for it seemed to me wrong, so far as I remember, to suffer myself to be supported by him, when he had no prospect that I should become, what he would wish me to be, namely, a clergyman with a good living. This resolution I was enabled to keep.

By the way I would here observe, that the Lord afterwards, in a most remarkable way, supplied my temporal wants. For shortly after this had occurred, several American

gentlemen, three of whom were professors in American colleges, came to Halle for literary purposes; and as they did not understand German, I was recommended by Dr. Tholuck to teach them. These gentlemen, some of whom were believers, paid so handsomely for the instruction which I gave them, and for the lectures of certain professors which I wrote out for them, that I had enough and to spare. Thus did the Lord richly make up to me the little which I had relinquished for His sake. "O fear the Lord, ye His saints; for there is no want to them that fear Him." Psalm xxxiv. 9.

On my return from my father to Halle, I found that the more experienced brethren thought that I ought for the present to take no further steps respecting my desire to go out as a missionary. But still it was more or less in my mind.--Whitsuntide and the two days following I spent in the house of a pious clergyman in the country: for all the ministers at Halle, a town of more than 30,000 inhabitants, were unenlightened men, God greatly refreshed me through this visit. Dear Beta was with me. On our return we related to two of our former friends, whose society we had not quite given up, though we did not any longer live with them in sin, how happy we had been on our visit. I then told them how I wished they were as happy as ourselves. They answered, we do not feel that we are sinners. After this I fell on my knees, and asked God to show them that they were sinners. Having done so, I left them, and went into my bed-room, where I continued to pray for them. After a little while I returned to my sitting-room, and found them both in tears, and both told me that they now felt themselves to be sinners. From that time a work of grace commenced in their hearts.

### **Decides by Lot**

Shortly after this, being still greatly exercised about going out as a missionary, and wishing much (according to my natural mind, as I now see,) to have the matter settled, in one way or the other, without being willing quietly, patiently, and prayerfully to wait on the Lord, I came to the conclusion to ascertain the Lord's mind by the lot. To this end I not merely drew a lot in private, but I bought a ticket in the royal lottery; and I left it thus with the Lord, that if I gained any thing, I should take it to be His will that I should become a missionary, if not, that I should remain at home. My ticket came out with a small sum, on account of which it appeared to me that I should be a missionary. I therefore applied to the Berlin Missionary Society, but was not accepted, because my father had not given his consent.

Very soon afterwards I was led to see in some degree, and since then much more fully, the error into which I had fallen respecting the lot. In the first place it was altogether wrong, that I, a child of God, should have any thing to do with so worldly a system as that of the lottery. But it was also unscriptural to go to the lot at all for the sake of ascertaining the Lord's mind, and this I ground on the following reasons. We have neither a commandment of God for it, nor the example of our Lord, nor that of the apostles, *after the Holy Spirit had been given on the day of Pentecost*. 1. We have many exhortations in the word of God to seek to know His mind by prayer and searching the Holy Scriptures, but no passage which exhorts us to use the lot. 2. The example of the apostles (Acts i.) in using the lot, in the choice of an apostle, in the room of Judas Iscariot, is the only passage, which can be brought in favour of the lot, from the New Testament, (and to the Old we have not to go under this dispensation, for the sake of ascertaining how we ought to live as disciples of Christ). Now concerning this circumstance we have to remember, that the Spirit was not yet given (John vii. 39; ch. xiv. 16, 17; ch. xvi. 7, 13), by whose teaching especially it is that we may know the mind of the Lord; and hence we find, that,

after the day of Pentecost, the lot was no more used, but the apostles gave themselves to prayer and fasting to ascertain how they ought to act.

In addition to this I would give my own experience concerning the lot, but only by way of illustrating the view just given; for the word of God is quite sufficient on the subject. And first as it regards my using the lot in the above case. How did it turn out? I had repeatedly asked the Lord to show me His mind, whether He would have me to be a missionary or not. But not coming to a satisfactory assurance, and being very anxious to have the matter settled, I found out in my own judgment a much shorter way, namely, the lot. I ought to have said to myself, how can an individual, so ignorant as you are, think about being a teacher to others? For though I was truly begotten again, and rested upon Christ alone for salvation, still I should not have been able to give a clear explanation of even the most elementary truths of the Gospel. How then could I be fit to teach others? The first thing therefore I ought to have done, was, to seek through much prayer, and searching the Scriptures, and a holy life, to obtain more knowledge of divine things. Further, as to my impatience in wishing the matter settled, how could I have been fit to endure in that state the hardships and trials of a missionary life, in which my patience, no doubt, would have been much more severely tried? I therefore ought to have said to myself, if I cannot wait quietly, though it be many months longer, before the Lord shows me clearly His will concerning the matter, how then can I be fit for missionary work? Instead of thus comparing my state of heart and knowledge, with what is required in the Scriptures from him who is to be a teacher, I ran hastily to the lot, and thought I had done it prayerfully. And how did it end? According to my prayers the lot decided I should be a missionary among the heathen (and my mind, at that time, especially inclined to the East Indies). But the way in which the Lord has led me since has been very different. And it ought not to be said in defense of the practice of deciding by lot--Perhaps the Lord meant you to be a missionary among the heathen, but you did not give yourself to the work? for I actually offered myself to a society, but was not accepted. Moreover, since 1826 I have repeatedly offered myself most solemnly to the Lord for this work, and am as sure that it is not His will that I should go out a missionary for the present, as I am sure of any thing. Nor could it be said, that perhaps the Lord yet may call me for this work. For if He should be pleased to do so tomorrow, yet that would prove nothing concerning the above point. For I did not use the lot to ascertain whether at *any period of my life* I should be engaged in missionary work, but whether I should then set about it. And to put such an explanation on the matter, would be acting as false prophets, who, when their prophecies fail, try to find out some way or other, whereby they may show that their prophecies were true.

About two years after I used the lot in another instance. I went one day to a village about fifteen miles from Halle, to see the few believers there. When I was about three miles from the place, it began to get dark; and finding myself in a spot where the road divided, and not knowing which way I should choose, I was greatly perplexed. I stood a moment, and then prayed to God to show me by the lot, which was the right way. Now, truly one may say, if the use of the lot in our day is according to the will of God, this was particularly a case for the Lord to direct me through this means. For here was one of His children in need, looking up to his Father to help him, through the lot, out of his difficulty, and this His child also on a journey in His service. I drew the lot and went the way to the left. After some time I found I was on the wrong road. Now, at last, as I did not know how to get into the right one, I did what I ought to have done before, and what I believe to be a scriptural way of acting; I prayed that the Lord graciously would send some one to put me into the right way; and almost immediately a carriage came up, and I was directed on my journey.

In one other instance I used the lot some years after. It concerned a most important matter, important for my whole life. I had *then* a degree of conviction, that I ought prayerfully and patiently to wait for the Lord's decision. But my natural mind would have the decision at *once*, and thus after prayer I drew the lot, to have the matter in one way or other settled. But facts turned out completely different from what the lot decided.

To ascertain the Lord's will we ought to use scriptural means. Prayer, the word of God, and His Spirit should be united together. We should go to the Lord repeatedly in prayer, and ask Him to teach us by His Spirit through His word. I say, by His Spirit through His word. For if we should think that His Spirit led us to do so and so, because certain facts are so and so, and yet His word is opposed to the step which we are going to take, we should be deceiving ourselves.

For instance: A brother in business thinks he ought to leave the house in which he lives, because it is not in a good situation. He wishes to know the Lord's mind, as he says, and prays about the matter. After a few days, unexpectedly, a house is offered to him without seeking after it, in a much better situation. The house is very suitable, as he thinks; the rent very moderate; and moreover the person who offers him the house tells him, that, because he is a believer he will let him have it at this cheap rent. There is, however, this scriptural objection in the way. If he goes into this house, he must carry on so large a business, to cover his expenses, that his time will be so occupied as to encroach upon those hours, which ought to be devoted to his spiritual interests. Now the scriptural way of deciding would be this: No situation, no business will be given to me *by God*, in which I have not time enough to care about my soul (Matthew vi. 33). Therefore, however outward circumstances may appear, it can only be considered as permitted of God, to prove the genuineness of my love, faith, and obedience, but by no means as the leading of His providence to induce me to act contrary to His revealed will.

In connexion with this I would mention, that the Lord very graciously gave me, from the very commencement of my divine life, a measure of simplicity and of childlike disposition in spiritual things, so that whilst I was exceedingly ignorant of the Scriptures, and was still from time to time overcome even by outward sins, yet I was enabled to carry most minute matters to the Lord in prayer. And I have found "godliness profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Though very weak and ignorant, yet I had now, by the grace of God, some desire to benefit others, and he who so faithfully had once served Satan, sought now to win souls for Christ.

I may mention a few instances. I circulated every month, in different parts of the country, about 300 missionary papers. I also sold and distributed a considerable number of tracts, and often took my pockets full in my walks, and distributed them, and spoke to poor people whom I met. I also wrote letters to some of my former companions in sin. I visited for thirteen weeks a sick man, who, when I first began to speak to him about the things of God, was completely ignorant of his state as a sinner, trusting for salvation in his upright and moral life. After some weeks, however, the Lord allowed me to see a decided change in him, and he afterwards repeatedly expressed his gratitude, that I had been sent to him by God, to be the means of opening his blind eyes. May this encourage the believing reader to sow the seed, though he does not see it spring up at once.

Thus the Lord condescended to begin to use me soon after my conversion, though but little; for I could bear but very little, as I did not see at that time, as I do now, that God alone can give spiritual life at the first, and keep it up in the soul afterwards. How

imperfectly, however, on account of my ignorance, some of these things were done, I will show by the following instance. Once I met a beggar in the fields, and spoke to him about his soul. But when I perceived it made no impression upon him, I spoke more loudly; and when he still remained unmoved, I quite bawled in talking to him; till at last I went away, seeing it was of no use. Though none had sought the Lord less than myself, when He was pleased to begin His work in me; yet so ignorant was I of the work of the Spirit, that I thought my speaking very loudly would force him into repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus.

### **First Sermon**

Having heard that there was a schoolmaster living in a village, about six miles from Halls, who was in the habit of holding a prayer meeting at four o'clock every morning, with the miners, before they went into the pit, giving them also an address, I thought he was a believer; and as I knew so very few brethren, I went to see him, in order, if it might be, to strengthen his hands. About two years afterwards he told me, that when I came to him first, he knew not the Lord, but that he had held these prayer-meetings merely out of kindness to a relative, whose office it was, but who had gone on a journey; and that those addresses which he had read were not his own, but copied out of a book. He also told me, that he was much impressed with my kindness, and, what he considered condescension on my part in coming to see him, and this, together with my conversation, had been instrumental in leading him to care about the things of God; and I knew him ever afterwards as a true believer.

This schoolmaster asked me, whether I would not preach in his parish, as the aged and infirm clergyman would be very glad of my assistance. Up to this time I had never preached, though for fifteen months past I might have done so as a student of divinity; for before Christmas 1825 I had been mercifully kept from attempting to preach, (though I wrote to my father about July that I had preached, because I knew it would please him), and after Christmas, when I knew the Lord, I refrained from doing so, because I felt that I was yet too little instructed in the things of God. The same reason ought to have still kept me from preaching; yet I thought, that, by taking a sermon, or the greater part of one, written by a spiritual man, and committing it to memory, I might benefit the people. Had I reasoned scripturally, I should have said, surely it cannot be the will of God, that I should preach in this way, if I have not enough knowledge of the Scriptures to write a sermon. Moreover, I had not enough light nor tenderness of conscience to see, that I was a deceiver in the pulpit; for every body supposes, that the sermon a man preaches is, if not entirely, at least as to the most part, his own composition.

I now set about putting a printed sermon into a suitable form, and committing it to memory. It was hard work. There is no joy in man's own doings and choosings. It took me nearly a whole week to commit to memory such a sermon as would take up nearly an hour in repeating. I got through it, but had no enjoyment in the work. It was on August 27, 1826, at eight in the morning, in a chapel of ease, in connexion with which my friend was schoolmaster. [Note: The schoolmasters, as well as the clergymen, in Prussia, are connected with the State.] At eleven I repeated the same sermon verbatim in the parish church. There was one service more, in the afternoon, at which I needed not to have done any thing; for the schoolmaster might have read a printed sermon, as he used to do. But having a desire to serve the Lord, though I often knew not how to do it scripturally; and knowing that this aged and unenlightened clergyman had had this living for forty-eight years, and having therefore reason to believe, that the gospel scarcely ever had been preached in that place; I had it in my heart to preach again in the afternoon. But I had no

second sermon committed to memory. It came, however, to my mind to read the 5th chapter of Matthew, and to make such remarks as I was able. I did so. Immediately upon beginning to expound "Blessed are the poor in spirit, &c." I felt myself greatly assisted; and whereas in the morning my sermon had not been simple enough for the people to understand it, I now was listened to with the greatest attention, and I think was also understood. My own peace and joy were great. I felt this a blessed work. After the service I left the aged clergyman as soon as possible, lest I should lose my enjoyment.

On my way to Halle I thought, this is the way I should like always to preach. But then it came immediately to my mind, that such sort of preaching might do for illiterate country people, but that it never would do before a well educated assembly in town. I thought, the truth ought to be preached at all hazards, but it ought to be given in a different form, suited to the hearers. Thus I remained unsettled in my mind as it regards the mode of preaching; and it is not surprising that I did not then see the truth concerning this matter, for I did not understand the work of the Spirit, and therefore saw not the powerlessness of human eloquence. Further, I did not keep in mind, that if the most illiterate persons in the congregation can comprehend the discourse, the most educated will understand it too; but that the reverse does not hold true.

It was not till three years afterwards that I was led, through grace, to see what I now consider the right mode of preparation for the public preaching of the Word. But about this, if God permit, I will say more when I come to that period of my life.

I now preached frequently, both in the churches of villages and towns, but never had any enjoyment in doing so, except when speaking in a simple way; though the repetition of sermons, which had been committed to memory, brought more praise from my fellow-creatures. But from neither way of preaching did I see any fruit. It may be, that the last day may show the benefit even of these feeble endeavours. One reason why the Lord did not permit me to see fruit, seems to me, that I should have been most probably lifted up by success. It may be also, because I prayed exceedingly little respecting the ministry of the Word, and because I walked so little with God, and was so rarely a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use.

### **Lived in Franke's Orphanage**

About the time that I first began to preach I lived for about two months in free lodgings, provided for poor students of divinity in the Orphan-House, built in dependence upon God, by that devoted and eminent servant of Christ, A. H. Franke, Professor of Divinity at Halle, who died 1727. I mention this, as some years afterwards I was benefited myself through the faith of this dear man of God.--About that time I was still so weak that I fell repeatedly into open sins, yet could not continue in them, nay, not even for a few days, without sorrow of heart, confession before God, and fleeing to the blood of the Lamb. And so ignorant was I still, that I bought a crucifix in a frame, and hung it up in my room, hoping that being thus frequently reminded of the sufferings of my Saviour, I should not fall so frequently into sin. But in a few days the looking to the crucifix was as nothing, and I fell about that very time more than once deeply.

About this time I formed an intimate acquaintance with a brother, who was also a divinity student: and as we loved one another so much, and were so happy in one another's society, we thought that it would greatly add to our joy, and to one another's benefit, to live together, and that thus we might mutually help one another. Accordingly in September 1826, I left the free lodgings in the Orphan-House, and lived with him. But

alas! we were not aware, that because God is greatly glorified by the love and union of His people, for this very reason Satan particularly hates it, and will, therefore, in every possible way, seek to divide them. We ought to have especially prayed, and that frequently, that the Lord would keep us together in love; instead of which, I do not think that we at all feared disunion, as we loved one another so much. For this reason our great adversary soon got an advantage by our neglecting prayer concerning this point, and we were disunited, and love and union were not fully restored between us till after we had been for some time separated.

### **First Remarkable Donation Received**

Having heard that a very rich lady of title, residing at Frankfort-on-the-Maine, about two hundred miles from Halle, was a very pious person, and, in visiting a charitable institution at Dusselthal, had given very liberally; and wishing much about the commencement of the year 1827 to help a poor relative with a small sum of money, and also to pay the remainder of the debt which I had contracted for my traveling expenses to Switzerland: I wrote to this lady, asking her to lend me a small sum of money, in actual amount only little above £5., but, as money in the North of Germany has much more value than in England, it was as much as £12. or £15. in this country. Whilst I was writing, however, the thought occurred to me, Suppose this lady should not be a believer? I, therefore, pointed out to her the way of salvation, and related to her how I had been brought to the knowledge of the truth. But I received no answer by the time I might have had one.--I would just notice, that since 1829 my practice, on account of what I found in the Scriptures, Rom. xiii. 8, as it regards borrowing money, has been different. And, moreover, I have considered that there is no ground to go away from the door of the Lord to that of a believer, so long as He is so willing to supply our need.

About January 20th I was one day very wretched. Satan obtained an advantage over me through over-much work; for I was in the habit of writing about fourteen hours a day. One morning I was in so wretched a state, that I said in my heart, what have I now gained by becoming a Christian? Afterwards I walked about in the streets in this wretched state of heart, and at last I went into a confectioner's shop, where wine and ardent spirits were sold, to eat and to drink. But as soon as I had taken a piece of cake I left the shop, having no rest, as I felt that it was unbecoming a believer, either to go to such places, or to spend his money in such a way. In the afternoon of the very day on which, in the ingratitude of my heart, I had had such unkind thoughts about the Lord, (who was at that very time in so remarkable a manner supplying my temporal wants, by my being employed in writing for an AMERICAN Professor), He graciously showed me my sin, not by a severe chastisement, as I most righteously deserved, but by adding another mercy to the many He had already shown me. Oh! how long-suffering is our Lord. How does He bear with us! May I at least now seek, for the few days whilst I may stay in this world, to be more grateful for all His mercies!

At two o'clock I received a parcel from Frankfort, containing the exact sum of money of which I had requested the loan. There was no letter to be found. I was overwhelmed with the Lord's mercy, but very much regretted that there was no letter. At last, on carefully examining the paper in which the silver had been packed, I found one, which I have kept, and which I translate from the German.

"A peculiar providence has brought me acquainted with the letter which you have written to Lady B. But you are under a mistake concerning her, both as it regards her character, and her stay at D., where she never was. She has been taken for another individual. But

that I may lessen in some measure the difficulties in which you seem to be, I send you the enclosed small sum, for which you may thank, not the unknown giver, but the Lord, who turneth the hearts like rivers of water. Hold fast the faith which God has given you by His Holy Spirit; it is the most precious treasure in this life, and it contains in itself true happiness. Only seek by watching and prayer more and more to be delivered from all vanity and self-complacency, by which even the true believer may be ensnared when he least expects it. Let it be your chief aim to be more and more humble, faithful, and *quiet*. May we not belong to those who say and write continually, 'Lord,' 'Lord,' but who have Him not deeply in their hearts. Christianity consists not in words, but in power. There must be life in us. For, therefore, God loved us first that we might love Him in return; and that loving we might receive power, to be faithful to Him, and to conquer ourselves, the world, distress, and death. May His Spirit strengthen you for this, that you may be an able messenger of His Gospel! Amen.

"AN ADORING WORSHIPPER OF THE SAVIOUR, JESUS CHRIST."

Frankfort-on-the-Maine, January 14th, 1827.

I saw, in some measure, at the time when I received the letter, how much I needed such a faithful, and, at the same time, loving word of admonition; but I have seen it more fully since. Self-complacency, and a want of quietness and saying and writing more frequently "Lord," "Lord," than acknowledging Him by my life as such; these were the evils against which at that time I particularly needed to be cautioned; and up to this day I am still much, very much, lacking in these points: though the Lord, to His praise I would say it, has done much for me in these particulars since that time.

After having read this letter, my heart was full of joy, shame and gratitude. Truly it was the goodness of God which brought my heart into this state, and not the money for that was gone in a few hours after for the two purposes above referred to. With my heart full of peculiar feelings, and ashamed of my conduct in the morning, I left the town towards the evening, to walk alone in a solitary place. And now, being particularly conscious of my ingratitude to the Lord for all His mercies, and of my want of steadfastness in His ways, I could not forbear falling down on my knees behind a hedge, though the snow was a foot deep, anew to surrender myself wholly to Him, and to pray for strength that I might for the future live more to His glory, and also to thank Him for His late mercy. It was a blessed time, I continued about half an hour in prayer.

After such an experience, it may be difficult for one, who does not know the plague of his own heart, to think that I was at that time a true believer, when I tell him that so base was I, so altogether like a beast before my God, and unmindful of His mercies to me in Christ, that only a few weeks after I fell into a wretched backsliding state, in which I continued for many days, during which time prayer was almost entirely given up. It was on one of these days that I rang my bell, and ordered the servant to fetch me wine. And now I began to drink. But how good was the Lord! Though I desired to drink, that I might be able more easily to go on in sin, yet He would not allow me to give up myself to the wickedness of my heart. For whilst in my ungodly days I had drunk once about five quarts of strong beer in one afternoon, in the way of bravado, and once also much wine at one time, without remorse of conscience, I could now take only two or three glasses before the wickedness of my conduct was brought before me; and my conscience told me that I drank merely for the sake of drinking, and thus I gave it up.

It was about this time that I formed the plan of exchanging the University of Halle for that of Berlin, on account of there being a greater number of believing professors and



students in the latter place. But the whole plan was formed without prayer, or at least without earnest prayer. When, however, the morning came on which I had to take decided steps concerning it, and to apply for the university-testimonials, the Lord graciously stirred me up, prayerfully to consider the matter; and finding that I had no sufficient reason for leaving Halle, I gave up the plan, and have never had reason to regret having done so.

In the vacations, Michaelmas, 1826, and Easter, 1827, and at other times, I visited a Moravian settlement, called Gnadau, which was only about three miles distant from the place where my father then resided. Through the instrumentality of the brethren, whom I met there, my spirit was often refreshed.

The public means of grace by which I could be benefited were very few. Though I went regularly to church when I did not preach myself, yet I scarcely ever heard the truth; for there was no enlightened clergyman in the town. And when it so happened that I could bear Dr. Tholuck, or any other godly minister, the prospect of it beforehand, and the looking back upon it afterwards, served to fill me with joy. *Now and then I walked ten or fifteen miles to enjoy this privilege.* May those who enjoy the faithful ministry of the Word feel exceedingly thankful for it. There are few blessings on earth greater for a believer; and yet the Lord is frequently obliged to teach us the value of this blessing by depriving us of it for a season.

### **Students' Meetings**

Another means of grace which I attended, besides the Saturday evening meetings in brother Wagner's house, was a meeting every Lord's day evening with the believing students, which consisted of six or more in number, and increased, before I left Halle, to about 20; and which, after the Easter vacation of 1827, was held in my room till I left Halle. In these meetings one, or two, or more of the brethren prayed, and we read the Scriptures, sang hymns, and sometimes also one or another of the brethren spoke a little in the way of exhortation, and we read also such writings of godly men as were calculated for edification. I was often greatly stirred up and refreshed in these meetings; and twice, being in a backsliding state, and therefore cold and miserable, I opened my heart to the brethren, and was brought out of that state through the means of their exhortations and prayers. "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together," is a most important exhortation. Even if we should not derive any especial benefit, at the time, so far as we are conscious, yet we may be kept from much harm. And very frequently the beginning of coldness of heart is nourished by keeping away from the meetings of the saints. I know, when I was cold, and had no real desire to be brought out of that state, I went a few times into the villages, where I was sure not to meet with brethren, that I might not be spoken to about the things of God. Yet so gracious was the Lord, that my very wretchedness brought me back after a few hours. The Lord had begun a good work in me; and being faithful, though I was faithless, He would not give me up, but carried on His gracious work in me; though it would have progressed much more rapidly, had not my rebellious heart resisted. As to the other means of grace I would say: I fell into the snare, into which so many young believers fall, the reading of religious books in preference to the Scriptures. I could no longer read French and German novels, as I had formerly done, to feed my carnal mind; but still I did not put into the room of those books the best of all books. I read tracts, missionary papers, sermons, and biographies of godly persons. The last kind of books I found more profitable than others, and had they been well selected, or had I not read too much of such writings, or had any of them tended particularly to endear the Scriptures to me, they might have done me much good.--I never

had been at any time in my life in the habit of reading the Holy Scriptures. When under fifteen years of age, I occasionally read a little of them at school; afterwards God's precious book was entirely laid aside, so that I never read one single chapter of it, as far as I remember, till it pleased God to begin a work of grace in my heart. Now the scriptural way of reasoning would have been: God Himself has condescended to become an author, and I am ignorant about that precious book, which His Holy Spirit has caused to be written through the instrumentality of His servants, and it contains that which I ought to know, and the knowledge of which will lead me to true happiness; therefore I ought to read again and again this most precious book, this book of books, most earnestly, most prayerfully, and with much meditation; and in this practice I ought to continue all the days of my life. For I was aware, though I read it but little, that I knew scarcely anything of it. But instead of acting thus, and being led by my ignorance of the word of God to study it more, my difficulty in understanding it, and the little enjoyment I had in it, made me careless of reading it (for much prayerful reading of the Word, gives not merely more knowledge, but increases the delight we have in reading it); and thus, like many believers, I practically preferred, for the first four years of my divine life, the works of uninspired men to the oracles of the living God. The consequence was, that I remained a babe, both in knowledge and grace. In knowledge I say; for all *true* knowledge must be derived, by the Spirit, from the Word. And as I neglected the Word, I was for nearly four years so ignorant, that I did not clearly know even the *fundamental* points of our holy faith. And this lack of knowledge most sadly kept me back from walking steadily in the ways of God. For it is the truth that makes us free, (John viii. 31, 32,) by delivering us from the slavery of the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life. The Word proves it. The experience of the saints proves it; and also my own experience most decidedly proves it. For when it pleased the Lord in Aug. 1829, to bring me really to the Scriptures, my life and walk became very different. And though even since that I have very much fallen short of what I might and ought to be, yet, by the grace of God, I have been enabled to live much nearer to Him than before.

If any believers read this, who practically prefer other books to the Holy Scriptures, and who enjoy the writings of men much more than the word of God, may they be warned by my loss. I shall consider this book to have been the means of doing much good, should it please the Lord, through its instrumentality, to lead some of His people no longer to neglect the Holy Scriptures, but to give them that preference, which they have hitherto bestowed on the writings of men. My dislike to increase the number of books would have been sufficient to deter me from writing these pages, had I not been convinced, that this is the only way in which the brethren at large may be benefited through my mistakes and errors, and been influenced by the hope, that in answer to my prayers, the reading of my experience may be the means of leading them to value the Scriptures more highly, and to make them the rule of all their actions.

Before I leave this subject I would only add: If the reader understands very little of the word of God, he ought to read it very much; for the Spirit explains the Word by the Word. And if he enjoys the reading of the Word little, that is just the reason why he should read it much; for the frequent reading of the Scriptures creates a delight in them, so that the more we read them, the more we desire to do so. And if the reader should be an unbeliever, I would likewise entreat him to read the Scriptures earnestly, but to ask God previously to give him a blessing. For in doing so, God may make him wise unto salvation, 2 Tim. iii. 16.

## Advice on Reading the Scriptures

If any one should ask me, how he may read the Scriptures most profitably, I would advise him, that:

I. Above all he should seek to have it settled in his own mind, that God alone, by His Spirit, can teach him, and that therefore, as God will be inquired of for blessings, it becomes him to seek God's blessing previous to reading, and also whilst reading.

II. He should have it, moreover, settled in his mind, that although the Holy Spirit is the best and *sufficient* teacher, yet that this teacher does not always teach immediately when we desire it, and that, therefore, we may have to entreat Him again and again for the explanation of certain passages; but that He will surely teach us at last, if indeed we are seeking for light prayerfully, patiently, and with a view to the glory of God.

III. It is of immense importance for the understanding of the word of God, to read it in course, so that we may read every day a portion of the Old and a portion of the New Testament, going on where we previously left off. This is important--1, because it throws light upon the connexion, and a different course, according to which one habitually selects particular chapters, will make it utterly impossible ever to understand much of the Scriptures. 2, Whilst we are in the body, we need a change even in spiritual things, and this change the Lord has graciously provided in the great variety which is to be found in His word. 3, It tends to the glory of God; for the leaving out some chapters here and there, is practically saying, that certain portions are better than others; or, that there are certain parts of revealed truth unprofitable or unnecessary. 4, It may keep us, by the blessing of God, from erroneous views, as in reading thus regularly through the Scriptures, we are led to see the meaning of the whole, and also kept from laying too much stress upon certain favourite views. 5, The Scriptures contain the whole revealed will of God, and therefore we ought to seek to read from time to time through the whole of that revealed will. There are many believers, I fear, in our day, who have not read even once through the whole of the Scriptures; and yet in a few months, by reading only a few chapters every day, they might accomplish it.

IV. It is also of the greatest importance to meditate on what we read, so that perhaps a small portion of that which we have read, or, if we have time, the whole may be meditated upon in the course of the day. Or a small portion of a book, or an epistle, or a gospel, through which we go regularly for meditation, may be considered every day, without, however, suffering oneself to be brought into bondage by this plan.

Learned *commentaries* I have found to store the head with many notions, and often also with the truth of God; but when the Spirit teaches, through the instrumentality of prayer and meditation, the *heart* is affected. The former kind of knowledge generally puffs up, and is often renounced, when another commentary gives a different opinion, and often also is found good for nothing, when it is to be carried out into practice. The latter kind of knowledge generally humbles, gives joy, leads us nearer to God, and is not easily reasoned away; and having been obtained from God, and thus having entered into the heart, and become our own, is also generally carried out. If the inquirer after truth does not understand the Hebrew and Greek languages, so as to be able to compare the common translation with the original, he may, concerning several passages, get light by an improved rendering, provided he can be sure that the translator was a truly spiritual person.

The last and most important means of, grace, namely, prayer, was comparatively but little improved by me. I prayed, and I prayed often. I also prayed, in general, by the grace of God, with sincerity; but had I been more earnestly praying, or even only as much, as I have prayed of late years, I should have made much more rapid progress.

### **Offers Himself for Missionary Work**

In August, 1827, I heard that the Continental Society in England intended to send a minister to Bucharest, the residence of many nominal German Christians, to help an aged brother in the work of the Lord; the two other German Protestant ministers in that place being, the one a Socinian, and the other an unenlightened orthodox preacher. After consideration and prayer I offered myself for this work to professor Tholuck, who was requested to look out for a suitable individual; for with all my weakness I had a great desire to live wholly for God. Most unexpectedly my father gave his consent, though Bucharest was above a thousand miles from my home, and as completely a missionary station as any other. I considered this a remarkable providence; though I see now, that a servant of Christ has to act for his Master, whether it be according to the will of his earthly father or not. I then went home to, spend a short time with my father. In the town where he lived, containing about 3000 inhabitants, I could not hear of a single believer, though I made many inquiries. The time I stayed with my father was more profitably spent than it had formerly been. I was enabled more than ever before to realize my high calling. I had by the grace of God power over sin; at least much more than at any former period of my life.

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, his 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 anything about that, as I was going to Bucharest: to which he agreed.

When I came home, however, these few words were like fire within me. The next morning I felt all desire for going to Bucharest gone, which appeared to me very wrong and fleshly, and I therefore entreated the Lord, to restore to me the former desire for labouring on that missionary station. He graciously did so almost immediately. My

earnestness in studying Hebrew, and my peculiar love for it, however, continued. About this time I had an offer of becoming tutor to the sons of a pious Gentleman of title, which I did not accept on account of my purpose of going to Bucharest, and if that should come to nothing, on account of my desire of being a missionary to the Jews.

### **Offers to Become a Missionary to the Jews**

About ten days after, Dr. Tholuck received a letter from the Continental Society, stating, that, on account of the war between the Turks and Russians, it appeared well to the committee, for the time being to give up the thought of sending a minister to Bucharest, as it was the seat of war between the two armies. Dr. Tholuck then asked me again, what I now thought about being a missionary to the Jews. My reply was, that I could not then give an answer, but that I would let him know, after I had prayerfully considered the matter. After prayer and consideration, and consulting with experienced brethren, in order that they might probe my heart as to my motives, I came to this conclusion, that, though I could not say with certainty it was the will of God that I should be a missionary to the Jews, yet, that I ought to offer myself to the committee, leaving it with the Lord to do with me afterwards, as it might seem good in His sight. Accordingly Dr. Tholuck wrote, about the beginning of December, 1827, to the committee in London.

At Christmas I spent a few days at Belleben, a village about fifteen miles from Halle, where I had been once or twice before, both for the sake of refreshing the few brethren living there, and also of having my own spirit refreshed by their love. One evening, when I was expounding the Scriptures to them, an unconverted young man happened to be present, and it pleased the Lord to touch his heart, so that he was brought to the knowledge of the truth.

In the beginning of the year 1828 there was a new workhouse established at Halle, into which persons of bad character were put for a time, and made to work. Being disposed to benefit unbelievers, I heartily desired to have permission statedly to preach the word of truth to them while I stayed at Halle, particularly as I understood that one of the lecturers of divinity in the university, who was a Socinian, had applied for this living. I wrote to the magistrates of the city, and offered to preach to those criminals gratuitously, hoping that in this way there would be less objection to my doing so. The reply was, that Dr. \_\_\_\_ had applied for this living, and that it had been laid before the provincial government for consideration, but that they would be glad if I would preach in the workhouse till the matter was decided. The decision did not come for some time, and I had thus an opportunity of preaching twice every Lord's day, and once or twice on the week evenings; and besides this I took the criminals one by one into a room, to converse with them about their souls. Thus the Lord condescended to give to one so unworthy, so ignorant, so weak in grace, and so young in the faith and in years, a most important field of labour. However, it was well, that even under these circumstances I should have laboured there; for humanly speaking, had I not been there, they would have had either no instruction at all, or a Socinian, or an unenlightened preacher would have preached to them. And besides this, I had at least some qualification for ministering there; for I knew the state of those poor sinners, having been myself formerly, in all probability, a great deal worse than most of them, and my simplicity and plainness of speech they would not have found in every minister. After some months the matter was decided, the Socinian lecturer of divinity, Dr. \_\_\_\_, was appointed to the living, and I had to discontinue my labours.

It was not before March 1828, that Professor Tholuck received an answer from London respecting me, in which the committee put a number of questions to me, on the satisfactory answers to which my being received by them would depend. After replying to this first communication, I waited daily for an answer, and was so much the more desirous of having it, as my course in the university was completed. But no answer came. Had my desire, to serve the Lord among the Jews, been of the flesh, it would in all likelihood not have continued; but I still thought about it, and continued to make it a subject of prayer. At last, on June 13th, I received a letter from London, stating that the committee had determined, to take me as a missionary student for six months on probation, provided that I would come to London.

I had now had the matter before me about seven months, having supposed, not only that it would have been settled in a few weeks, but also, that, if I were accepted, I should be sent out immediately, as I had passed the university. Instead of this, not only seven months passed over before the decision came, but I was also expected to come to London, and not only so, but, though I had from my infancy been more or less studying, and now at last wished actively to be engaged, it was required that I should again become a student. For a few moments, therefore, I was greatly disappointed and tried. But, on calmly considering the matter, it appeared to me but right that the committee should know me personally, and that it was also well for me to know them more intimately than merely by correspondence, as this afterwards would make our connexion much more comfortable. I determined therefore, after I had seen my father, and found no difficulty on his part, to go to London.

### **Military Service Demanded**

There was, however, an obstacle in the way of my leaving the country. Every Prussian male subject is under the necessity of being for three years a soldier, provided his state of body allows it; but those who have had a classical education up to a certain degree, and especially those who have passed the university, need to be only one year in the army, but have to equip and maintain themselves during that year. Now, as I had been considered fit for service, when I was examined in my twentieth year, and had only been put back, at my own request, till my twenty-third year, and as I was now nearly twenty-three, I could not obtain a passport out of the country, till I had either served, my time, or had been exempted by the King himself. The latter I hoped would be the case; for it was a well-known fact that those who had given themselves to missionary service, had been always exempted. Certain brethren of influence, living in the capital, to whom I wrote on the subject, advised me, however, to write first to the president of the government of the province to which I belonged. This was done, but I was not exempted. Then those brethren wrote to the King himself; but he replied, that the matter must be referred to the ministry and to the law, and no exception was made in my favour.

I now knew not what to do. In the meantime, at the beginning of August, I was taken ill. It was a common cold at first, but I could not get rid of it, as formerly. At last a skillful physician was consulted, and powerful means were used. After some time, he prescribed tonics and wine. For a day or two I seemed to get better, but after that it appeared, by the return of giddiness in my head, that the tonics had been too soon resorted to. At last, having used still other means, I seemed in a fit state for tonics, and began again to take them. At the same time one of my friends, an American Professor, took me as a companion with him to Berlin and other places, so that we rode about the country for about ten days together. As long as I was day after day in the open air, going from place to place, drinking wine and taking tonics, I felt well; but as soon as I returned to Hale, the

old symptoms returned. A second time the tonics were given up, and the former means used.

About ten weeks had by this time passed away, since I was first taken ill. This illness, in which a particular care for the body seemed to be so right, and in which therefore frequent walks were taken, and in which I thought myself justified in laying aside the study of Hebrew, &c., had not at all a beneficial effect on my soul. In connexion with this one of my chief companions at this time, the last-mentioned American Professor, was a backslider. If the believing reader does not know much of his own heart and of man's weakness, he will scarcely think it possible that, after I had been borne with by the Lord so long, and had received so many mercies at His hands, and had been so fully and freely pardoned through the blood of Jesus, which I both knew from His word, and had also enjoyed; and after that I had been in such various ways engaged in the work of the Lord; I should have been once more guilty of great backsliding, and that at the very time when the hand of God was lying heavily upon me. Oh! How desperately wicked is the human heart.

It was in this cold state of heart, that I rode with my friend to Leipsic, at the time of the famous Michaelmas fair. He wished me to go with him to the Opera. I went, but had not the least enjoyment. After the first act I took a glass of ice for refreshment. After the second act I was taken faint in consequence of this, my stomach being in a very weak state; but I was well enough; after a while, to go to the hotel, where I passed a tolerable night. On the next morning my friend ordered the carriage for our return to Halle. This circumstance the Lord graciously used as a means of arousing me; and on our way home, I freely opened my mind to my friend about the way in which we had been going on; and he then told me that he was in a different state of heart, when he left America. He also told me, when I was taken faint, that he thought it was an awful place to die in. This was the second and last time, since I have believed in the Lord Jesus, that I was in a theatre; and but once, in the year 1827, I went to a concert, when I likewise felt, that it was unbecoming for me, as a child of God, to be in such a place. On my return to Halle I broke a blood-vessel in my stomach, in consequence of the glass of ice. I was now exceedingly weak, in which state I continued for several weeks, and then went for change of air into the country, to the house of a beloved brother in the Lord, who, up to this day, has continued a kind and faithful friend to me. My heart was now again in a better state than it had been before the rupture of the blood-vessel, Thus the Lord, in the faithful love of His heart, seeing that I was in a backsliding state, chastised me for my profit; and the chastisement yielded, in a measure at least, the peaceable fruit of righteousness. Heb. xii. 10,11.

Whilst I was staying in the country, I received a letter from the American Professor, who had in the meantime changed Halle for Berlin, and who wished me to come to Berlin, where, being near the Court, I should be more likely to obtain an exemption from my military duty; and he mentioned, at the same time, that all the expenses, connected with my staying in Berlin, would be fully covered by the remuneration I should receive for teaching German to himself and two of his friends, for a few hours every week. As I had no more connexion with the university at Halle, my course having been finished for more than six months past, and as I had the prospect of being spiritually benefited through my stay in Berlin, and there was no probability, if I remained at Halle, of obtaining the above-mentioned exemption, I came to the conclusion to go to Berlin.

Two ladies of title traveled with me to Berlin in a hired carriage. As I knew that we should be for two days together, I thought, in my fleshly wisdom, that though I ought to

speak to them about the things of God, I should first show them kindness and attention, and that, after having thus opened a way to their hearts, I might fully set before them their state by nature, and point them to the Lamb of God. We went on together most amicably, I making only a few general remarks about divine things. On the second evening, however, when we were near the end of our journey, I felt that it was high time to speak. And no sooner had I begun plainly to do so, than one of them replied, "Oh! Sir, I wish you had spoken sooner about these things, for we have, for a long time, wished to have some one to whom we might open our hearts; but seeing that the ministers whom we know do not live consistently, we have been kept from speaking to them." I now found that they had been under conviction of sin for some time, but did not know the way to obtain peace, even by faith in the Lord Jesus. After this I spoke freely to them during the hour that yet remained. They parted from me under feelings of gratitude and regret that they could hear no more, for they only passed through Berlin. I felt myself greatly reproved, and all I could do was, by a long letter, to seek to make up for my deficiency in ministering to them on the journey. May this circumstance never be forgotten by me, and may it prove a blessing to the believing reader.

### **Exempted from Military Service**

My chief concern now was how I might obtain a passport for England, through exemption from military duty. But the more certain brethren tried, though they knew how to set about the matter, and were also persons of rank, the greater difficulty there appeared to be in obtaining my object; so that in the middle of January 1829 it seemed as if I must immediately become a soldier. There was now but one more way untried, and it was at last resorted to. A believing major, who was on good terms with one of the chief generals, proposed that I should actually offer myself for entering the army, and that then I should be examined as to my bodily qualifications, in the hope, that, as I was still in a very weak state of body, I should be found unfit for military service. In that case it would belong to the chief general finally to settle the matter; who, being a godly man himself, on the major's recommendation would, no doubt, hasten the decision, on account of my desire to be a missionary to the Jews. At the same time it stood so, that, if I should be found fit for service, I should have to enter the army immediately.

Thus far the Lord had allowed things to go, to show me, it appears, that all my friends could not procure me a passport till His time was come. But now it was come. The King of kings had intended that I should go to England, because He would bless me there, and make me a blessing, though I was at that time, and am still most unworthy of it; and, therefore, though the King of Prussia had not been pleased to make an exemption in my favour, yet now all was made plain, and that at a time when hope had almost been given up, and when the last means had been resorted to. I was examined, and was declared to be unfit for military service. With a medical certificate to this effect, and a letter of recommendation from the major I went to this chief general, who received me very kindly and who himself wrote instantaneously to a second military physician, likewise to examine me at once. This was done, and it was by him confirmed that I was unfit. Now the chief general himself, as his adjutants happened to be absent, in order to hasten the matter, wrote with his own hands the papers which were needed, and I got a complete dismissal, and that for life, from all military engagements. This was much more than I could have expected. This military gentleman spoke to me in a very kind way, and pointed out certain parts of the Scriptures, which he in particular advised me to bring before the Jews, especially Romans xi.



On considering why the Lord delayed my obtaining this permission, I find that one of the reasons may have been, that I might both be profited myself by my stay in Berlin, and that I also might be instrumental in benefiting others. As to the first, I would mention, that I learned a lesson in Berlin which I did not know before. Whilst I was at Halle, I thought I should much enjoy being among so many Christians as there are in Berlin. But when I was there I found, that enjoyment in the Lord does not depend upon the multitude of believers, by whom we are surrounded. As to the second point, perhaps the last day may show, that the Lord had some work for me in Berlin: for, from the time of my coming until I left, I preached three, four, or five times every week in the wards of a poorhouse, which was inhabited by about three hundred aged and infirm people. I also preached once in a church, and likewise visited one of the prisons several times on Lord's days to converse with the prisoners about their souls, where I was locked in by the keeper with the criminals in their cells.

On the whole my time in Berlin was not lost; and I was in a better state of heart than I had been for any length of time before, I was not once overcome by my former outward besetting sins, though I have nothing to boast of even as it regards that period; and were only the sins of those days brought against me, had I not the blood of Jesus to plead, I should be most miserable. But I think it right to mention, for the glory of God, as I have so freely spoken about my falls, that whilst I was more than ever unobserved by others; and whilst I was living in the midst of more gaiety and temptations than ever; and had far more money than at any previous time of my life; I was kept from things of which I had been habitually guilty in my unconverted days!--My health was in a very weak state, almost the whole time whilst I was staying in Berlin, and was in no degree better, till, on the advice of, a believing medical professor, I gave up all medicine.

### **Removal to England**

Having now without any further difficulty obtained my passport, I left Berlin on February 3rd, 1829, for London. The Lord gave me more grace on my way from Berlin than on my way to it; for my mouth was almost immediately opened to my fellow-travelers, and the message of the Gospel seemed to be listened to with interest, particularly by one. On February 5th I arrived at my father's house; it was the place where I had lived as a boy, and the scene of many of my sins, my father having now returned to it after his retirement from office. I came to it with peculiar feelings. These feelings were not excited merely by the fact of my having been seven years absent from it, but arose from the spiritual change I had undergone since I last saw the place; for I had never been at Heimersleben since my father fetched me from thence, which was a few days after my imprisonment at Wolfenbüttel had come to an end. There were but three persons in the whole town with whom my soul had any fellowship. One of them had spent all his money in coal mines, and was then earning his daily bread by thrashing corn. As a boy I had in my heart laughed at him, for he seemed so different from all other people. Now I sought him out, having previously been informed that he was a believer, to acknowledge him as such, by having fellowship with him, and attending, a meeting in his house on the Lord's day evening. My soul was refreshed, and his also. Such a spiritual feast, as meeting with a brother, was a rare thing to him. May we believers who live in Great Britain, and especially those of us who are surrounded by many children of God, seek for grace, more highly to prize the blessings which, we enjoy through fellowship with brethren! This dear brother, who had then been a believer for more than twenty years, had only a few times heard the gospel preached during all that period. What a wonderful thing that I, one of the vilest of those brought up in that small town, should have been so abundantly favoured, as to have been brought to the knowledge of the truth, whilst none of all my relations, and

scarcely one of those who grew up with me, so far as it has come to my knowledge, know the Lord!

I left my father's house on February 10th, with the prospect of seeing him again in about a twelvemonth, as a missionary among the Jews. But how has the Lord graciously altered matters!--I was kindly lodged for a night at Halberstadt by an aged brother, and then proceeded towards Rotterdam, by the way of Munster. At Munster I rested a few days, and was very kindly received by several brethren. They were officers in the army, and two of them had been, but a little while before this, Roman Catholics. I lodged in the house of a beloved brother, a tailor, who likewise had been a Roman Catholic.

About February 22nd I arrived at Rotterdam. I took lodgings in the house of a believer, where two German brethren lodged, whom I had known at Halle, and who intended to go out as missionaries in connexion with the Dutch Missionary Society. It was a peculiar feeling to me, for the first time in my life to find myself among Christians of another nation, to attend their family prayer, hear them sing, &c. In spirit I had fellowship with them, though our communication was but broken, as I understood but little of the Dutch language. Here also I heard for the first time the preaching of the Gospel in English, of which I knew enough to understand a part of what was said.--My going to England by the way of Rotterdam was not the usual way; but consulting with a brother in Berlin, who had been twice in England, I was told that this was the cheapest route. My asking this brother, to be profited by his experience, would have been quite right, had I, besides this, like Ezra, sought of the Lord the right way. Ezra viii. 21. But I sought unto men only, and not at all unto the Lord, in this matter. When I came to Rotterdam, I found that no vessels went at that time from that port to London, on account of the ice having just broken up in the river, and that it would be several weeks before the steamers would again begin to ply. Thus I had to wait nearly a month at Rotterdam, and, therefore, not only needed much more time than I should have required to go by way of Hamburgh, but also much more money.

On March 19th, 1829, I landed in London. I now found myself, in a great measure, as it regards liberty, brought back to the years when I was at school; yea, almost all the time I had been at school, and certainly for the last four years, previous to my coming to England, I was not so much bound to time and order as I was in this seminary; and had not there been a degree of grace in me, yea, so much as not to regard the liberty of the flesh, I should now probably have given up all idea of being a missionary to the Jews. But as I did not see that anything was expected from me which I could not conscientiously accede to, I thought it right to submit myself, for the Lord's sake, to all the regulations of the institution.

My brethren in the seminary, most of them Germans, had instruction in Hebrew, Latin, Greek, French, German, &c., scarcely any of them having had a classical education; I read only Hebrew, and was exempted from all the rest. I remember how I longed to be able to expound the Scriptures in English, when I heard a German brother do so, a few days after my arrival. And I also remember what joy it gave me, when a few weeks after, for the first time, I spoke in English to a little boy, whom I met alone in the fields, about his soul, thinking that he would bear with my broken English.--I now studied much, about twelve hours a day, chiefly Hebrew; commenced Chaldee; perfected myself in reading the German-Jewish in Rabbinic characters, committed portions of the Hebrew Old Testament to memory, &c.; and this I did with prayer, often falling on my knees, leaving my books for a little, that I might seek the Lord's blessing, and also, that I might be kept from that spiritual deadness, which is so frequently the result of much study. I

looked up to the Lord even whilst turning over the leaves of my Hebrew dictionary, asking His help, that I might quickly find the words. I made comparatively little progress in English; for living with some of my countrymen, I was continually led to converse in German.

My experience in this particular leads me to remark, that, should this fall into the hands of any who are desirous to labour as missionaries among a people whose language is not their own, they should seek not merely to live among them, for the sake of soon learning their language, but also, as much as possible, to be separated from those who speak their own language; for, when, some months after, I was in Devonshire, completely separated from those who spoke German, I daily made much progress, whilst I made comparatively little in London.

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.

### **Illness**

I came to England weak in body, and in consequence of much study, as I suppose, I was taken ill on May 15, and was soon, at least in my own estimation, apparently, beyond recovery. The weaker I became in body, the happier I was in spirit. Never in my whole life had I seen myself so vile, so guilty, so altogether what I ought not to have been, as at this time. It was as if every sin, of which I had been guilty, was brought to my remembrance; but, at the same time, I could realize that all my sins were completely forgiven that I was washed and made clean, completely clean, in the blood of Jesus. The result of this was, great peace. I longed exceedingly to depart and to be with Christ. When my medical attendant came to see me, my prayer was something like this: "Lord, Thou knowest that he does not know what is for my real welfare, therefore do Thou direct him." When I took my medicine, my hearty prayer each time was something like this: "Lord, Thou knowest that this medicine is in itself nothing, no more than as if I were to take a little water. Now please, O Lord, to let it produce the effect which is for my real welfare, and for Thy glory. Let me either be taken soon to Thyself or let me be soon restored; let me be ill for a longer time, and then taken to Thyself, or let me be ill for a longer time, and then restored. O Lord, do with me as seemeth Thee best!" One sin in particular was brought to my mind, which I never had seen before, viz., that whilst all my life, even in former sicknesses, I had been blessed with uninterrupted refreshing sleep, which now, for some nights, had almost entirely fled from my eyes, I had never heartily thanked God for it.

### **Visit to Teignmouth**

After I had been ill about a fortnight, my medical attendant unexpectedly pronounced me better. This, instead of giving me joy, bowed me down, so great was my desire to be with the Lord; though almost immediately afterwards grace was given me to submit myself to the will of God. After some days I was able to leave my room. Whilst recovering I still continued in a spiritual state of heart, desiring to depart and to be with Christ. As I recovered but slowly, my friends entreated me to go into the country for change of air; but my heart was in such a happy and spiritual frame, that I did not like the thought of

traveling and seeing places. So far was I changed, who once had been so passionately fond of traveling. But as my friends continued to advise me to go into the country, I thought at last that it might be the will of God that I should do so, and I prayed therefore thus to the Lord: "Lord, I will gladly submit myself to Thy will, and go if Thou wilt have me to go. And now let me know Thy will by the answer of my medical attendant. If, in reply to my question, he says it would be very good for me, I will go; but if he says it is of no great importance, then I will stay." When I asked him, he said that it was the best thing I could do. I was then enabled willingly to submit, and accordingly went to Teignmouth. It was there that I became acquainted with my beloved brother, friend, and fellow-labourer, Henry Craik.

A few days after my arrival at Teignmouth, the chapel, called Ebenezer, was reopened, and I attended the opening. I was much impressed by one of those who preached on the occasion. For though I did not like all he said, yet I saw a gravity and solemnity in him different from the rest. After he had preached, I had a great desire to know more of him; and being invited by two brethren of Exmouth, in whose house he was staying, to spend some time with them, I had an opportunity of living ten days with him under the same roof. Through the instrumentality of this brother the Lord bestowed a great blessing upon me, for which I shall have cause to thank Him throughout eternity.

### **Further Light on God's Word**

I will mention some points which God then began to show me.

1. That the word of God alone is our standard of judgment in spiritual things; that it can be explained only by the Holy Spirit; and that in our day, as well as in former times, He is the teacher of His people. The office of the Holy Spirit I had not experimentally understood before that time. Indeed, of the office of each of the blessed persons, in what is commonly called the Trinity, I had no experimental apprehension. I had not before seen from the Scriptures that the Father chose us before the foundation of the world; that in Him that wonderful plan of our redemption originated, and that He also appointed all the means by which it was to be brought about. Further, that the Son, to save us, had fulfilled the law, to satisfy its demands, and with it also the holiness of God; that He had borne the punishment due to our sins, and had thus satisfied the justice of God. And further, that the Holy Spirit alone can teach us about our state by nature, show us the need of a Saviour, enable us to believe in Christ, explain to us the Scriptures, help us in preaching, &c. It was my beginning to understand this latter point in particular, which had a great effect on me; for the Lord enabled me to put it to the test of experience, by laying aside commentaries, and almost every other book, and simply reading the word of God and studying it. The result of this was, that the first evening that I shut myself into my room, to give myself to prayer and meditation over the Scriptures, I learned more in a few hours than I had done during a period of several months previously. *But the particular difference was, that I received real strength for my soul in doing so.* I now began to try by the test of the Scriptures the things which I had learned and seen, and found that only those principles, which stood the test, were really of value.

2. Before this period I had been much opposed to the doctrines of election, particular redemption, and final persevering grace; so much so that, a few days after my arrival at Teignmouth, I called election a devilish doctrine. I did not believe that I had brought myself to the Lord, for that was too manifestly false; but yet I held, that I might have resisted finally. And further, I knew nothing about the choice of God's people, and did not believe that the child of God, when once made so, was safe for ever. In my fleshly

mind I had repeatedly said, If once I could prove that I am a child of God for ever, I might go back into the world for a year or two, and then return to the Lord, and at last be saved. But now I was brought to examine these precious truths by the word of God. Being made willing to have no glory of my own in the conversion of sinners, but to consider myself merely as an instrument; and being made willing to receive what the Scriptures said; I went to the Word, reading the New Testament from the beginning, with a particular reference to these truths. To my great astonishment I found that the passages which speak decidedly for election and persevering grace, were about four times as many as those which speak apparently against these truths; and even those few, shortly after, when I had examined and understood them, served to confirm me in the above doctrines. As to the effect which my belief in these doctrines had on me, I am constrained to state, for God's glory, that though I am still exceedingly weak, and by no means so dead to the lusts of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, as I might and as I ought to be, yet, by the grace of God, I have walked more closely with Him since that period. My life has not been so variable, and I may say that I have lived much more for God than before. And for this have I been strengthened by the Lord, in a great measure, through the instrumentality of these truths. For in the time of temptation, I have been repeatedly led to say: Should I thus sin? I should only bring misery into my soul for a time, and dishonour God; for, being a son of God for ever, I should have to be brought back again, though it might be in the way of severe chastisement. Thus, I say, the electing love of God in Christ (when I have been able to realize it) has often been the means of *producing holiness, instead of leading me into sin*. It is only the notional apprehension of such truths, the want of having them in the heart, whilst they are in the head, which is dangerous.

3. Another truth, into which, in a measure, I was led during my stay in Devonshire, respected the Lord's coming. My views concerning this point, up to that time, had been completely vague and unscriptural. I had believed what others told me, without trying it by the Word. I thought that things were getting better and better, and that soon the whole world would be converted. But now I found in the Word, that we have not the least Scriptural warrant to look for the conversion of the world before the return of our Lord. I found in the Scriptures, that that which will usher in the glory of the church, and uninterrupted joy to the saints, is the return of the Lord Jesus, and that, till then, things will be more or less in confusion. I found in the Word, that the return of Jesus, and not death, was the hope of the apostolic Christians; and that it became me, therefore, to look for His appearing. And this truth entered so into my heart, that, though I went into Devonshire exceedingly weak, scarcely expecting that I should return again to London, yet I was immediately, on seeing the truth, brought off from looking for death, and was made to look for the return of the Lord. Having seen this truth, the Lord also graciously enabled me to apply it, in some measure at least, to my own heart, and to put the solemn question to myself--What may I do for the Lord, before He returns, as He may soon come?

4. In addition to these truths, it pleased the Lord to lead me to see a higher standard of devotedness than I had seen before. He led me, in a measure, to see what is my true glory in this world, even to be despised, and to be poor and mean with Christ. I saw then, in a measure, though I have seen it more fully since, that it ill becomes the servant to seek to be rich, and great, and honoured in that world, where his Lord was poor, and mean, and despised.

I do not mean to say that all that which I believe at present concerning these truths, and those which, in connexion with them, the Lord has shown me since August 1829, were

apprehended all at once; and much less did I see them all at once with the same clearness, as, by the grace of God, I do now; yet my stay in Devonshire was a most profitable time to my soul. My prayer had been, before I left London, that the Lord would be pleased to bless my journey to the benefit of my body and soul. This prayer was answered in both respects; for in the beginning of September I returned to London much better in body; and, as to my soul, the change was so great, that it was like a second conversion.

### **Return to London—Work in the Seminary**

After my return to London, I sought to benefit my brethren in the seminary, and the means which I used were these. I proposed to them to meet together every morning from six to eight for prayer and reading the Scriptures, and that then each of us should give out what he might consider the Lord had shown him to be the meaning of the portion read. One brother in particular was brought into the same state as myself; and others, I trust, were more or less benefited. Several times, when I went to my room after family prayer in the evening, I found communion with God so sweet, that I continued in prayer till after twelve, and then, being full of joy, went into the room of the brother just referred to; and, finding him also in a similar frame of heart, we continued praying until one or two and even then I was a few times so full, of joy, that I could scarcely sleep, and at six in the morning again called the brethren together for prayer.

All this moreover did not leave me idle, as it regards actual engagements in the Lord's work, as I will now show. After I had been for about ten days in London, and had been confined to the house on account of my studies, my health began again to decline; and I saw that it would not be well, my poor body being only like a wreck or brand brought out of the devil's service, to spend my little remaining strength in study, but that I now ought to set about actual engagements in the Lord's work, particularly as He had now given me more light about His truth, and also a heart to serve Him. I consequently wrote to the committee of the Society, requesting them to send me out at once, as they had now had an opportunity of knowing me; and, that they might do so with more confidence, to send me as a fellow-labourer to an experienced brother. However I received no answer.

### **Doubts about Working for the Missionary Society**

After having waited about five or six weeks, in the meantime seeking in one way or other to labour for the Lord, it struck me that I was wrong and acting unscripturally, in waiting for the appointment to missionary work from my fellow-men; but that, considering myself called by the Lord to preach the gospel, I ought to begin at once to labour among the Jews in London, whether I had the title of missionary or not. In consequence of this I distributed tracts among the Jews, with my name and residence written on them, thus inviting them to conversation about the things of God; preached to them in those places where they most numerously collect together; read the Scriptures regularly with about fifty Jewish boys; and became a teacher in a Sunday school. In this work I had much enjoyment and the honour of being reproached and ill-treated for the name of Jesus. But the Lord gave me grace, never to be kept from the work by any danger, or the prospect of any suffering.

My light increased more and more during the months of September, October, and November. At the end of November it became a point of solemn consideration with me, whether I could remain connected with the Society in the usual way. My chief objections were these: 1. If I were sent out by the Society, it was more than probable, yea, almost needful, if I were to leave England, that I should labour on the Continent, as I was unfit to

be sent to eastern countries on account of my health, which would probably have suffered, both on account of the climate, and of my having to learn other languages. Now, if I *did* go to the Continent, it was evident, that without ordination I could not have any extensive field of usefulness, as unordained ministers are generally prevented from labouring freely there; but I could not conscientiously submit to be ordained by unconverted men, professing to have power to set me apart for the ministry, or to communicate something to me for this work which they do not possess themselves. Besides this, I had other objections to being connected with any state church or national religious establishment, which arose from the increased light which I had obtained through the reception of this truth, that *the word of God is our only standard, and the Holy Spirit our only teacher*. For as I now began to compare what I knew of the establishment in England and those on the Continent, with this only true standard, the word of God, I found that all establishments, even because they are establishments, i.e. the world and the church mixed up together, not only contain in them the principles which necessarily must lead to departure from the word of God; but also, as long as they remain establishments, entirely preclude the acting throughout according to the Holy Scriptures.--Then again, if I were to stay in England, the Society would not allow me to preach in any place indiscriminately, where the Lord might open a door for me; and to the ordination of English bishops I had still greater objections, than to the ordination of a Prussian Consistory. 2. I further had a conscientious objection against being led and directed by men in my missionary labours. As a servant of Christ it appeared to me, I ought to be guided by the Spirit, and not by men, as to time and place; and this I would say, with all deference to others, who may be much more taught and much more spiritually minded than myself. A servant of Christ has but one Master. 3. I had love for the Jews, and I had been enabled to give proofs of it; yet I could not conscientiously say, as the committee would expect from me, that I would spend the greater part of my time only among them. For the scriptural plan seemed to me, that, in coming to a place, I should seek out the Jews, and commence my labour particularly among them; but that, if they rejected the gospel, I should go to the nominal Christians--The more I weighed these points, the more it appeared to me that I should be acting hypocritically, were I to suffer them to remain in my mind, without making them known to the committee.

The question that next occurred to me was, how I ought to act if not sent out by the Society. With my views I could not return to Prussia; for I must either refrain from preaching, or imprisonment would be the result. The only plan that presented itself to me was, that I should go from place to place throughout England, as the Lord might direct me, and give me opportunity, preaching wherever I went, both among Jews and nominal Christians. To this mode of service I was especially stirred up through *the recently received truth of the Lord's second coming*, having it impressed upon my heart to seek to warn sinners, and to stir up the saints; as He might soon come. At the same time it appeared to me well, that I should do this in connexion with the Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews, serving them without any salary, provided they would accept me on these conditions. An objection which came to my mind against taking any step which might lead to the dissolution of my connexion with the Society, namely, that I had been some expense to it, and that thus I should appear ungrateful, and the money would seem to have been thrown away, was easily removed in this way:

1. When I engaged with the Society, I did it according to the light I then had. 2. I have but one Master; His is the money, and to Him I have to give an account. 3. Though I have nothing to boast of, but much reason to be ashamed before God on account of my lack of service; yet, speaking after the manner of men, in some measure I did work, not only in

the Lord's service, but even in that particular line for which the money had been put into the hands of the committee.

There remained now only one point more to be settled:

How I should do for the future as it regarded the supply of my temporal wants, which naturally would have been a great obstacle, especially as I was not merely a foreigner, but spoke so little English, that whilst I was greatly assisted in expounding the Scriptures, it was with difficulty I could converse about common things. On this point, however, I had no anxiety; for I considered, that, as long as I really sought to serve the Lord, that is, as long as I sought the kingdom of God and His righteousness, these my temporal supplies would be added to me. The Lord most mercifully enabled me to take the promises of His word, and rest upon them, and such as Matthew vii. 7, 8, John xiv. 13, 14, Matthew vi. 25-34, were the stay of my soul concerning this point. In addition to this, the example of brother Groves, the dentist before alluded to, who gave up his profession, and went out as a missionary, was a great encouragement to me. For the news, which by this time had arrived, of how the Lord had aided him on his way to Petersburg, and at Petersburg, strengthened my faith.

At last, on December 12, 1829, I came to the conclusion to dissolve my connexion with the Society, if they would not accept my services under the above conditions, and to go throughout the country preaching, (being particularly constrained to do so from a desire to serve the Lord as much as in me lay, BEFORE HIS RETURN), and to trust in Him for the supply of my temporal wants. Yet at the same time it appeared well to me to wait a month longer, and to consider the matter still further, before I wrote to the committee, that I might be sure I had weighed it fully.

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.



About the beginning of the next year my fellow students had a fortnight's vacation, and as with them I had conformed myself to the order of the Institution, I felt that I might also partake of their privileges; not indeed to please the flesh, but to serve the Lord. On December 30th, I therefore left London for Exmouth, where I intended to spend my vacation in the house of my Christian friends, who had kindly lodged me the summer before, that I might preach there during this fortnight, and still more fully weigh the matter respecting my proposal to time Society. I arrived at Exmouth on December 31st, at six in the evening, an hour before the commencement of a prayer-meeting at Ebenezer Chapel. My heart was burning with a desire to tell of the Lord's goodness to my soul, and to speak forth what I considered might not be known to most with whom I met. Being, however, not called on, either to speak or pray, I was silent. The next morning I spoke on the difference between being *a Christian and a happy Christian*, and showed, whence it generally comes, that we rejoice so little in the Lord. This my first testimony was blessed to many believers, that God, as it appears, might show me that He was with me. Among others it proved a blessing to a Christian female, who had been for ten years in bondage, and who, in the providence of God, had been brought from Exeter to be present that morning. This she told me many months after, when I met her on a journey.

At the request of several believers I spoke again in the afternoon, and also proposed a meeting in the chapel every morning at ten, to expound the epistle to the Romans. I had also most days a meeting in a room with several ladies, for reading the Scriptures with them. This I did that I might make the best of my fortnight. The second day after my arrival, a brother said to me: "I have been praying for this month past that the Lord would do something for Lypstone, a large parish where there is little spiritual light. There is a Wesleyan chapel, and I doubt not you would be allowed to preach there." Being ready to speak of Jesus wherever the Lord might open a door, yet so, that I could be faithful to the truths which he had been pleased to teach me, I went, and easily obtained liberty to preach twice on the next day, being the Lord's day. Besides this I preached in another village near Exmouth; so that I spoke once, twice, or three times in public or private meetings every day for the first ten or twelve days, and that with great enjoyment to my own soul.

## 1830

During the first days of January, 1830, whilst at Exmouth, it became more and more clear to me, that I could not be connected with the Society under the usual conditions; and as I had an abundance of work where I was, and little money to spend in traveling (for all I possessed was about five pounds), it appeared best to me to write at once to the committee, that, whilst they were coming to a decision respecting me, I might continue to preach. I therefore wrote to them, stating what had been my views before I became acquainted with them, and what they were now. I also stated my difficulty in remaining, connected with them on the usual terms, as stated in substance above; and then concluded, that as, however, I owed them much, as having been instrumental in bringing me to England, where the Lord had blessed me so abundantly: and as I, also, should like to obtain from them the Hebrew Scriptures and tracts for the Jews: I would gladly serve them without any salary, if they would allow me to labour in regard to time and place as the Lord might direct me. Some time after I received a very kind private letter from one of the secretaries, who always had been very kind to me, together with the following official communication from the committee.

*"London Society for promoting Christianity amongst the Jews."*

At a Meeting of the Missionary Sub-Committee, held January 27, 1830, Society House, 10, Wardrobe Place, Doctors' Commons, a Letter was read from Mr. G. F. Müller.

"Resolved, That Mr. Müller be informed, that while the committee cordially rejoice in any real progress in knowledge and grace which he may have made under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, they, nevertheless, consider it inexpedient for any society to employ those who are unwilling to submit themselves to their guidance with respect to missionary operations; and that while, therefore, Mr. Müller holds his present opinions on that point, the committee cannot consider him as a missionary student; but should more mature reflection cause him to alter that opinion, they will readily enter into further communication with him."

Thus my connexion with the Society was entirely dissolved. Fifty-two years have passed away since, and I never have, even for one single moment, regretted the step I took, but have to be sorry that I have been so little grateful for the Lord's goodness to me in that matter. The following part of the Narrative also will prove to the enlightened reader, how God blessed my acting out the light He had been pleased to give me. But I cannot leave this subject, without adding, that it is far from my intention to throw any blame upon the Society. I have no wish to do so: nay, I confess, were the last-mentioned circumstances not so intimately connected with my being in England, I would rather have left out the matter altogether. But being under the necessity of saying something about my connexion with it, it appeared best to me to relate the circumstances just as they were. Yet I do testify that I have not done it in the least for the sake of injuring the Society; for I have received much kindness from some of those connected with it, particularly from two worthy men, then taking a prominent part in managing its affairs. If I be judged differently, I can only say, "Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come."

### **Returns to Teignmouth**

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. My answer was, I do not intend to be stationary in any place, but to go through the country, preaching the Word as the Lord may direct me. In the evening, Monday, I preached for brother Craik, at Shaldon, in the presence of three ministers, none of whom liked the sermon; yet it pleased God, through it, to bring to the knowledge of His dear Son, a young woman who had been servant to one of these ministers, and who had heard her master preach many times. How differently does the Lord judge from man! Here was a particular opportunity for the Lord to get glory to Himself. A foreigner was the preacher, with great natural obstacles in the way, for he was not able to speak English with fluency; but he had a desire to serve God, and was by this time also brought into such a state of heart as to desire that God alone should have the glory, if any good were done through his instrumentality. How often has it struck me, both at that time and since, that His strength was made perfect in my weakness.

On Tuesday evening I preached at Ebenezer Chapel, Teignmouth, the same chapel at the opening of which I became acquainted with the brother, whom the Lord had afterwards used as an instrument of benefiting me so much. My preaching was also disliked there by

many of the hearers; but the Lord opened the hearts of a few to receive the truth, and another young woman was brought to the Lord through the instrumentality of the word then preached. On Wednesday I preached again in the same chapel, and the word was disliked still, perhaps more, though the few, who received the truth in the love of it, increased in number. On Thursday I preached again at Shaldon, and on Friday at Teignmouth. The effect was the same; dislike on the one side, and joy and delight in the truth on the other. By this time I began to reflect about the cause of this opposition; for the same brethren who had treated me with much kindness the summer previous, when I was less spiritually minded, and understood much less of the truth, now seemed to oppose me, and I could not explain it in any other way than this, that the Lord intended to work through my instrumentality at Teignmouth, and that therefore Satan, fearing this, sought to raise opposition against me.

On the Lord's day I dined with a brother, whose heart the Lord had opened to receive me as a servant of Christ. After dinner I talked to a young woman, his servant, at the request of her sister, who on the Tuesday previous had been convinced of sin, and on the Friday brought to enjoy peace in the Lord. This young woman also was, through the instrumentality of this conversation, brought to see her sinful state, though she could not rejoice in the Lord until about seven months after. How differently the Lord dealt with her sister, and yet the work of grace was as real in the one as in the other, as I had full opportunity of seeing afterwards! On this same Lord's day I preached twice at Teignmouth, and once at Shaldon; for so precious did every opportunity seem to me, and so powerfully did I feel the importance of those precious truths, which I had so recently been led to see, that I longed to be instrumental in communicating them to others.

By this time the request, that I might stay at Teignmouth, and be the minister of the above chapel, had been repeatedly expressed by an increasing number of the brethren; but others were decidedly against my remaining there. This opposition was instrumental in settling it in my mind that I should stay for a while, at least until I was formally rejected. In consequence of this conclusion I took the following step, which, it may be, I should not repeat under similar circumstances, but which was certainly taken in love to those who were concerned in the matter, and for the glory of God, as far as I then had light.

On the Tuesday following, after preaching, I told the brethren how, in the providence of God, I had been brought to them without the least intention of staying among them, but that, on finding them without a minister, I had been led to see it to be the will of God to remain with them. I also told them, as far as I remember, that I was aware of the opposition of some, but that I nevertheless intended to preach to them till they rejected me; and if they should say, I might preach, but they would give me no salary, that would make no difference on my part, as I did not preach for the sake of money; but I told them, at the same time, that it was an honour, to be allowed to supply the temporal wants of any of the servants of Christ. The latter point I added, as it seemed right to me, to give out the whole counsel of God, as far as I knew it. On the next day, Wednesday, I left, and having preached in two or three places near Exmouth, and taken leave of my friends there, I returned to Teignmouth.

Here I preached again three times on the Lord's day, none saying we wish you not to preach, though many of the hearers did not hear with enjoyment. Some of them left, and never returned; some left, but returned after awhile. Others came to the chapel, who had not been in the habit of attending there previous to my coming. There was sufficient proof that the work of God was going on, for there were those who were glad to hear what I preached, overlooking the infirmities of the foreigner, delighting in the food for

their souls, without caring much about the form in which the truth was set before them; and these were not less spiritual than the rest: and there were those who objected decidedly; some, however, manifesting merely the weakness of brethren, and others the bitterness of the opposers of the cross. There was, in addition to this, a great stir, a spirit of inquiry, and a searching of the Scriptures, whether these things were so. And what is more than all, God set His seal upon the work, in converting sinners. Twelve weeks I stood in this same position, whilst the Lord graciously supplied my temporal wants, through two brethren, unasked for. After this time, the whole little church, eighteen in number, unanimously gave me an invitation to become their pastor. My answer to them was, that their invitation did not show me more than I had seen before, that it was the will of God that I should remain with them, yet that for their sakes I could not but rejoice in this invitation, as it was a proof to me that God had blessed them through my instrumentality, in making them thus of one mind. I also expressly stated to the brethren, that I should only stay so long with them, as I saw it clearly to be the will of the Lord; for I had not given up my intention of going from place to place, if the Lord would allow me to do so. The brethren, at the same time, now offered to supply my temporal wants, by giving me £55. a year, which sum was afterwards somewhat increased, on account of the increase of the church.

I now had Teignmouth for my residence, but I did not confine my labours to this place; for I preached regularly once a week in Exeter, once a fortnight at Topsham, sometimes at Shaldon, often at Exmouth, sometimes in the above-mentioned villages near Exmouth, regularly once a week at Bishopsteignton, where a part of the church lived, and afterwards repeatedly at Chudleigh, Collumpton, Newton Bushel, and elsewhere.

### **Mode of Preparation for Preaching the Word**

That which I now considered the best mode of preparation for the public ministry of the Word, no longer adopted from necessity, on account of want of time, but from deep conviction, and from the experience of God's blessing upon it, both as it regards my own enjoyment, the benefit of the saints, and the conversion of sinners, is as follows:--1. I do not presume to know myself what is best for the hearers, and I therefore ask the Lord in the first place, that He would graciously be pleased to teach me on what subject I shall speak, or what portion of His word I shall expound. Now sometimes it happens, that previous to my asking Him, a subject or passage has been in my mind, on which it has appeared well for me to speak. In that case I ask the Lord, whether I should speak on this subject or passage. If, after prayer, I feel persuaded that I should I fix upon it, yet so, that I would desire to leave myself open to the Lord to change it, if He please. Frequently, however, it occurs, that I have no text or subject in my mind, before I give myself to prayer for the sake of ascertaining the Lord's will concerning it. In this case I wait some time on my knees for an answer, trying to listen to the voice of the Spirit to direct me. If then a passage or subject, whilst I am on my knees, or after I have finished praying for a text, is brought to my mind, I again ask the Lord, and that sometimes repeatedly, especially if, humanly speaking, the subject or text should be a peculiar one, whether it be His will that I should speak on such a subject or passage. If after prayer my mind is peaceful about it, I take this to be the text, but still desire to leave myself open to the Lord for direction, should He please to alter it, or should I have been mistaken. Frequently also, in the third place, it happens, that I not only have no text nor subject on my mind previous to my praying for guidance in this matter, but also I do not obtain one after once, or twice, or more times praying about it. I used formerly at times to be much perplexed, when this was the case, but for more than forty-five years it has pleased the Lord, in general at least, to keep me in peace about it. What I do is, to go on with my

regular reading of the Scriptures, where I left off the last time, praying (whilst I read) for a text, now and then also laying aside my bible for prayer, till I get one. Thus it has happened, that I have had to read five, ten; yea twenty chapters, before it has pleased the Lord to give me a text: yea, many times I have even had to go to the place of meeting without one, and obtained it perhaps only a few minutes before I was going to speak; but I have never lacked the Lord's assistance at the time of preaching, provided I had earnestly sought it in private. The preacher cannot know the particular state of the various individuals who compose the congregation, nor what they require, but the Lord knows it; and if the preacher renounces his own wisdom, he will be assisted by the Lord; but if he will choose in his own wisdom, then let him not be surprised if he should see little benefit result from his labours.

Before I leave this part of the subject, I would just observe one temptation concerning the choice of a text. We may see a subject to be so very full, that it may strike us it would do for some other occasion. For instance, sometimes a text, brought to one's mind for a week-evening meeting, may appear more suitable for the Lord's day, because then there would be a greater number of hearers present. Now, in the first place, we do not know whether the Lord ever will allow us to preach on another Lord's day; and, in the second place, we know not whether that very subject may not be especially suitable for some or many individuals present just that week-evening. Thus I was once tempted, after I had been a short time at Teignmouth, to reserve a subject, which had been just opened to me, for the next Lord's day. But being able, by the grace of God, to overcome the temptation by the above reasons, and preaching about it at once, it pleased the Lord to bless it to the conversion of a sinner, and that too an individual who meant to come but that once more to the chapel, and to whose case the subject was most remarkably suited.

2. Now when the text has been obtained in the above way, whether it be one or two or more verses, or a whole chapter or more, I ask the Lord that He would graciously be pleased to teach me by His Holy Spirit, whilst meditating over it. Within the last fifty years, I have found it the most profitable plan to meditate with my pen in my hand, writing down the outlines, as the Word is opened to me. This I do, not for the sake of committing them to memory, nor as if I meant to say nothing else, but for the sake of clearness, as being a help to see how far I understand the passage. I also find it useful afterwards to refer to what I have thus written. I very seldom use any other help besides the little I understand of the original of the Scriptures, and some good translations in other languages. My chief help is prayer. I have NEVER in my life begun to study one single part of divine truth, without gaining some light about it, when I have been able really to give myself to prayer and meditation over it. But that I have often found a difficult matter, partly on account of the weakness of the flesh, and partly also on account of bodily infirmities and multiplicity of engagements. This I most firmly believe, that no one ought to expect to see much good resulting from his labours in word and doctrine, if he is not much given to prayer and meditation.

3. Having prayed and meditated on the subject or text, I desire to leave myself entirely in the hands of the Lord. I ask Him to bring to my mind what I have seen in my room, concerning the subject I am going to speak on, which He generally most kindly does, and often teaches me much additionally, whilst I am preaching.

In connection with the above, I must, however, state, that it appears to me there is a preparation for the public ministry of the Word, which is even more excellent than the one spoken of. It is this: to live in such *constant* and *real* communion with the Lord, and to be so *habitually* and *frequently* in meditation over the truth, that without the above

*effort*, so to speak, we have obtained food for others, and know the mind of the Lord as to the subject or the portion of the Word on which we should speak. But this I have only in a small measure experienced, though I desire to be brought into such a state, that habitually "out of my belly may flow rivers of living water."

That which I have found most beneficial in my experience for the last fifty-one years in the public ministry of the Word, is, *expounding* the Scriptures, and especially the going now and then through a whole gospel or epistle. This may be done in a two-fold way, either by entering minutely into the bearing of every point occurring in the portion, or by giving the general outlines, and thus leading the hearers to see the meaning and connexion of the whole. The benefits which I have seen resulting from *expounding* the Scriptures are these: 1. The hearers are thus, with God's blessing, led to the Scriptures. They find, as it were, a *practical* use of them in the public meetings. This induces them to bring their bibles, and I have observed that those who at first did not bring them, have afterwards been induced to do so: so that in a short time few, of the believers at least, were in the habit of coming without them. This is no small matter; for every thing, which in our day will lead believers to value the Scriptures, is of importance. 2. The expounding of the Scriptures is in general more beneficial to the hearers than if, on a single verse, or half a verse, or two or three words of a verse some remarks are made, so that the portion of Scripture is scarcely anything but a motto for the subject; for few have grace to meditate much over the Word, and thus exposition may not merely be the means of opening up to them the Scriptures, but may also create in them a desire to meditate for themselves. 3. The expounding of the Scriptures leaves to the hearers a connecting link, so that the reading over again the portion of the Word, which has been expounded, brings to their remembrance what has been said; and thus, with God's blessing, leaves a more lasting impression on their minds. This is particularly of importance as it regards the illiterate, who sometimes have neither much strength of memory nor capacity of comprehension. 4. The *expounding* of large portions of the Word, as the whole of a gospel or an epistle, besides leading the *hearer* to see the connexion of the whole, has also this particular benefit for the *teacher*, that it leads him, with God's blessing, to the consideration of portions of the Word, which otherwise he might not have considered, and keeps him from speaking too much on favourite subjects, and leaning too much to particular parts of truth, which tendency must surely sooner or later injure both himself and his hearers.--Expounding the word of God brings little honour to the preacher from the *unenlightened* or *careless* hearer, but it tends much to the benefit of the hearers in general.

Simplicity in expression, whilst the truth is set forth, is, in connexion with what has been said, of the utmost importance. It should be the aim of the teacher to speak so, that children, servants, and people who cannot read, may be able to understand him, so far as the natural mind can comprehend the things of God. It ought also to be remembered, that there is, perhaps, not a single congregation in which there are not persons of the above classes present, and that if *they* can understand, the well-educated or literary persons will understand likewise; but the reverse does not hold good. It ought further to be remembered that the expounder of the truth of God speaks for God, for eternity, and that it is not in the least likely that he will benefit the hearers, except he uses plainness of speech, which nevertheless needs not to be vulgar or rude. It should also be considered, that if the preacher strive to speak according to the rules of this world, he may please many, Particularly those who have a literary taste; but, in the same proportion, he is less likely to become an instrument in the hands of God for the conversion of sinners, or for the building up of the saints. For neither eloquence nor depth of thought make the truly great preacher, but such a life of prayer and meditation and spirituality, as may render

him a vessel meet for the Master's use, and fit to be employed both in the conversion of sinners and in the edification of the saints.

## **Baptism**

About the beginning of April I went to preach at Sidmouth. While I was staying there, three sisters in the Lord had, in my presence, a conversation about baptism, one of whom had been baptized after she had believed. When they had conversed a little on the subject, I was asked to give my opinion concerning it. My reply was, "I do not think, that I need to be baptized again." I was then asked by the sister who had been baptized, "But have you been baptized?" I answered, "Yes, when I was a child." She then replied, "Have you ever read the Scriptures, and prayed with reference to this subject?" I answered, "No." "Then," she said, "I entreat you, never to speak any more about it till you have done so." It pleased the Lord to show me the importance of this remark; for whilst at that very time I was exhorting every one to receive nothing which could not be proved by the word of God, I had repeatedly spoken against believers' baptism, without having ever earnestly examined the Scriptures, or prayed concerning it; and now I determined, if God would help me, to examine that subject also, and if infant baptism were found to be scriptural, I would earnestly defend it; and if believers' baptism were right, I would as strenuously defend that, and be baptized.

As soon as I had time, I set about examining the subject. The mode I adopted was as follows: I repeatedly asked God to teach me concerning it, and I read the New Testament from the beginning, with a particular reference to this point. But now, when I earnestly set about the matter, a number of objections presented themselves to my mind.

1. Since many holy and enlightened men have been divided in opinion concerning this point, does this not prove, that it is not to be expected we should come to a satisfactory conclusion about this question in the present imperfect state of the church?--This question was thus removed: If this ordinance is revealed in the Bible, why may I not know it, as the Holy Spirit is the teacher in the church of Christ now as well as formerly? 2. There have been but few of my friends baptized, and the greater part of them are opposed to believers' baptism, and they will turn their backs on me. Answer: Though all men should forsake me, if the Lord Jesus takes me up, I shall be happy. 3. You will be sure to lose one half of your income if you are baptized. Answer: As long as I desire to be faithful to the Lord, He will not suffer me to want. 4. People will call you a Baptist, and you will be reckoned among that body, and you cannot approve of all that is going on among them. Answer: It does not follow that I must in all points go along with all those who hold believers' baptism, although I should be baptized. 5. You have been preaching for some years, and you will have thus publicly to confess, that you have been in an error, should you be led to see that believers' baptism is right. Answer: It is much better to confess that I have been in error concerning that point than to continue in it. 6. Even if believers' baptism should be right, yet it is now too late to attend to it, as you ought to have been baptized immediately on believing. Answer: It is better to fulfill a commandment of the Lord Jesus ever so late, than to continue in the neglect of it.

It had pleased God, in his abundant mercy, to bring my mind into such a state, that I was willing to carry out into my life whatever I should find in the Scriptures concerning this ordinance, either the one way or the other. I could say, "I will do His will," and it was on that account, I believe, that I soon saw which "doctrine is of God," whether infant baptism or believers' baptism. And I would observe here, by the way, that the passage to which I have just now alluded, John vii. 17, has been a most remarkable comment to me

on many doctrines and precepts of our most holy faith. For instance: "Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." Matthew v. 39-44. "Sell that ye have, and give alms." Luke xii. 33. "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another." Rom. xiii. 8. It may be said, surely these passages cannot be taken literally, for how then would the people of God be able to pass through the world. The state of mind enjoined in John vii. 17, will cause such objections to vanish. Whosoever is WILLING To ACT OUT these commandments of the Lord LITERALLY, will, I believe, be led with me to see that, to take them LITERALLY, is the will of God.--Those who do so take them will doubtless often be brought into difficulties, hard to the flesh to bear, but these will have a tendency to make them constantly feel that they are strangers and pilgrims here, that this world is not their home, and thus to throw them more upon God, who will assuredly help us through any difficulty into which we may be brought by seeking to act in obedience to His word.

As soon as I was brought into this state of heart, I saw from the Scriptures that believers ONLY are the proper subjects for baptism, and that immersion is the only true Scriptural mode, in which it ought to be attended to. The passage which particularly convinced me of the former, is Acts viii. 36-38, and of the latter, Rom. vi. 3-5. Some time after, I was baptized. I had much peace in doing so, and never have I for one single moment regretted it.--Before I leave this point, I would just say a few words concerning the result of this matter, so far as it regards some of the objections which occurred to my mind when I was about to examine the Scriptures concerning baptism.

1. Concerning the first objection, my conviction now is, that of all revealed truths not on is more clearly revealed in the Scriptures, not even the doctrine of justification by faith, and that the subject has only become obscured by men not having been willing to take the Scriptures alone to decide the point.
2. Not one of my true friends in the Lord has turned his back on me, as I supposed, and almost all of them have been themselves baptized since.
3. Though in one way I lost money in consequence of being baptized, yet the Lord did not suffer me to be really a loser, even as it regards temporal things; for He made up the loss most bountifully. In conclusion, my example has been the means of leading many to examine the question of baptism, and to submit, from conviction, to this ordinance and seeing this truth I have been led to speak on it as well as on other truths; and during the forty-five years that I have now resided in Bristol, more than three thousand believers have been baptized among us.

In June of this year (1830) I went to preach at the opening of a chapel in a village near Barnstaple, built by that blessed man of God, Thomas Pugsley, now with the Lord. It pleased God to bring two souls to Himself through this my visit, and one more was converted on another visit. So graciously did the Lord condescend to use me, that almost everywhere He blessed the Word which I preached, thereby testifying that He had sent me, and thereby also getting glory to Himself in using such an instrument. It was so usual for me to preach with particular assistance, especially during the first months of this year, that once, when it was otherwise, it was much noticed by myself and others. The



circumstance was this. One day, before preaching at Teignmouth, I had more time than usual, and therefore prayed and meditated about six hours, in preparation for the evening meeting, and I thought I saw many precious truths in the passage on which I had meditated. It was the first part of the first chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians. After I had spoken a little time, I felt that I spoke in my own strength, and I, being a foreigner, felt particularly the want of words, which had not been the case before. I told the brethren, that I felt I was left to myself, and asked their prayers. But after having continued a little longer, and feeling the same as before, I closed, and proposed that we should have a meeting for prayer, that the Lord still might be pleased to help me. We did so, and I was particularly assisted the next time.

### **Breaking Bread**

During this summer also it appeared to me scriptural, according to the example of the Apostles, Acts xx. 7, to break bread every Lord's day, though there is no commandment given to do so, either by the Lord, or by the Holy Ghost through the Apostles. And at the same time it appeared to me scriptural, according to Eph. iv., Rom. xii., &c., that there should be given room for the Holy Ghost to work through any of the brethren whom He pleased to use; that thus one member might benefit the other with the gift which the Lord has bestowed upon him. Accordingly at certain meetings any of the brethren had an opportunity to exhort or teach the rest, if they considered that they had any thing to say which might be beneficial to the hearers.--I observe here, that, as the Lord gave me grace to endeavour at once to carry out the light which He had been pleased to give me on this point, and as the truth was but in part apprehended, there was much infirmity mixed with the manner of carrying it out. Nor was it until several years after that the Lord was pleased to teach me about this point more perfectly. That the disciples of Jesus should meet together, on the first day of the week, for the breaking of bread, and that that should be their principal meeting, and that those, whether one or several, who are truly gifted by the Holy Spirit for service, be it for exhortation, or teaching, or rule, &c., are responsible to the Lord for the exercise of their gifts: these are to me no matters of uncertainty, but points on which my soul, by grace, is established, through the revealed will of God.

### **Marries Miss Groves**

On October 7th, 1830, I was united by marriage to Miss Mary Groves, sister of the brother whose name has already been mentioned. This step was taken after prayer and deliberation, from a full conviction that it was better for me to be married: and I have never regretted since, either the step itself or the choice, but desire to be truly grateful to God for having given me such a wife.

### **Gives up a Stated Salary**

About this time I began to have conscientious objections against any longer receiving a stated salary. My reasons against it were these:--

1. The salary was made up by pew-rents; but pew-rents are, according to James ii. 1-6, against the mind of the Lord, as, in general, the poor brother cannot have so good a seat as the rich. (All pew-rents were therefore given up, and all the seats made free, which was stated at the entrance of the chapel).
2. A brother may *gladly* do something towards my support if left to his own time; but when the quarter is up, he has perhaps other expenses, and I do not know, whether he pays his money grudgingly, and of necessity, or cheerfully; but God loveth a cheerful giver. Nay, *I knew it to be a fact*, that sometimes it

had not been convenient to individuals to pay the money, when it had been asked for by the brethren who collected it. 3. Though the Lord had been pleased to give me grace to be faithful, so that I had been enabled not to keep back the truth, when He had shown it to me; still I felt that the pew-rents were a snare to the servant of Christ. It was a temptation to me, at least for a few minutes, at the time when the Lord had stirred me up to pray and search the Word respecting the ordinance of baptism, because £30. of my salary was at stake, if I should be baptized.

For these reasons I stated to the brethren, at the end of October, 1830, that I should for the future give up having any regular salary. After I had given my reasons for doing so, I read Philippians iv., and told the saints, that if they still had a desire to do something towards my support, by voluntary gifts, I had no objection to receive them, though ever so small, either in money or provisions. A few days after it appeared to me, that there was a better way still; for if I received personally every single gift, offered in money, both my own time and that of the donors would be much taken up; and in this way also the poor might, through temptation, be kept from offering their pence, a privilege of which they ought not to be deprived; and some also might in this way give more than if it were not known who was the giver; so that it would still be doubtful whether the gifts were given grudgingly or cheerfully. For these reasons especially, there was a box put up in the chapel, over which was written, that whoever had a desire to do something towards my support, might put his offering into the box.

At the same time it appeared to me right, that henceforth I should ask no man, not even my beloved brethren and sisters, to help me, as I had done a few times according to their own request, as my expenses, on account of traveling much in the Lord's service, were too great to be met by my usual income. For unconsciously I had thus again been led, in some measure, to trust in an arm of flesh; going to man, instead of going to the Lord at once. *To come to this conclusion before God, required more grace than to give up my salary.*

About the same time also my wife and I had grace given to us to take the Lord's commandment, "Sell that ye have, and give alms," Luke xii. 33, literally, and to carry it out. Our staff and support in this matter were Matthew vi. 19-34, John xiv. 13,14. We leaned on the arm of the Lord Jesus. It is now fifty-one years, since we set out in this way, and *we do not in the least regret the step we then took.* Our God also has, in His tender mercy, given us grace to abide in the same mind concerning the above points, both as it regards principle and practice; and this has been the means of letting us see the tender love and care of our God over His children, even in the most minute things, in a way in which we never experimentally knew them before; and it has, in particular, made the Lord known to us more fully than we knew Him before, *as a prayer hearing God.* As I have written down how the Lord has been pleased to deal with us since, I shall be able to relate some facts concerning this matter, as far as they may tend to edification.

Copied by Stephen Ross for WholesomeWords.org from *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller written by Himself.* First Part, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1895.