"STRENGTHENING THE FAITH OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD": PIETISM, PRINT,

AND PRAYER IN THE MAKING OF A WORLD EVANGELICAL HERO,

GEORGE MÜLLER OF BRISTOL (1805-1898)

by

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B.A., California State University, Bakersfield, 1997
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M.A., Villanova University, 2003

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of History
College of Arts and Sciences

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

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Abstract

George Müller of Bristol (1805-1898) was widely celebrated in the nineteenth century as the founder of the Ashley Down Orphan Homes in Bristol, England. He was a German immigrant to Great Britain who was at the vanguard of evangelical philanthropic care of children. The object of his charitable work, orphans, influenced the establishment of Christian orphanages in Great Britain, North America, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe. However, what brought Müller widespread public acclaim was his assertion that he supported his orphan homes solely by relying on faith and prayer. According to Müller, he prayed to God for the material needs of the orphans and he believed, in faith, that those needs were supplied by God, without resort to direct solicitation, through donations given to him. He employed his method as a means to strengthen the faith of his fellow Christians and published an ongoing chronicle of his answered prayers that served as evidence. Müller's method of financial support brought him to the forefront of public debate in the nineteenth century about the efficacy of prayer and the supernatural claims of Christianity. His use of prayer to provide for the orphans made his name a "household word the world round."

This dissertation is a study of Müller's influence on evangelicals that analyzes Müller's enduring legacy as a hero of the faith among evangelicals around the world. For evangelicals Müller was an exemplary Christian—a Protestant saint—who embodied a simple but pure form of biblical piety. To explore his influence from the nineteenth century through the twentieth century, this study, as a social biography, investigates how evangelicals remember individuals and how that memory, in this case Müller, influenced the practice of prayer in evangelical piety. The dissertation affirms a link between evangelicals and eighteenth-century German Pietism,

while also showing that evangelicals used publications to celebrate and to informally canonize individuals esteemed for their piety. The dissertation, ultimately, is concerned with how evangelicals identified heroes of the faith and why these heroes were and are widely used as models for edification and for emulation in everyday life.

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Table of Contents

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Dedication

For Rachael, Keegan, and Braeden

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: GEORGE MÜLLER AND EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

Introduction

George Müller (1805-1898)[1] did not set out to become a hero of the faith known around the world. Over the course of his lifetime he became a highly regarded example of evangelical Christian piety and remains a well-known figure in popular evangelicalism today. His importance among evangelicals extended beyond his adopted city of Bristol and his adopted country of Great Britain to reach around the world. However, Müller's rise to global prominence was not accidental. He was a compulsive publisher of his own accounts of God's response to his prayers in his continually revised and expanded text, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings, with George Muller, Minister of Christ, Written By Himself*. First published in 1837, the *Narrative* eventually reached six parts that was published in a four-volume set in 1886 and in a final, ninth edition in 1895.[2] The books tell the ongoing story of his interactions with God through prayer to support some 2,050 orphans by the end of the nineteenth century, simply by

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[1] Spellings of George Müller's name include variations such as Georg Muller, George Muller, and George Mueller. To maintain consistency, George Müller will be used throughout the main text of this dissertation, but variant spellings will be employed in direct quotations and titles from the primary and secondary sources.

[2] For a short account of the multiple editions and printings of Müller's publications, see Joshua James Nelson, "George Müller: His Orphan Work and Influence" (M.A. thesis, California State University, Stanislaus, 2000), 5.

adhering to the "living by faith" principle.[3] The support of the orphan homes by prayer recorded

in the *Narrative* eventually brought Müller to the forefront of evangelical popular thought by the

middle of the nineteenth century. Preachers, periodical articles, books, and ordinary

conversations promoted Müller's work until his story was no longer localized to Bristol,

England, or even to Great Britain, but reached beyond the British Isles to continental Europe, the

United States, Japan, New Zealand, Australia, India, and the Middle East. Even today

evangelicals around the world, from the United States to South Korea, are familiar with his

name.[4]

Defining Evangelicalism

Protestant Christianity originated in the context of the Reformations of the sixteenth

century ignited by the Augustinian monk Martin Luther. In the sixteenth-century context the

word "evangelical," a term popularized by Luther, simply meant a return to the Gospel (in Greek

evangelion) message of the New Testament. For Luther, evangelical meant focusing on the

Gospel message without any intermediaries between God and people or any reliance on works of

piety to obtain salvation, but rather a faith in Jesus Christ to save those who believed in him as

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[3] Timothy Larsen argues that "living by faith" is a practice associated most famously with George Müller and the Open Brethren. It entails, as Larsen defines it, "the belief that full-time workers, such as missionaries or individuals meeting the pastoral needs of a church, should not be paid a salary. Instead, all such workers should 'look directly to the Lord' for support and trust that he would lead Christians to send them money." Timothy Larsen, "'Living By Faith': A Short History of Brethren Practice," *Brethren Archivists and Historians Network Review* 1, no. 2 (Winter 1998): 68.

[4] In 2005 a Korean translation of *Release the Power of Prayer*, an edited volume based on the writings of George Müller, was published. The backcover of the Korean volume promoted the book with the following statement: "Miracles always happen to those who pray, and God does miracles for you." George Müller, *Release the Power of Prayer*, trans. Eung Joon Bae (Seoul: Kyujang Publishing Company, 2005).

savior.[5] Simply put, evangelicals were those who developed a bond with God through an

intimate and individual relationship based on the concept of faith. Consequently, the hierarchy

of priests and prelates in the Roman Catholic Church no longer held authority for those who

embraced this new theological understanding of Christian initiation. Among evangelicals a

radical spiritual leveling occurred that empowered all who had, as theologian Gerald Birney

Smith notes, "a genuine personal *experience* of religion."[6] Evangelicals, as historian Robert D.

Linder explains,

> [are part of] that family of faith that stemmed from the Protestant Reformation and
> persisted into the seventeenth century, emerging in the eighteenth century in even more
> virile form than anticipated by its sixteenth-century forbears. . . . Evangelicals seem to
> emerge in each century to make their mark on the Christian Church, each time in a
> slightly different form with somewhat different emphases appropriate for the age.
> However, in all eras they have featured an emphasis on a personal commitment to Jesus
> Christ that is based on faith and not works and which results in a transformed lifestyle. In
> other words, they have shared a profound Christocentric theology and they have insisted
> on the necessity of "the new birth" and "a heart religion" that had a practical outcome in

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[5] Luther's initial understanding of faith was based on a study of Paul's Epistle to the
Romans for lectures he was presenting at the University of Wittenberg, Germany, from
November 1515 to September 1516. Oberman argues that Luther's mature thought on the issue
of faith was not realized until the "beginning of 1518." Heiko A. Oberman, *Luther: Man
Between God and the Devil*, trans. Eileen Walliser-Schwarzbart (New York: Image Books,
1992), 164. Howard Clark Kee, a noted New Testament scholar, explains that "In the writings of
Paul faith is primarily trust, reliance, and confidence in God's words and deeds. . . . Paul, in his
letters to the Galatians and the Romans (Gal 3; Rom 4), saw that confidence in the divine
promise as the basis of one's relationship to God and participation in his covenant people."
Howard Clark Kee, "From the Jesus Movement Toward Institutional Church," in *Conversion to
Christianity: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives on a Great Transformation*, ed. and
intro. Robert W. Hefner (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), 62.

[6] Smith goes on to point out that "Pietism, the Moravian Brethren, and the Wesleyan
movement are all remarkable for their freedom from attempts to Christianize the world by
compelling subjection to an official system." Evangelical, according to Smith, is therefore
marked first and foremost by a personal religious experience with God. Strict doctrinal
orthodoxy, a hierarchy of leaders, and rites and rituals are for evangelicals foreign to their way of
thinking and explains, to some degree, the large and diverse groups of Protestant sects and
denominations that self-identify as evangelicals. Gerald Birney Smith, "The Spirit of
Evangelical Christianity," *The Journal of Religion* 2, no. 6 (November 1922): 626, 629.

everyday life. They also have embraced the Bible as their sole authority for faith and practice in the Christian Church, no matter what denominational stripe they might bear.[7]

Linder emphasized continuity among evangelicals from the Reformation through the eighteenth century when evangelicalism manifested itself as a more devout form of Protestant Christianity. "Evangelicalism" remains a problematic term[8] that describes those who are evangelical, specifically Protestant in form of Christian theology and practice, and were influenced by the eighteenth-century Great Awakening that impacted Great Britain, Europe, and North America.[9] W. R. Ward, emeritus professor of history at the University of Durham, England, captures the confounding nature of the problem when he explains, "Evangelicals, in the Anglo-Saxon sense of the word, seem generally to have found it easier to recognize each other than others have found it to categorise them."[10] The issue Ward points to when looking at the development of English-speaking evangelicalism in the seventeenth and eighteenth century has remained a constant problem in the history of evangelicalism to the present. Those who define themselves as evangelicals have been able to identify each other and form communities and networks based on that knowledge, but troubles arise when those studying evangelicals attempt to define them in a comprehensive manner. Evangelicalism, as it originated in the eighteenth century, was also a

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[7] Robert D. Linder, "The Evangelical Triangle: The Connections of the Pietist Renewal, the Wesleyan Revival, and the First Great Awakening" (paper presented at Local, Regional, and Global Constructions of Christianity: Religious Communication Networks 1680-1830, German Historical Institute, London, England, July 12, 2007), 2.

[8] Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1785-1865* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 7.

[9] The best overview of these international revivals is found in W. R. Ward, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1; also see, Henry D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism*, 3rd ed. (London: Epworth Press, 2002), xvii.

[10] W. R. Ward, *Early Evangelicalism, A Global Intellectual History, 1670-1789* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 6.

transatlantic movement that involved individuals on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, such as Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, and John Wesley. However, because European colonialism and British Imperialism had not reached their apex, eighteenth-century evangelicals were not known globally, in particular, among non-Western people in a way that would become possible in the nineteenth century.

A definitive characteristic of evangelicals, as Linder emphasized, was their Christocentric understanding of God. Edwards, Whitefield, and Wesley gave renewed emphasis to personal salvation by faith in the atoning death of Jesus of Nazareth.[11] This Christocentric element is also crucial to historian David Bebbington's widely embraced definition of evangelicalism. Bebbington posited that,

> There are four qualities that have been the special marks of Evangelical religion: *conversionism*, the belief that lives need to be changed; *activism*, the expression of the gospel in effort; *biblicism*, a particular regard for the Bible; and what may be called *crucicentrism*, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Together they form the quadrilateral of priorities that is the basis of Evangelicalism.[12]

Bebbington's argument for the four defining qualities of evangelicalism works best at broadly incorporating all of the disparate theological groupings of those who self-identify as evangelicals.[13] However, Bebbington's definition generalizes evangelicalism to a fault and lacks the specificity necessary to know exactly which Protestants would identify with the movement.

Clarity can be provided by focusing attention on the essential attributes that evangelicals acknowledge. Evangelicals self-identify as a collective whole by recognizing the following

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[11] "Evangelicalism," in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, 3rd rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 583-584.

[12] David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), 2-3.

[13] Neil T. R. Dickson, "Evangelical Historiography: An Interview with David Bebbington," *Brethren Archivists and Historians Network Review* 3 (2005): 82-102.

characteristics: belief in the deity of Jesus Christ based on his death on the cross to account for human sin followed by his resurrection and ascension, a personal religious experience that acknowledges Jesus Christ as savior, the supreme authority of the Bible in Christian life and thought, the necessity of sharing their personal religious experience with others, living a life defined by serious religious piety informed by biblically-based ethics and morality, and an expectation of the eventual return of Jesus Christ.

Evangelicals usually self-indentify according to a variety of markers they recognize as essential for their understanding of Christian practice and theology.   The result is both unity and diversity as theologian Gabriel Fackre explained when he wrote,

> Accompanying marks of an evangelical are a sense of urgency about sharing the message of Scripture and the experience of justification (thus the inextricability of evangelism and evangelicalism), an intense piety, and adherence to strict codes of personal morality. While evangelicals share these characteristics, they do so in a variety of subcommunities that include *fundamentalists*, for hyperinerrancy becomes the test of faithfulness to Christ in a world of Manichaean "us and them" divisions; *old evangelicals*, for whom the born-again experience and its replication through evangelicalism are focal; *new evangelicals*, for whom apologetics and social concern are features added to the former's commitments; *justice and peace evangelicals*, for whom social action directed toward systemic change of established structures is a crucial mark of piety; *charismatic evangelicals*, for whom a 'second blessing' of exuberant worship, healing, and glossolalia are the stigmata of a full faith; *ecumenical evangelicals*, who are hospitable to kindred souls and minds beyond the self-defined evangelical circle, and thus often in coalition with evangelical *ecumenicals*.
>
> Each of these subcommunities is identifiable by its network of churches and parachurches, journals, publishing houses, educational institutions, advocacy movements, mailing lists, etc. Of course, there is a fluidity, a mobility within and among the evangelical camps. And there are subsets of the subsets, as for example, the divisions within fundamentalism between the political fundamentalism of the Christian Right and the apolitical posture of more traditional fundamentalists, or the difference between apocalyptic fundamentalism (especially, premillennialist, and within this "pretrib," "midtrib," and "posttrib") and nonapocalyptic fundamentalism (viz., postmillennial Reconstructionists). For all this diversity (regularly lost on outside commentary, both secular and religious), the commonalities noted do give evangelicalism its identity.[14]

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[14] Gabriel Fackre, "Narrative Theology from an Evangelical Perspective," in *Faith and Narrative*, ed. Keith E. Yandell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 189.

Fackre captures the broad range of sub-groups, theologies, and activities that comprise

evangelical Christianity. Although no definition will ever completely account for the breadth of

diversity among evangelicals,[15] these traits best distill the heavy emphasis evangelicals place on

the person of Jesus Christ.[16] The last of these attributes also takes seriously evangelicals' belief

in the Second Coming of Christ that is often *the* motivation behind what Bebbington labels

"*activism*." Because evangelicals are compelled by their interpretation of the Bible to tell others

about Jesus, evangelicals are found around the world proclaiming salvation through faith in Jesus

Christ. Everything from schools, hospitals, and open-air preaching events to publications and

films have been employed by evangelicals as tools for preaching the gospel. Regardless of the

method, evangelicals remained determined to witness and reach all of humanity with the "good

news" of salvation by faith in Jesus. Evangelicals, consequently, have been instrumental in the

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[15] Another definition by historian Bruce L. Shelly points to the problem of trying to
define evangelicals in an inclusive yet precise manner. Shelly argues that "It [the term
evangelical] is most accurately employed, however, in referring to all Christians within
Protestant Christianity who emphasize salvation by faith in the atoning death of Jesus Christ
through personal conversion, the authority of Scripture, and the importance of preaching in
contrast to ritual as a means of saving grace." Shelly's definition places heavy emphasis on the
practice of preaching over ritual and liturgy. However, there are evangelicals who have been
part of high liturgical church traditions. Furthermore, many evangelicals are not uniform in how
they view preaching versus what they would have called personal evangelism. Preaching implies
a reliance on a pastor or preacher to present the Gospel, whereas most evangelicals, especially
since the last half of the nineteenth century, would believe that ordinary Christians have a
responsibility to share Jesus with others through a variety of means. Bruce L. Shelly,
Evangelicalism in America (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1967), 14.

[16] Historian Mark A. Noll notes that many of the qualities that define American
evangelicalism, in particular, are foreshadowed in European Protestantism. Mark A. Noll,
"Common Sense Traditions and American Evangelical Thought," *American Quarterly* 37, no. 2
(Summer 1985): 226.

global expansion of Christianity over the last several centuries and enabled Müller to obtain worldwide recognition.[17]

Autobiographical Tradition

Müller made his unique contribution to evangelical history through his autobiographical writings. Müller's *Narrative* is part of the autobiographical tradition that begins with St. Augustine and remains a vibrant part of the history of Christianity through the twenty-first century.[18] Müller's own life story as one who was "lost" from God, completely corrupted by immoral behavior, and eventually transformed by an encounter with God functions in the

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[17] Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 78.

[18] Augustine of Hippo's *Confessions*, as his main modern biographer Peter Brown notes, "is an autobiography in which the author has imposed a drastic, fully-conscious choice of what is significant. The *Confessions* are, quite succinctly, the story of Augustine's 'heart', or of his 'feelings'—his *affectus*." Consequently, Augustine envisioned his *Confessions* to be an "'accusation of oneself; praise of God.'" Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, rev. ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 163, 169. The impact of the *Confessions* on the history of Christianity was significant. Brown contends, "From 413 to Augustine's death, in 430, the various phases of the Pelagian controversy revealed to an attentive (and not always sympathetic) audience of educated Latin Christians, which stretched from Britain to Jerusalem, successive layers of the message condensed, with such persuasive power, in the *Confessions*. The controversy placed human agency at the center of attention; and the qualified acceptance of the views of Augustine in preference to those of Pelagius placed God at the center of that agency. By this decision, Latin Christians of the fifth century made plain that they needed heroes, not self-improvers; and heroes, as many late Roman persons knew (including the emperor Constantine, whose sense of imperial mission had been fuelled by frequent great visions), were made by God. In the words of a fervent supporter of Augustine, Prosper of Aquitaine, the Church gained nothing from 'a fickle will, that is not ruled by the changeless will of God;' for 'the elect receive grace, not to allow them to remain idle . . . but to enable them to work well.'" Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity AD 200-1000* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 49. Müller's *Narrative* clearly reflects Augustine's model of a selective autobiography that accuses the self and intends to direct praise to God, while completely submitting the will of the individual to God so that a hero could emerge for God's glory and as a model for lay Christians. However, the inspiration for Müller's autobiography was not Augustine, but rather August Hermann Francke, a leading Pietist and professor at the University of Halle.

archetypal model of a Christian testimony. Conversion or "awakening" stories were an elementary part of the evangelical tradition that sought to create distance from the cultural forms of Christianity that evangelicals believed were part of the deadening dogma-oriented faith of Roman Catholics, traditional Anglicans, and orthodox Lutherans. Although such narratives in the evangelical tradition are not new, Müller's practice of living by faith—praying to God to provide for basic material needs without letting his needs be known to others—enabled his story to transcend the common evangelical salvation narrative and present an astounding account of God's work in everyday life. Müller's writings emphasized the agency of the individual and the agency of the Holy Spirit in everyday events. People chose to pray, to give money, to do good works, to sacrifice for the benefit of others, while the Holy Spirit prompted people to act at a particular moment in response to an unknown need or situation. Müller not only took the unusual step of supposedly living his life in complete reliance on prayer to God to meet his everyday material needs, but also applied the same principle to housing, feeding, and educating young orphan children. By becoming the savior of orphans, reliant on God's provision for the support of those orphans, Müller was *made* into something larger than life—a living example of God's great work in the world. The key point that Müller made in his writings was that he never allowed anyone to know what the need was before hand, but he simply prayed that God would use someone to give what was required. When the need was met, he rejoiced and the orphans remained cared for by prayerful provision.

Celebrating the Life of Faith

In the nineteenth century, Müller's living-by-faith approach to everyday life drew the attention of both Christians and the spiritually curious from around the world. He became part of an elite category of individuals who were able to speak across denominational, theological,

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racial, cultural, linguistic, national, and economic boundaries. The list of nineteenth-century

religious leaders who attracted a similar global attention can be limited to a handful of persons:

various popes, David Livingston, John Henry Newman, Charles G. Finney, Charles H. Spurgeon,

and Dwight L. Moody. However, none of these individuals became part of the collective

memory of evangelicals in the way that Müller did. Some were famous preachers and

missionaries, influential ecclesiastical leaders, famous converts or prolific writers, but they all

lacked a simple single story that pointed away from their personality or position to serve as

evidence for maintaining a belief in God. Müller's name did not suffer from this limitation. Not

only did his books, reports, and tracts challenge ordinary people to re-conceptualize their idea of

Christianity, but he also personally travelled around the world giving his testimony of God's

faithfulness and permanently inserted himself into the lives and memories of those to whom he

preached.

Müller became a recognized religious authority through the simple stories that were

recorded and circulated widely in periodicals, newspapers, pamphlets, books, and by word of

mouth. In addition, he personally challenged men and women who were skeptical, critical, or

antagonistic to the Christian religion to reconsider their position by examining his testimony in

light of the material evidence. His testimony increased in clout with each year that he continued

to live by faith. The annual reports provided by Müller served as evidence of God's hand in

history that were not easily dismissed by critics. Müller, therefore, offered his personal

experience as proof of God's existence and activity in the modern world.

Müller's life and story highlights a key aspect of evangelical Christianity in the

nineteenth century that has not yet been fully recognized—the power of personal testimony.

Reporters, critics, and admirers were all amazed by the compounding evidence of Müller's

personal testimony and annual published reports of God's faithful support of his various

religious and philanthropic enterprises. His mode of reliance on God was an attempt to thwart

the rise of doubt about the power of God in the world. He served as a counter argument to the

development of theological liberalism, the rise of scientific skepticism, doubts about the efficacy

of prayer, and criticism of the supernatural.[19] Consequently, Müller was widely recognized in

the nineteenth century because he forced Christians and non-Christians alike to come to terms

with his claim for the repeated supernatural work of God in his testimony of answered prayer.

The impact was profound. Leading political, religious, and social figures of the time,

including such religious luminaries as Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Dwight L. Moody, Francis

Wayland, Dr. Thomas Barnardo, Arthur T. Pierson, J. Hudson Taylor, Andrew Murray, Henry

Grattan Guinness, W. E. Boardman, John Alexander Dowie, and A. B. Simpson, were all

influenced to varying degrees by Müller. Non-Western Christians also found his story

compelling and some even adopted his method of life by faith.[20] Even those who did not

identify with nineteenth-century evangelical religion paid attention to Müller. For example,

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[19] Historian Ian Bradley argues similarly that in the eighteenth century evangelicalism became an important religious force in Great Britain because it was able to explain the cause for the major "disasters" of the period—the American Revolution, riots, mob violence, and the French Revolution. Bradley contends that evangelicals held that "the country [Great Britain] was suffering because the country had sinned." Evangelicals realized that the French Revolution supported their commonsensical claim because France was "universally reckoned to be the most decadent and immoral society in Europe, and France in the French Revolution had suffered, by far, the worst disaster." Consequently, in the 1780s evangelicalism attracted a new generation of devoted Christian converts, like William Wilberforce, who appealed for societal repentance that challenged excesses of eighteenth-century sexual laxity, open drunkenness, gambling, and other vices. David M. Thompson and Ian Bradley, *Evangelical Religion and Society From 1789-1829*, HEA024, Audio Learning Limited (Audiocassette), 1977.

[20] Jintarō Fujii, ed., *Outline of Japanese History in the Meiji Era*, trans. Hattie K. Colton and Kenneth E. Colton (Tokyo: Ōbunsha, 1958), 373; William C. Irvine, "An Appreciation," in *Pandita Ramabai: A Great Life in Indian Missions*, J. Chappell and H. S. Dyer (London: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.), 62.

President Rutherford B. Hayes met with Müller at the White House, Charles Dickens made "Brother Müller" the lead story in his journal *Household Words*, Ralph Waldo Emerson read Müller and was not impressed nor was the great Harvard psychologist William James who critiqued Müller's method of piety in his now-classic work, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. Müller was, in fact, a leading religious personality in the nineteenth century.

Thanks to the celebrity garnered in the nineteenth century, Müller's memory remained important for evangelicals in the twentieth century. He attracted imitators like the orphanage director Laura B.S. Crouch in Canada, the American Fundamentalist John R. Rice, and scores of ordinary Christians, pastors, and missionaries who used his story as a model of serious Christian piety. Even Mohandas K. Gandhi became familiar with Müller's story from a friend in South Africa who attempted to employ Müller's testimony as evidence of the effectiveness of Christian prayer.[21] Others saw in Müller, as they either read or heard about his story, an inspirational example of faithful and active piety that they wished they could realize in their everyday life. Müller's story of his sinful past, his acceptance of Jesus Christ as savior, and his reliance upon God to provide for his daily needs was fundamental to his becoming a recognized authority on the practice of Christianity.

Müller's rise to renown raises many questions about how evangelical culture operated in the nineteenth century, the twentieth century, and at the dawn of the twenty-first century. For

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[21] Gandhi wrote that a friend of his in South Africa, a Mr. Baker, hoped he would "embrace Christianity," and turned to answered prayer to convince him. Gandhi commented, "his [Mr. Baker's] final hope was the efficacy of prayer. He had an abiding faith in prayer. It was his firm conviction that God could not but listen to prayer fervently offered. He would cite the instances of men like George Muller of Bristol, who depended entirely on prayer even for his temporal needs. I listened to his [Mr. Baker's] discourse on the efficacy of prayer with unbiased attention, and assured him that nothing could prevent me from embracing Christianity, should I feel the call." Mohandas K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments With Truth*, trans. Mahadev Desai (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), 135.

example, what initially drew attention to Müller and allowed him to become a celebrated

religious figure?   What does his celebrity reveal about how social and cultural networks

functioned in the nineteenth century? How was he able to transcend the limits of national

influence and become globally recognized?[22] Did his personality play a role in his attractiveness?

Why do evangelicals continue to revere him and read his writings today?[23] And finally, why has

Müller's story become part of popular evangelical memory that persists into the present? These

questions will all be dealt with in the course of this dissertation in an effort to understand

evangelicals in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and even today.

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[22] Historian David Bebbington points out that "It has been customary to organize ecclesiastical history by country, tracing events in one land to the exclusion of developments in another. Normally the only exceptions are accounts of when an individual from one nation played an undeniable role in another, as when Dwight L. Moody ran evangelistic campaigns in Britain or the English Congregational leader Thomas Binney visited Australia." Müller is one of the exceptions to the normal approach to writing evangelical history primarily based on the country he lived in because he was recognized during the nineteenth century as someone who was known worldwide for his work with Bristol's orphans and for his global preaching tours. In fact, Müller's reputation for living by faith and relying on prayer to meet everyday needs may have had a direct influence on the everyday piety of more people than other evangelical Christians in the second half of the nineteenth century. David W. Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 53.

[23] All of Müller's major written works are still in print today, in several cases with more marketable titles. See George Müller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller, First Part* (Charleston, SC: Bibliobazaar, LLC, 2008); idem, *Walking By Faith Not By Sight: Some Sermons by George Müller* (Minions, U.K.: Diggory Press, 2008); idem., *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller, Third Part* (Charleston, SC: Bibliobazaar, LLC, 2007); idem., *Release The Power of Prayer* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2000); idem., *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller, Written By Himself, Together with Jehovah Magnified: Addresses By George Müller, Complete and Unabrigdged, Two Volumes* (Spring Lake, MI: Dust & Ashes Publications, 2003); idem., *The Autobiography of George Müller* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1984). The most famous biography of Müller, first published in 1898, is also available in a new edition. A. T. Pierson, *George Müller of Bristol* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008).

Müller and the Modern World

Müller's status among evangelicals in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries allows him to serve as a focal point from which to analyze evangelicalism in the modern era. Müller's role in the debate over the nature of the modern world and the underlying secularization process associated with modern life is also essential for understanding the social and cultural events shaping evangelicals in the nineteenth century. By the middle of the nineteenth century, evangelical Christianity no longer remained simply a Western form of Christian practice. Missionaries had successfully transplanted evangelical views of Christianity in non-Western societies and cultures that resulted in the development of an indigenous evangelical Christianity. Building on the reputation Müller established during the first half of the nineteenth century in Great Britain, Müller's story became important for non-Western evangelicals as they too began looking for examples of serious piety to follow. Thanks to the efforts of missionaries and the widespread circulation of books, tracts, and religious periodicals Müller's story reached the periphery of the British Empire. He increased his renown in the last quarter of the nineteenth century by traveling around the world on a series of preaching tours where he spoke to over a million people.[24] He served as an exemplary Christian, a hero of the faith, who should be imitated because he had lived a consistent life of faith that benefited poor orphans in England and affirmed that access to the supernatural through prayer could be realized through holy living.

As the nineteenth century progressed, evangelicals sought to transform the societies and nations they lived in by renewing the focus on disciplined individual piety and social activism. They engaged in a conscious re-fashioning of the individual according to an idealized concept of

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[24] "The Talk of Bristol," *The Bristol Mercury*, May 7, 1890, 8.

personal holiness.[25] A renewed interest in conducting revivals was one marker of this

transformation, as were various meetings and conferences focused on promoting missionary

service, encouraging individuals to live holy lives, and ascertaining the moment of the Second

Coming of Jesus Christ. The tension between an intensified personal practice of the Christian

faith and a desire to promote change in society resulted in sharp divisions among evangelicals by

the beginning of the twentieth century when the struggle to deal with the complexity of the

modern world resulted in the advent of both Pentecostalism and Fundamentalism.

Although evangelicals did not remain unified about how Christian piety should be

expressed, Müller's significance after his death on March 10, 1898, did not diminish his

importance to evangelicals who needed examples to follow as they engaged in a long battle to

show the world that God was still active in human history. In fact, Müller's story achieved a

new level of importance because he had managed to spend the majority of his years on earth

completely devoted to the Christian religion, unmoved in his belief in the biblical text, dependent

on God to meet his every need through prayer, and absolutely unwavering in his belief that God

still acts in the trivial needs of everyday life. Consequently, Müller's story was simplified, re-

printed, and re-constructed to meet the needs of the twentieth-century world. Even though he

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[25] It should be noted that evangelicalism has always been concerned with personal piety
and individual holiness. Issues surrounding the development of personal holiness within
evangelicalism became more and more radicalized over the course of the nineteenth century.
The rise of various new denominational bodies, revivalism, the explosion of the missionary
movement into a popular cause, and new movements focused on personal holiness, temperance,
and urban social reform took ordinary evangelicals into the mire of societal ills where they could
perform the necessary tasks to liberate the oppressed through their godly living and righteous
acts. The scope and performance of these pious endeavors involved a much larger part of the
evangelical community than activities occurring in the early nineteenth century. For an
examination of these developments in the evangelical conscience see the landmark volume,
Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth Century America*
(Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1957); also see Norris Magnuson, *Salvation in the Slums:
Evangelical Social Work, 1865-1920* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1977).

was clearly a Victorian-era Anglo-American evangelical, he remained relevant and useful to evangelical Christians, especially Pentecostals and Fundamentalists, in the twentieth century. His account of material provision garnered through prayer allowed Müller's story to transcend his own lifetime and become part of the collective memory of evangelicals around the world.

Müller in Modern Evangelical Memory

The dynamic nature of Müller's writings, popularity, and ongoing usefulness for evangelicals also illuminates an aspect of evangelicalism that has not been fully recognized. The eighteenth-century evangelical revivals established the foundation for a global evangelical network that unified evangelicals. Müller's story allows for the historical evolution of that system to be examined and analyzed more fully. Cultural historians have, for some time, been exploring how mentalités about everyday life are formed and how that knowledge is transmitted.[26] The stories, images, and ideas that were passed from generation to generation, as a means of informal education, were mainly confined by geographic region, religion, family, and social status. However, in the modern period, the intellectual development of individuals was no longer dictated by local and regional circumstances but now involved broader social and cultural networks, as well as the proliferation of inexpensive printed literature. The global reach of modern evangelicals may provide one of the best foundations for exploring how knowledge and ideas were transferred through an entire community outside of a geographic region. Müller's

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[26] Historian Anna Green notes that three characteristics are distinctive to historians of mentalités. First, they are concerned with the collective thought of groups over individuals and, in particular, the thought of masses over elites. Second, they try to uncover the subconscious ideas and assumptions that govern the thought life of these groups. Third, they attempt to uncover the symbolic and metaphoric language that explains how and what people think. Anna Green, *Cultural History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 28-29.

role in this global network is important because he was widely known for his piety and philanthropic work.

Müller was brought to the attention of millions of people around the world because he was seen as a legitimate and celebrated model of the Christian faith. This celebrity relied on social and information networks, publications, endorsements, and a widespread belief that Müller's form of Christian practice matched the biblical ideal. My thesis, consequently, is that George Müller was the first world evangelical hero of the faith who, through his piety, philanthropy, and written works, became an archetypal example of how evangelicals believed faith and piety should operate in the modern world. The main goal of this dissertation is to describe Müller's rise to legendary status among evangelicals around the world in order to analyze the development of modern evangelicalism as a global religious movement that was, and remains, enamored with radical acts of individual piety that create heroes of the faith.[27] Heroes of the faith serve as legitimized and informally canonized Protestant saints[28] who are above

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[27] The study follows, on this point, in the wake of historian Nathan O. Hatch's *The Democratization of American Christianity* that examined "popular religion" by focusing "upon elites." Although Müller would have denied that he was part of an elite class of religious leaders, his treatment and status among evangelicals around the world indicates that he was part of an influential group of evangelical personalities who were regularly heralded in the popular press, by leading ministers, and in society at large. Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 12.

[28] There are several eighteenth-century evangelicals who are clearly located in the category of "hero of the faith," such as William Carey, David Brainerd, along with Edwards, Whitefield, and the Wesley brothers. Within the context of contemporary evangelicalism a wide variety of individuals are triumphantly proclaimed "heroes of the faith." Individuals as diverse as Martin Luther, Mother Teresa, Sojourner Truth, Eric Liddell, Watchman Nee, and George Müller are all included, along with dozens of other individuals, in a series entitled, *Heroes of the Faith*, published by Barbour Publishing. The Barbour series along with YWAM Publishing's *Christian Heroes Then & Now Series* includes Müller as a primary example of evangelical piety. Faith Coxe Bailery, *George Mueller* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1958); Janet and Geoff Benge, *George Müller: The Guardian of Bristol's Orphans* (Seattle, WA: YWAM Publishing, 1999).

reproach.[29] To analyze Müller's own success among evangelicals, this study will argue that there is an evangelical socio-spiritual progression that culminates in someone being identified as a hero of the faith and being given a permanent place of veneration in the collective memory of evangelicals.[30] Because evangelicals self-identify with the movement according to general ideas and practices, they have no formal process like the Roman Catholic Church by which to seek beatification and canonization for those who have distinguished themselves in their Christian life. Consequently, evangelicals, on a global level, have embraced an informal process, although they have not consciously verbalized that process, which allows them to recognize, celebrate, and, ultimately, proclaim an individual as a hero of the faith.

This dissertation argues that a six-step process of socio-spiritual progression allows select evangelicals to achieve widespread recognition among evangelicals as a hero of the faith. This socio-spiritual progression includes the following: initiation, testimony, chronicling,

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[29] As a point of reference, modern evangelicals are as quick to point to the work of Mother Teresa of Calcutta (1910-1997) as a model of Christian piety as their Roman Catholic counterparts and, in some cases, more quickly. Evangelicals are deeply impressed by those who "do" versus those who "talk" about doing. Therefore, any profession or activity that appears to be focused on doing, especially in service to humanity, (e.g., medical doctors, nurses, teachers, lawyers, missionaries, and pastors) is more valuable than others. This focus on action, however, is somewhat ironic because the critique evangelicals make of Roman Catholics is that they rely on works for salvation versus faith in God's saving grace. The distinction, as evangelicals understand it, is that Jesus' atonement for their sins through his death on the cross provides salvation if they simply believe. Whereas, works of piety for evangelicals, including participation in the sacraments of baptism and communion, do not provide salvation in any way but are evidence that they are living lives aimed at serving God that will be rewarded in Heaven after the death of their earthly body.

[30] Socio-spiritual progression is a term aimed at capturing the social or public element in evangelical piety that operates as a process of development from someone who is seen as an ordinary Christian to someone who is envisioned to be a model worthy of veneration and even emulation.

legitimization, celebration, and informal canonization.[31] These socio-spiritual steps are derived

from an analysis of Müller's rise to renown as his story moved through each stage in this socio-

spiritual progression until it became a part of the collective memory of evangelicals. For

evangelicals, the first step is initiation, which simply means the process of an individual

accepting Jesus of Nazareth as their personal savior. Often referred to at the popular level as

being "Born Again" or experiencing a "New Birth," Christian initiation among evangelicals

relies on a conversion moment that can be expressed in a variety of forms from an emotional

experience to an intellectual epiphany.[32] For evangelicals the moment of initiation into the

Christian faith is usually a recognizable moment in the life of an individual that transforms him

or her from their previous condition of being "lost" or separated from God to a new life that

brings the person into a heartfelt relationship with God.[33]

Initiation into Christianity is followed by the second step of socio-spiritual progression

that is also required of all evangelicals, providing a testimony.[34] Evangelicals are expected to

testify to the saving work of Jesus in their life in a public manner by providing a proclamation of

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[31] In Roman Catholic practice saints are viewed as having a role in intercessory prayer and can be appealed to for assistance. This view of sainthood is different from the evangelical conception of a "hero of the faith" who remains simply a model to be imitated or emulated, but not someone who can be appealed to in prayer for help. "Saints, Devotion to the," *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, 3rd ed. rev. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1454-1455. Also see "Saints" in John A. McGuckin, *The SCM Press A-Z of Patristic Theology*, 2nd ed. (London: SCM Press, 2005), 302-303.

[32] Fackre, "Narrative Theology from an Evangelical Perspective," 189.

[33] For a detailed description of the conversion as understood by evangelicals in the nineteenth century see Hilton, *The Age of Atonement*, 8.

[34] Richard Peace, a prolific author and professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, calls this "holy conversation." Richard Peace, *Holy Conversation: Talking About God in Everyday Life* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006).

faith through words or deeds.[35] All evangelical Christians live in a testimonial tension with the

world around them. They are compelled to share their salvation experience with the aim of

initiating others into the Christian faith, yet they also hope that their outward actions point to an

interior spiritual transformation.[36] Evangelical activism in the society is often motivated by a

desire to see others come into Christianity. Furthermore, they understand their lives, once

initiated into Christianity, to be a miraculous testimony of God's forgiveness and grace.[37] Most

evangelicals remain at the testimony step in the socio-spiritual progression. They express their

faith in Christ as savior through words and actions, but they are not compelled to conceptualize

their testimony as a written narrative for public consumption.

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[35] Christian initiation and testimonies have, in fact, served different purposes in the
history of Christianity that do create problems for understanding the motivation behind them.
For example, in Puritan New England a testimony of Christian initiation was a political
statement that provided the testifying person membership in the church and, consequently,
political rights. Edmund S. Morgan, *Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea* (Ithaca, NY:
Cornell University Press, 1965),121-122; also see, Daniel B. Shea, *Spiritual Autobiography in
Early America* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), xv; Lewis Rambo,
Understanding Religious Conversion (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 12.

[36] Testimony is, in fact, the evangelical method of sharing in an oral form the process of
their Christian initiation with others. Testimonies operate on a number of levels for evangelicals.
Testimonies provide a way to identify themselves as Christians, to trace an individual's place in
sacred history, and as a witnessing tool. For evangelicals, sharing the Evangel or "Good News"
(Gospel) of Jesus Christ, as commanded in Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15, with those who
are not Christians often is prefaced by giving their testimony. Testimonial narratives follow a
traditional pattern of being in a fallen or "lost" state, receiving redemption and being "found" in
their moment of spiritual awakening.

[37] Cultural anthropologist Peter G. Stromberg argues that "From the believer's
perspective, that event [conversion] was a miracle, a moment in which God intervened in a
demonstrable way in the believer's life. The subsequent change in the believer's life evidences
the miraculous nature of the event. In this sense, the conversion conforms to the pattern of the
appearance of Jesus Christ in history: it is a moment when history embodies the divine. The very
logic of the conversion experience, from the perspective of the believer, necessitates the claim
that is an historical event, the conversion, that transforms the believer." Peter G. Stromberg,
Language and Self-Transformation: A Study of the Christian Conversion Narrative (Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, 1993), 14.

The third socio-spiritual step, chronicling, involves the transformation of a personal testimony into a formal written expression of Christian faith.[38] This autobiographical stage of socio-spiritual progress happens when evangelicals are compelled to formalize their thought in public journals, letters, articles, tracts, and books.[39] These written expressions of personal faith formalize a testimony with the intent of benefiting the Christian community and challenging those outside of that community. Evangelicals heavily emphasize the individual in their understanding of Christian initiation and the performance of a testimony. Therefore, chronicling, in a similar manner, also proclaims that the particular religious experience of an individual is significant and worthy of special remembrance. Chronicling provided a simple historical narrative that reinforced aspects of religious identity among evangelicals who read and remembered the examples of piety and devotion contained in printed works.[40] Chronicling, as a

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[38] This scheme differentiates between testimony and chronicling, or "conversion literature" as the genre is usually termed, because most evangelicals did not and do not write their testimony down into an autobiographical work for public consumption. The process involved in producing a spiritual autobiography is a significant step beyond an oral statement. An autobiographical work asserts a sense of identity construction that hints at a new level of self-importance and elitism. For an examination of conversion narratives as a literary genre see, D. Bruce Hindmarch, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative: Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[39] Richard Peace has also authored a book on how to help laypeople tell their chronicle of "God's interaction in [their] lives." Richard Peace and Jennifer Howe Peace, *Spiritual Storytelling: Discovering and Sharing Your Spiritual Autobiography, A Small Group Discussion Guide* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1996), 9.

[40] Literally unknown thousands of autobiographical works have been published by evangelicals who have served as active laypeople, para-church leaders, pastors, missionaries, and evangelists. They usually have had some sort of unique story, adventure, or sense of personal importance that serves to provide them with a rationale for making their story known to the public. Often these narratives are published by the author or by small religious publishing houses and achieve widespread acclaim for the uniqueness of the individual's devotion. For an example see, Bruce E. Olson, *Bruchko* (Altamonte Springs, FL: Creation House, 1978). Olson's book, since its original publication in 1973, has been reprinted in several different languages, been reprinted multiple times, and has sold hundreds of thousands of copies. In the 2006 edition

formal process, among evangelicals is also about the construction of personal identity against the

background of a fallen world. It presupposes a higher moral plane, based on Christian ethics,

which separates the person from the world around him or her and allows one to identify how he

or she is spiritually distinguished due to the practice of Christianity.[41]

Chronicling is the foundation on which the fourth step of socio-spiritual progression

develops. Once a story has moved beyond a personal audience, such as in a published memoir or

diary, and entered the public sphere, the story is judged for the aspects of evangelical identity the

publication promotes. Legitimization, the fourth step, occurs if the broader community accepts

the formal written expression of the Christian faith as valid.[42] Often to ensure that an

autobiographical account is trustworthy a preface or foreword is offered by a witness or person

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a foreword by Robert Walker entitled, "The Beginning of a Miracle," signals a new level of acclaim for Olson's account. Bruce E. Olson, *Bruchko: The Astonishing True Story of a 19-year Old American—His Capture by the Motilone Indians and His Adventures in Christianizing the Stone Age Tribe*, foreword by Robert Walker, epilogue by Janice G. Franzen (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2006).

[41] Literary historian Daniel B. Shea notes that within the context of the Anglo-American Puritan autobiographical tradition the goal of Puritan writers was "to assemble the evidence for divine favoritism . . . ." Since evangelicalism is an heir of Anglo-American Puritanism it too places emphasis on the triumphal spiritual achievements of the individual in relationship to God. Shea, *Spiritual Autobiography*, xxv.

[42] *Christianity Today*, an evangelical periodical published in the United States, regularly lists books that have been influential among evangelical leaders. Another evangelical periodical, *Books and Culture: A Christian Review*, offers a determined attempt to create a high-brow literary periodical focused on reading broadly outside of the narrow confines of evangelical popular literature. Although no canon of evangelical literature has emerged, there are key writers who contemporary evangelicals favor, such as the Anglican layman and former Cambridge professor C. S. Lewis. Some evangelicals have produced reading lists, see Eugene H. Peterson, *Take and Read: Spiritual Reading: An Annotated List* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996).

of significance to affirm the claims of the story.[43] The process of moving from individual

initiation to testimony and chronicling involves the story's attracting a larger public audience

who read, critique, and, ultimately, endorse or reject the individual's story as meeting the

expectations of collective evangelical identity. The testing of the narrative on a public platform

focuses on the importance of that individual's life and testimony compared to evangelical

expectations of personal transformation. The public written record operates on a number of

levels as an inspirational account of the Christian faith for readers, as a formal account of God's

work in the world, as evidence that the person's life and work offers inspiration to readers, and

even as a medium of self-glorification. Legitimization indicates that the author is viewed as

acceptable to evangelicals and worthy of continued public recognition.[44]

The fifth step in the socio-spiritual progression is celebration. This occurs when the

written chronicle of an individual is legitimized and endorsed on a regular basis as a unique

model of Christian piety and practice. The individual now enters into an elite realm among

evangelicals because they are seen as living a life of noteworthy devotion. The individual, in

fact, moves beyond providing a testimony of God's forgiveness and grace for the benefit of

initiating others into the Christian faith and becomes a model of piety to be emulated by other

evangelicals. Distinguishing characteristics of their unique approach and practice of the

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[43] For an example see, Leon Elliott, *From Maine to the Himalayas: An Autobiography*, foreword by Huldah Buntain (Springfield, MO: Leon Elliott, 1996).

[44] Historian André Vauchez argues on this point that promoters of medieval saints played an important role in establishing a saint's following. Vauchez posits that it is the job of the historian "to investigate the identity of those 'others' who were the originators of reputations for sanctity." In Müller's context those who endorsed him provided legitimacy for his methods that enabled him to become widely celebrated and informally canonized. André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 141.

Christian faith are now celebrated as holding value for others who would also like to progress in their life of service, faith, and holiness. Other evangelicals publicly reference them in their writings, produce additional biographies of them, or study their life story for personal benefit.[45] At this stage in the socio-spiritual process, the individual may also escape from the confines of the evangelical subculture and receives some sort of larger public recognition in newspapers and periodical literature. The key point in this stage of development is that the individual is now a model for others to follow and is celebrated broadly, even globally, by evangelicals.

The final step in the socio-spiritual progression among evangelicals is informal canonization as a hero of the faith. This final stage is, in reality, similar to how saints were popularly recognized in the Roman Catholic tradition prior to the late-twelfth and early thirteenth century when the papacy assumed control over the process of canonization.[46] Historian Richard Kieckhefer explains,

> At first there was no official canonization of saints. There was little question about the sanctity of a martyr; the Christian community could easily attest that a particular person had remained faithful to Christianity and undertaken a heroic death. Thus there was no need for an official inquiry and declaration. Even when the persecutions ceased, it remained customary for the populace to acclaim a person a saint—the voice of the people being taken for that of God. Only late in the Patristic Era did bishops (particularly in North Africa) begin to exercise systematic control over the cult of saints in an effort to prevent veneration of heretics or charlatans.[47]

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[45] One of the most influential endorsements of this type was given by Jonathan Edwards in remembrance of David Brainerd. See Jonathan Edwards, *The Life of Rev. David Brainerd, Chiefly Extracted from His Diary, The Evangelical Family Library, Vol. VII* (New York: American Tract Society, n.d.). The reading of Brainerd's diaries in England inspired evangelical mission work by men like Henry Martyn. Martyn wrote, "I thought of David Brainerd, and ardently desired his devotedness to God and holy breathings of soul." George Smith, *Henry Martyn, Saint and Scholar: First Modern Missionary to the Mohammedans, 1781-1812* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1892), 33.

[46] Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, 24-27.

Kieckhefer goes on to explain that during the Middle Ages bishops and regional synods declared an individual a saint. Papal canonization, however, was the only way to ensure broader recognition of a saint outside of a single diocese and started to become more in the late tenth century. Papal canonization involved "an elaborate quasi-judicial process, involving scrutiny of witnesses and composition of a canonization biography or vita."[48] Traits that resulted in recognition as a saint included: asceticism, contemplation, and action combined with "extraordinary manifestations of power" such as miracles and visions.[49] After being canonized by the papacy the saint, as Kieckhefer explains, "could be honored with the full range of liturgical and devotional accolades. They could be invoked in public prayers; churches could be dedicated to them; liturgy could be celebrated in their honor on their feast days; their relics could be enclosed in precious vessels and displayed for veneration; and they could be represented in art with the full nimbus or halo of a saint."[50] The saint, as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* indicates, "practiced heroic virtue and lived in fidelity to God's grace."[51] Therefore, they serve to encourage hope for Christians "as models and intercessors."[52] Within the context of the

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[47] Richard Kieckhefer, "Imitators of Christ: Sainthood in the Christian Tradition," in *Sainthood: Its Manifestations in World Religions*, ed. Richard Keickhefer and George D. Bond (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 3-4.

[48] Richard Kieckhefer, "Major Currents in Late Medieval Devotion," in *Christian Spirituality: High Middle Ages and Reformation*, eds. Jill Raitt, Bernard McGinn, and John Meyendorff (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1987), 94.

[49] Kieckhefer, "Imitators of Christ," 12.

[50] Kieckhefer, "Major Currents in Late Medieval Devotion," 94.

[51] *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1994), 219.

[52] Ibid.

Roman Catholic Church canonization was and remains an official process with observable outcomes.

Informal canonization of a hero of the faith by evangelicals is not defined by any single ecclesiastical body. The last step in the socio-spiritual progression is an unofficial status and corresponds to the popularity of a hero of the faith among evangelicals. Evangelical pastors, laypeople, denominations, missionary organizations, educational institutions, parachurch organizations, and charities all recognize and celebrate pious leaders or workers who lead noteworthy lives. However, evangelicals do esteem some men and women collectively as "giants of the faith."[53] These "giants" may have been important in the history of a particular denomination or group of evangelicals, but their story transcends that immediate sphere of influence to appeal broadly to all evangelicals based on important spiritual qualities. The popular recognition of a hero of the faith relies on a person's spiritual devotion (labeled "holiness" by evangelicals) that is manifest in his or her promotion of the Christian faith through service to society. Similar to the Roman Catholic tradition, evangelicals also embrace "extraordinary manifestations of power" as evidence to show the godliness of a hero of the faith. The evidence for unusual spiritual power is not only established by claims for miracles, but often includes the distinctly evangelical emphasis on either powerful preaching resulting in revivals or completing a period of sacrificial service as a missionary. As a result of their distinguished spiritual qualities, informally canonized evangelical heroes were and are promoted, praised, and

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[53] Jack Kuhatschek, an author of several evangelical Bible-study booklets, encourages evangelicals to follow "a giant of the faith" when he writes, "God's Hall of Fame (or Hall of Faith) also includes many people from church history. Read a biography of either Hudson Taylor, George Muller, Amy Carmichael, D. L. Moody, Corrie ten Boom or some other giants of the faith from recent times. As you read, ask God to show you how you can follow their example of faith." Jack Kuhatschek, *Pleasing God.* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 24.

given iconic status by those impressed by their example. Orally-transmitted stories, sermons, books, tracts, and magazine articles legitimize and celebrate a hero's story, which ultimately assumes a hagiographical quality that does not critically assess his or her life outside of the framework of salvation history (*Heilsgeschichte*).[54] More importantly, an informally canonized hero of the faith remains embedded in the collective memory of evangelicals and continues to inform the personal piety and activity of those who use the hero as an inspirational model for the practice of Christianity.

Methodological Approach

The methodological approach this dissertation will use for analyzing the socio-spiritual progression that resulted in Müller's achieving the status of a world evangelical hero of the faith involves combining social history, literary analysis, and history and memory approaches to the historical evidence. The use of these various approaches will help unravel the ties that linked Müller to so many different segments of global evangelicalism. To analyze his place in the history of Christianity this dissertation will review the role of hagiographical literature related to this study in the next chapter. The third chapter of this study will operate as a microhistory aimed at reconnecting Müller to the social milieu of early-nineteenth century German society and Pietism. The fourth chapter, a social history, will analyze his activism in the context of nineteenth-century Great Britain. The microhistorical and social history approaches will afford the opportunity to examine Müller's Christian initiation, his testimony, and his chronicle of

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[54] Historian Joseph H. Lynch pointed out that in early Christianity the process of canonization was not formal as in the modern Roman Catholic Church. Rather, as Lynch argued, "A dead person was holy—which is what 'saint' means—if enough people believed that he or she was holy and especially if the local bishop agreed to have the holy person's name read out during the liturgy." Joseph H. Lynch, *Early Christianity: A Brief History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 186.

piety. The fifth chapter will offer a literary analysis of the source for Müller's life of faith that

enabled evangelicals to celebrate his story globally. In the sixth and seventh chapters Müller's

rise to significance among transatlantic evangelicals and Christians around the world will be

examined and analyzed in order to understand more fully how he was legitimized, celebrated,

and informally canonized through evangelical networks that relied on publications, preaching,

and voluntary associations. The eighth chapter will examine the use of Müller's memory as a

hero of the faith by transatlantic evangelicals who ensured he remained part of the collective

memory of evangelicals into the present. In chapter nine, Müller's continuing importance among

evangelicals will be analyzed to determine how his life story relates to issues evangelicals have

found important from the nineteenth century to the present.

Although the methodological approaches that will be used in these chapters are often

seen as distinct historiographical approaches, in the case of Müller they help to recreate the

world into which he was born, while also taking seriously larger social, cultural, economic, and

political considerations that allowed ordinary people to see in Müller something that was worthy

of their consideration. Consequently, this study is an attempt to create a *social biography* that

analyzes the multiple societal forces that shape individuals and how their memory is

reconstructed over time to suit particular purposes. Biographies are problematic for most

historians in terms of their methodological simplicity: one person's life, a sequence of events

surrounding that person, and the larger ramifications are limited to direct impact of that person's

life on politics or a war or some other relevant aspect of the larger narrative of history. However,

microhistorians, like Carlos Ginzburg, and cultural historians, such as Natalie Zemon Davis,

have been able to transform the usefulness of single life stories by allowing them to tell the story

of lost mentalités or ways of living that have been omitted from the broader historical narrative.[55]

By recapturing lost frameworks of thinking and living, microhistorians have enabled previously

unheard voices to reemerge as representative of "popular" thought and culture. Therefore, the

social biographical approach that I am positing as the methodology of this dissertation draws

together the minutia of one person's life, popular thought, social and communication networks,

individual personalities, religious history, memory studies, and literary analysis to recreate a

recently lost world that was consciously being created as that world was being written about and

remembered.[56] Drawing on autobiographies, diaries, periodicals, newspapers, letters,

photographs, maps, pamphlets, tracts, reports, books, and other material culture this dissertation

will bring together disparate historical source material to illuminate Müller's life and the mental

world of those who found in him an exemplary model of Christian piety. By looking at the

whole with a critical eye toward the legitimized and celebrated story of Müller's life, a more

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[55] For criticism of the microhistorical approach see Georg G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge*, 2nd ed. (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 2005), 113. By working outward from the mircohistorical realm to macrohistorical mentalités this dissertation aims to avoid the criticism of microhistorical studies that are often dismissed as "anecdotal antiquarianism," taking a romantic view of the past, and being unable to deal with the change associated with the modern world or political realities. For an excellent example of cultural interactions centered on the life of a single individual see, Natalie Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim Between Worlds* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006).

[56] I concur with the astute observation of Oxford historian Jane Garnett when she writes, "The true range and complexity of Victorian views and values are only being recognized. Intellectual and religious life were not contained—or even necessarily directed—by universities and churches, or by the state. We are beginning to get a much richer sense of a culture which even at the end of the century was not dominated by professionals, and in which intellectual debate was not abstract, but was bound up with day-to-day life." Jane Garnett, "Religious and Intellectual Life," in *The Nineteenth Century, The British Isles: 1815-1901*, ed. Colin Matthews, *Short Oxford History of The British Isles*, ed. Paul Langford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 196.

exacting and complete account will emerge of the collective memory of evangelicals who made Müller into a hero of the faith.

Because this dissertation is also concerned with the place of remembrance among evangelicals, the study will not end with the death of the main actor. Müller remains part of a living tradition of evangelical thought and practice found in sermons, periodical articles, books, plays, and films. These living reminders of a hero of the faith serve a function in evangelical thought and practice that needs to be analyzed so that they can illuminate the concerns and struggles within popular evangelical culture. For evangelicals, a hero of the faith, like Müller and others who are classified in this manner, operate as a source of inspiration and assurance for facing the myriad of problems encountered in everyday life. The fears, doubts, and the challenges of the modern world are checked by a saintly model of devotion who triumphed over scientific skepticism to prove faith by prayer. Müller rose to prominence by chronicling his ongoing testimony of answered prayer that appealed broadly to evangelicals around the world. The ability to engage evangelicals collectively with a model for Christian piety will be analyzed to understand how evangelicalism is rooted in the everyday lives and minds of the hundreds of millions of individuals around the world who identify themselves as evangelicals.[57]

Conclusion

In many respects this dissertation attempts to follow the critical aspiration of E. P. Thompson in his classic *The Making of the English Working Class*. However, instead of

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[57] Of the more than two billion estimated Christians found around the world in 2010, somewhere between 263 million to 700 million can be, depending on the definition employed, identified as evangelicals. In 1910 evangelicals comprised 40% of the population of the United States, Northern Europe, Australia, and New Zealand. Todd M. Johnson, Kenneth R. Ross, and Sandra S. K. Lee, eds., *Atlas of Global Christianity 1910-2010* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 98.

focusing on the ordinary worker this dissertation will try to rescue an element of the ordinary

evangelical's mental world that has been subject to, as Thompson said of working-class Britons,

"the enormous condescension of posterity."[58] One method to better understanding the mentalité of ordinary evangelicals is to look at individuals, like Müller, who were celebrated for their accomplishments and became, over the course of time, heroes for what could be achieved when Christianity was lived out in a serious manner. Besides trying to capture the popular mentalité of evangelicals, this dissertation also emphasizes the preeminence of publications for evangelical identity formation. As the study of Müller's life and memory will show, evangelicals embraced writing, preferably through publications, as the method by which to identify themselves as evangelical and to participate in the collective life of the community. In the case of Müller, his published account of answered prayer was intended to strengthen the "faith of the children of God" by providing a living example of God's faithful response to prayer. Müller wanted to encourage his fellow Christians, who wondered if God still acted in human history, to see in his story God's power and provision.[59] Müller consciously battled against doubt and skepticism in the nineteenth century and evangelicals have continued to wage this war into the present. Like Müller, evangelicals proclaim, in every communication medium at their disposal, that their lives are a testimony of a supernatural God acting in the ordinary details of everyday life.[60] The next

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[58] E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 12.

[59] Müller explains the motive for his venture when he states, "Now, if I, a poor man, simply by prayer and faith, obtained, *without asking any individual*, the means for establishing and carrying on an Orphan-House: there would be something which, with the Lord's blessing, might be instrumental in strengthening the faith of the children of God. This, then, was the primary reason, for establishing the Orphan-House." George Müller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller: First Part.* 9th ed. (London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1895), 146.

[60] Philip Jenkins notes that even today in the Southern hemisphere of the world non-Western Christians embrace a similar worldview that sees God operative in everyday circumstances. Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*, 217-218.

chapter will examine Müller's place in the hagiographical and historical literature that has

celebrated him and also affirmed his place in evangelical history.

CHAPTER 2

CONFRONTING HAGIOGRAPHY: A LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to place Müller in the context of the history of Christianity and determine his place in the historical literature. The chapter will begin by critically analyzing the popular biographies—more correctly described as hagiographical texts—that have played a defining role in placing Müller's name and story before popular audiences and scholars. The popular biographical literature was written by evangelicals who have an obvious bias toward promoting Müller's beliefs and practices as exemplary, but these biographers did not critically assess his story. In addition to examining the work of biographers, this chapter will analyze how Müller's contribution is understood by scholars who have acknowledged his contribution to evangelical thought and practice. Scholarly studies of Müller are limited but focus on areas where he influenced the practice of the others or was noted for his philanthropic work. Historians of the Christian Brethren, often referred to as the Open Brethren, have examined, in detail, Müller's contribution to the development of the Brethren Movement in the nineteenth century. In addition to Brethren historiography, Müller has been included in the historiography of British Christianity, Anglo-American Philanthropy, Pietism and evangelicalism, and the history of Christianity. In each of these areas of study scholars have noted Müller's influence on thought and practice. Often Müller's contribution was depicted as a peripheral influence, which resulted in him being marginalized as an aside or a footnote. What this literature review will

show is how limiting historical accounts sometimes are in capturing the ideas and persons who

are widely known and celebrated in their own lifetime. Müller's story and name were known

around the world in the nineteenth century, but the historiography does not point to his

prominence as a public figure. Only within the context of the historiography of the Christian

Brethren did Müller's name and story maintain its significance.

Hagiography and Müller

A challenge in the study of Müller is the abundance of hagiographic literature that

employs his memory as a model for a life of devotion and commitment to the work of God.

Hagiography is typically not a term employed to describe evangelical biographical writing, but

the blatant bias toward devotion and elevation of the individual for imitation and emulation

clearly identifies these writings as part of that genre. Although hagiographical writing is not

limited to Christianity,[1] the scholar most responsible for defining the field of Christian

hagiography, Hippolyte Delehaye, argued,

> So we see that to be strictly hagiographical the document must be of a religious character
> and aim at edification. The term then must be confined to writings inspired by religious
> devotion to the saints and intended to increase that devotion.
>   The important thing to be emphasized at the outset is the distinction between
> hagiography and history. The work of the hagiographer may be historical, but it is not
> necessarily so. It may take any literary form suited to honouring the saints, from an
> official record adapted to the needs of the faithful to a highly exuberant poem that has
> nothing whatever to do with factual reality.[2]

Delehaye's observation is important for examining the evangelical literature that celebrated

Müller's life. Although evangelicals do not see themselves as writing hagiography, Delehaye's

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[1] John Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 4, 8.

[2] Hippolyte Delehaye, *The Legends of the Saints*, trans. Donald Attwater (New York: Fordham University Press, 1962), 3-4.

definition captures the purpose of evangelical biographies, poems, sermons, plays, fiction, and popular writing in that this literature is thoroughly religious and aims to edify evangelicals regardless of the form employed. Another scholar of medieval hagiography, Thomas J. Heffernan, extended the definition beyond promoting edification to accounts that were intended to provoke replication. Heffernan argues, "The lives of the saints were sacred stories designed to teach the faithful to imitate actions which the community had decided were paradigmatic."[3] Heffernan expands on Delehaye's definition by emphasizing that the saint represented "paradigmatic" piety that others should, ideally, apply to their own lives. The study of medieval hagiography—"as a collection of genres"—has much to contribute to the study of popular evangelical literature since both intended to encourage piety and provide an example for imitation.[4] Therefore, promoting exemplars of piety—hagiography—has continuity in the history of Christianity in which making followers—disciples—necessitates models—saints.

Although evangelicals have shied away from the term saint, they have embraced other terms such as heroes of the faith, heroes of the cross, and, more recently, "God's generals" to describe models of piety.[5] Evangelical hagiography has centered on individuals who were widely celebrated as exemplars for imitation by the broader evangelical community. In a similar

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[3] Thomas J. Heffernan, *Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 5.

[4] Historian Thomas Head observes that, "The sorts of literature which fit under the rubric of hagiography are extremely varied, including the *Lives* of saints, collections of miracle stories, accounts of the discovery or movement of relics, bulls of canonization, inquests held into the life of a candidate for canonization, liturgical books, sermons, and visions." Thomas Head, ed., *Medieval Hagiography: An Anthology* (New York: Routledge, 2001), xiv.

[5] Rich Marshall, *God at Work: Discovering the Anointing for Business* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, 2000), 7; Robert Liardon, *God's Generals: Why They Succeeded and Why Some Fail* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2003); John G. Lake, *Diary of God's General: Excerpts from the Miracle Ministry of John G. Lake* (Tulsa, OK: Harrison House Publishers, 2004).

fashion, Müller's recognition, over the course of the nineteenth century, as a hero of the faith made him into a legendary figure among evangelicals who continue to esteem him in the present.[6] Müller's goal for establishing his orphanage, living by faith, and publishing his account of the work was for the benefit of fellow Christians.[7] Subsequent biographers captured the vision of Müller's goal to encourage devotion and have published additional accounts of his life for audiences in the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries. These publications enshrined Müller's story in uncritical hagiographical accounts that envisioned him as a paradigmatic example of evangelical piety.

Hagiographical accounts written by Müller's biographers all follow the basic story that Müller tells in his *Narrative*. The biographies describe a wayward youth who was a thief, liar, and reprobate. Following a series of youthful indiscretions he ends up at university studying to be, of all things, a pastor. However, it is while studying at the University of Halle that Müller, as W. Elfe Tayler described in one of his biographies, "experienced that change of heart without which none 'can see the kingdom of God;' and from that period his chief object seems to have

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[6] The first time I encountered the story of George Müller was as a child sitting in a church pew listening to the story of miraculous provision by prayer for a man, a century ago, who ran an orphanage in England. The second time Müller's memory was brought to my attention was in a lecture by a seminary professor who had utilized Müller's life of faith as a point of reference to expect miraculous provision when he prayed so that he could support his family when he was a desperately-poor doctoral student.

[7] George Müller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller, Written By Himself,* 7th ed. (London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1869), 146. In the first edition of his *Narrative,* before his editorial hand modified his own writing style, Müller stated that his reasons for founding the orphan home are as follows: "1. That God may be glorified, should he be pleased to furnish me with the means, in its being seen that it is not a vain thing to trust in him, and that thus the faith of his children may be strengthened. 2. The spiritual welfare of fatherless and motherless children. 3. Their temporal welfare." George Müller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller, Minister of Christ, Written By Himself* (London: J. Nisbet, 1837), 142-143.

been to glorify God."[8] Müller's life story is then followed from Halle to London, and on to

Teignmouth and Bristol where he worked with Henry Craik to found the Scriptural Knowledge

Institution for Home and Abroad as well as the orphan homes. This simple story is repeated in

all of the biographical accounts. A common quality in these biographies is to trace Müller's life

story from a degenerate youth to a faithful servant of Christ who does everything for God's

glory. Likewise, all of the biographies are also heavily reliant on two primary sources of

information for Müller's life: his autobiographical *Narrative* that operates as a diary and the

annual reports he published to account for the donations given and work accomplished.

Although these primary sources are extremely useful for examining Müller's life and work, these

autobiographical accounts do not take into account the popular response to Müller or any

criticism that he may have faced in his lifetime.

During his lifetime a number of books were published that promoted the orphan work.

The books usually did little more than summarize Müller's *Narrative*, although some indicate

that the author had personally visited the orphan homes. Several anonymous authors along with

W. Elfe Tayler and Mrs. E. R. Pitman wrote the first biographical accounts.[9] In addition to the

biographical accounts, there were two edited volumes of Müller's autobiography in the

nineteenth-century, one edited by H. L. Wayland and the other edited by Abbie C. Morrow,

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[8] W. Elfe Tayler, *The Bristol Orphan Houses, Ashley Down: The History of the New Orphan Houses on Ashley Down, Bristol, Under the Direction of Mr. George Müller*, 3rd ed. (London: Morgan and Scott, 1871), vii.

[9] *Faith in God as to Temporal Things: An Account of the Rise and Progress of the New Orphan Houses, Ashley Down, Bristol* (London: Houlston & Stoneman, 1855); Philos [pseud.], *A Visit to the New Orphan House, Ashley Down, Bristol*, 2nd ed. (London: Houlston & Stoneman, and Wertheim & Macintosh, 1856); W. Elfe Tayler, *"Mighty Through God": Some Account of the Extraordinary Labours of Mr. George Müller (of Bristol), As Founder and Director of an Institution for Missionary Work at Home and Abroad, and Other Operations* (London: Wertheim, Macintosh, & Co., 1861); Tayler, *The Bristol Orphan Houses*; E. R. Pitman, *George Müller and Andrew Reed*, 2nd ed. (London: Cassell and Co., 1885).

which were widely read in North America and celebrated for their astute editing and summaries

of his cumbersome *Narrative*.[10] In the early twentieth century, Fred Bergin edited a version of

Müller's autobiography that was published in Great Britain and still remains an important text

because the book details information through Müller's death in 1898.[11] Bergin envisioned the

book as a commemorative volume operating as "Living Oracles" in the twentieth century.

Although Bergin's edited volume was a mere 735 pages with the index, a descendant of one of

Müller's co-laborers, A. Rendle Short, published in 1954 a concise volume of Müller's

autobiography that ran a total of 128 pages. Short purposely condensed the work to make

Müller's life more accessible to general readers who might have been daunted by the massive

four-volume set Müller published or Bergin's lengthy volume. Short also included some

childhood recollections of the "old saint" that revealed how highly Müller was esteemed in

Bristol at the end of his life.[12] These edited versions of Müller's *Narrative* and annual reports

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[10] George Müller, *The Life of Trust: Being a Narrative of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller, Written by Himself*, ed. H. L. Wayland, intro. Francis Wayland (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1861); George Müller, *The Life of Trust: Being a Narrative of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller, Written by Himself*, ed. H. L. Wayland, intro. Francis Wayland, new ed. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., 1878); Abbie C. Morrow, ed. *The Work of Faith Through George Müller* (Cincinnati, OH: W. M. Knapp, 1899); *Autobiography of George Müller*, ed. G. Fred Bergin (London: J. Nisbet and Co., 1905); A. Rendle Short, ed., *The Diary of George Müller* (London: Pickering & Inglis Ltd., 1954). In 1961 a Chinese language version of Short's edited volume was published, see A. Rendle Short, ed., *Mule ri ji jing hua,* trans. Zhaojie Huang (Xianggang, China: Zheng dao chu ban she, 1961).

[11] Bergin reports that after James Wright's death in 1905 he decided to publish the edited volume of Müller's autobiography because the printer who was responsible for publishing Müller's writings suffered a fire. Although Bergin says that "sheets of many copies of the Narrative were consumed" in the blaze, he does not indicate if sections of Müller's handwritten diary were destroyed. The loss of the handwritten diary is significant since so many details about the work, donors, and letters from supports must have been contained within its pages. *Autobiography*, ix-x.

[12] Short explained in the preface that his grandfather once served, in 1855, as a teacher in the orphanage. Short, *The Diary*, 127.

are important because they were the only firsthand account that many people read. Therefore, the choices that editors made to emphasize Müller's life of faith conveyed principles and particular examples for others to follow.

The most important biography was published by Arthur Tappan Pierson in 1899, the year following Müller's death. Pierson was a leading American evangelical pastor who managed to be both a prolific author and intimately connected to the broader evangelical community through his role as a conference speaker, traveling statesman of the faith, and author. [13] Pierson wrote the most widely read and celebrated study of Müller's life titled, *George Müller of Bristol and His Witness to a Prayer-Hearing God*.[14] Pierson knew Müller personally, had access to letters, records, and first-hand accounts from Müller and his close associates in Bristol. Furthermore, Pierson was himself inspired by Müller's piety and openly supported the type of faith-based project that the German-born minister established in Bristol. Pierson's book also holds the unique privilege of being published within a year of Müller's death thereby allowing Müller's son-in-law and successor, James Wright, to "endorse his work as the authorized memoir for British as well as American readers."[15] Pierson's biography provides a unique glimpse into the mentality of late-nineteenth century Anglo-American Protestant thought. Pierson intended to promote Müller's holy life of service to God, while also providing readers with a practical handbook on Christian piety.

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[13] Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 291.

[14] Arthur T. Pierson, *George Müller of Bristol* (London: Pickering & Inglis, 1899).

[15] Arthur T. Pierson, *George Müller of Bristol and His Witness to a Prayer-Hearing God,* intro. James Wright (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1899), 7.

In addition to Pierson's account, Frederick G. Warne also published a biography of Müller in 1898 entitled, *George Müller: The Modern Apostle of Faith*.[16] This book would also be important in the multitude of biographical accounts but would not surpass the influence of Pierson.[17] The Pierson and Warne accounts were followed by biographies written by Harding (1914), Ellis (1927), Hamblin (1930), Miller (1941), Beltz (1945), and Garton (1963).[18] Nancy Garton's popular biography was distinguished from previous works because she included independent research beyond previous biographies and attempted to place well-known stories about Müller into historical context. Continuing the trend toward more serious research was Roger Steer's 1975 biography entitled, *George Müller: Delighted in God!*[19] Steer's biography became an important volume because it was later produced in a mass-market paperback version. However, the paperback version presented an even more simplified version of the text void of all critical apparatus. In reality Steer's biography was the successor to Pierson's biography. Steer,

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[16] Frederick G. Warne, *George Müller: The Modern Apostle of Faith* (Bristol: Burleigh Ltd., 1898).

[17] Like Pierson's biography Warne's would also be published in both Great Britain and the United States. Frederick G. Warne, *George Müller: The Modern Apostle of Faith* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Co., n.d.).

[18] William Henry Harding, *The Life of George Müller* (Edinburgh: Oliphants Ltd., 1914); J. J. Ellis, *Faithful and Fearless: The Life Stories of John Wesley, George Muller, and Dwight L. Moody* (London: Pickering & Inglis, 1927); Henry Thomas Hamblin, *A Venture of Faith: Lessons from the Life of George Muller* (Bosham, U.K.: H. T. Hamblin, 1930); Basil Miller, *George Muller: The Man of Faith*, 5th ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1941); Basil Miller, *Ten Boys Who Became Famous* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1946); R. A. Beltz, *George Muller: A Great Obtainer, The Hall of Fame Series* (Chicago: Van Kampen Press, 1945); Nancy Garton, *George Müller and His Orphans* (n.p.: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1963).

[19] Roger Steer, *George Müller: Delighted in God!* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1975). A mass-market paperback was also published, see Roger Steer, *George Müller: Delighted in God!*, rev. ed. (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1981).

in fact, became the most commonly cited modern authority on Müller.[20] For a time Steer made

Müller into a cottage industry and produced additional books about Müller that were intended to

be used as devotional literature.[21]

In addition to Steer's popular biography, a number of paperback biographies have

continued to promote Müller among evangelical audiences that appreciate historical fiction with

a devotional purpose. Janet and Geoff Benge along with Faith Bailey, Fern Stocker, Bonnie

Harvey, and Dave and Neta Jackson have all written biographical accounts that do not pretend to

be anything more than inspirational historical fiction.[22] Irene Howat has also written two

popular biographical accounts of Müller for children entitled, *The Children's Champion* and *Ten*

Boys Who Changed the World.[23] In addition to these inspirational accounts that lack critical

awareness are two recent biographies, one by Carol Purves and the other by Clive Langmead,

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[20] Steer's biography is often cited as the recommended book for further study of Müller. C. J. Mahaney and John Loftness, *Disciplines for Life: Steps to Spiritual Strength*, rev. ed. (Gaithersburg, MD: Sovereign Grace Ministries, 1992), 35.

[21] Roger Steer, *A Living Reality: George Müller's Experience of God* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1985); Roger Steer, ed., *Admiring God: The Best of George Müller* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1986).

[22] Janet and Geoff Benge, *George Müller: The Guardian of Bristol's Orphans, Christian Heroes: Then & Now* (Seattle, WA: YWAM Publishing 1999); Faith Coxe Bailey, *George Mueller* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1958); Fern Neal Stocker, *George Mueller: Champion of Orphans* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1986); Bonnie Harvey, *George Müller: Man of Faith* (Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour Publishing, 1998); Dave and Neta Jackson, *The Bandit of Ashley Downs*, illus. Julian Jackson (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1993).

[23] Irene Howat, *The Children's Champion: George Müller* (Tain, U.K.: Christian Focus Publications, 2000); Irene Howat, *Ten Boys Who Changed the World* (Tain, U.K.: Christian Focus Publications, 2001).

that have attempted to undertake more serious historical research, but they too have struggled to provide any critical insight and often rely on accounts provided by previous biographies.[24]

Despite the hagiographical biases that persist in accounts of his life, Müller remains a figure who continues to draw attention from those who are desperate to identify with his practice of Christianity. Although the hagiographical accounts are marred by the particular biases of authors and goals of the religious publishing houses, they are essential for determining Müller's broader influence.[25] In the hagiographical accounts, Müller is an example of spiritual power that ordinary people can command through simple prayer. Evangelicals see accounts of Müller's life as useful for spiritual encouragement, whereas within the Christian Brethren his contribution is clearly seen within the historical development of the Brethren Movement.

The Christian Brethren

Müller played a crucial role in the history and development of the Christian Brethren. The Christian Brethren[26] are most closely associated with the name of John Nelson Darby who is

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[24] Carol Purves, *From Prussia With Love: The George Müller Story* (Leominster, U.K.: Day One Publications, 2005); Clive Langmead, *Robber of the Cruel Streets: The Prayerful Life of George Muller*, foreword by George Verwer (Farnham, U.K.: CWR, 2006).

[25] Cambridge-educated historian Timothy C. F. Stunt has recognized Müller's significance and the lack of adequate scholarship dealing with his influence outside of popular biographical accounts. Stunt explains, "Müller's life has inspired numerous biographical works of piety but apparently no seriously independent reach going beyond his own autobiographical account." Timothy C. F. Stunt, *From Awakening to Secession: Radical Evangelicals in Switzerland and Britain, 1815-1835* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000), 286.

[26] The terms Christian Brethren or Brethren defines a group often referred to, incorrectly, as the "Plymouth Brethren." The Christian Brethren formed around a group of Anglican ministers and Nonconformist Christians in Dublin, Ireland, in the late 1820s. The movement among Anglican seceders then spread to Plymouth, England and to other cities in Great Britain. John Nelson Darby is the most well-known individual in the Brethren Movement. Darby led the Exclusive Brethren after a schism from Müller and the Brethren at Bethesda Chapel for not condemning what Darby saw as the heretical teachings of Benjamin Wills Newton and his

credited with providing them with the foundation for the eschatological system known as

dispensational premillennialism.[27] Darby's view of end time prophecy was an essential

component of transatlantic evangelicalism in the nineteenth century and became firmly

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followers. The schism imposed by Darby on the Brethren in Bristol resulted in Müller becoming the leader of the Open Brethren. The primary difference between the two groups related to the practice of communion. The Open Brethren have communion with all Protestants who profess Christ as Savior, while the Exclusive Brethren limit communion to the known Christians within their own ranks. For the most recent detailed accounts of the origins of the Brethren Movement see Grayson Carter, *Anglican Evangelicals: Protestant Secessions from the Via Media, 1800-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 195-248; Tim Grass, *Gathering to His Name: The Story of the Open Brethren in Britain and Ireland*, foreword by David Bebbington (Milton Keynes, U.K.: Paternoster, 2006).

[27] Dispensationalism asserts that history can be divided according to the stories of two separate and distinct groups: the nation of Israel and the Christian church. These two groups are utilized to reveal evidence of divisions or "dispensations" of time that can be recognized in how God has chosen to deal with humanity over the course of history in distinct eras. Dispensational thought holds that God began his story of human redemption with the chosen people of the nation of Israel but when they rejected Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah who was sent to redeem them the story was broadened to include Gentiles who embraced Jesus as Messiah and formed the Christian church. According to dispensationalists, God then shifted his attention to focus on the Church, but he will eventually return to fulfill the promises and prophecies associated with the nation of Israel before the end of time. Dispensational thought is also linked with premillenialism, which holds that the Second Coming of Christ will be before the literal one-thousand-year reign of Christ prior to the final judgment of God and the arrival of a new heaven and new earth. John Nelson Darby's innovative interpretation of Scripture led him to hold that, according to historian Ernest R. Sandeen, "There were, in effect, two 'second comings' in Darby's eschatology. The church is first taken from the earth secretly and then, at a later time, Christ returns in a public second advent as described in Matthew 24. Darby claimed that, 'The church's joining Christ has nothing to do with Christ's appearing or coming to earth.' Second, Darby taught that the secret rapture could occur at any moment. In fact, the secret rapture is also often referred to as the doctrine of the any-moment coming. Unlike the historicist millenarians, Darby taught that the prophetic timetable had been interrupted at the founding of the church and that the unfulfilled biblical prophecies must all wait upon the rapture of the church. The church was a great parenthesis which Old Testament prophets had not had revealed to them. As was true of all futurists, of course, Darby maintained that none of the events foretold in the Revelation had yet occurred nor could they be expected until after the secret rapture of the church." Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism 1800-1930* (Chicago:The University of Chicago Press, 1970), 63. Dispensational premillenialists embraced charts to help explain their complicated and nuanced scheme for interpreting the biblical literature. For an example of dispensational thought with interpretive charts see Clarence Larkin, *Dispensational Truth or God's Plan and Purpose in the Ages*, rev. ed. (Glenside, PA: Rev. Clarence Larkin Est., 1920).

entrenched in American religious history with the publication of the Scofield Bible in 1909.[28]

Since the publication of the *Scofield Reference Bible* dispensationalism has become part of the

popular culture of evangelicalism, especially among Fundamentalists and Pentecostals, in the

United States.[29] In the 1970s, Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth* gained a widespread

readership based on speculating about the end of human history according to a premillennial

dispensational foundation and, most recently, the *Left Behind* series of books by Tim Lahaye and

Jerry Jenkins have continued the speculative musings and made the bestseller lists.[30] Because of

the focus on eschatology by the Christian Brethren and Darby, scholars have instinctively

focused on the singular aspect of this contribution to the history of evangelicalism and popular

religious practice.[31] However, giving too much emphasis to one aspect of Darby and the

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[28] Historian Ernest R. Sandeen notes the significance of Scofield's Bible when he explains, "The *Scofield Reference Bible* combined an attractive format of typography, paragraphing, notes, and cross references with the theology of Darbyite dispensationalism. The book has thus been subtly but powerfully influential in spreading those views among hundreds of thousands who have regularly read that Bible and who often have been unaware of the distinction between the ancient text and the Scofield interpretation." Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, 222.

[29] George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 4-5.

[30] The *Left Behind* series, a fictional account of the end of the world based loosely on premillennial eschatological belief began in 1996 with the publication of *Left Behind: A Novel of the Earth's Last* Days by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins. Tyndale House Publishers claims that over 40,000,000 copies of the books in the series have been sold. "The Left Behind Collection," Tyndale Publishers, http://tyndale.com/x_products/details.php?isbn=978-0-8423-5745-6 (accessed March 21, 2010).

[31] A dispensational view of history was not unique to Darby and the Brethren, but was a concept that was widely used in the nineteenth century. Thomas J. Kelley, "'Come, Lord Jesus, quickly come!': The Writing and Thought of Edward Nangle, 1828-1862," in *Protestant Millennialism, Evangelicalism, and Irish Society, 1790-2005*, ed. Crawford Gribben and Andrew R. Holmes (Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 114-115.

Brethren, scholars have failed to see the broader impact of the Christian Brethren on the development of evangelicalism.

The Christian Brethren, or Open Brethren as they are often referred to, formed a key part of the religious milieu that Müller was attracted to and participated in when he immigrated to Great Britain. Originating in Dublin, Ireland, and Plymouth, England, in the 1820s, the early Brethren included a number of evangelical "secessionists," who left the Church of Ireland and the Church of England in an effort to restore the true church. Most of their early focus emphasized ecclesiological concerns (their theological raison d'être on how to constitute a church body) and millenarian eschatology theories.[32] Although the Brethren Movement has often been misunderstood by critics and outsiders, Brethren scholars have worked diligently to make their history and beliefs known. The Brethren are part of British Dissent that intended to revitalize Christianity in the British Isles by abandoning the state church.[33] This process was controversial and painful for many. The Brethren, in fact, once officially separated from the state church were plagued by continuing divisions that shattered their high ideals of Christian

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[32] Based on Revelation 20, millenarian teaching holds that there will be a literal thousand year period of peace and love that will either precede or follow the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The Christian Brethren widely embraced John Nelson Darby's premillennial dispensational theory that the Second Coming of Jesus Christ would involve a secret rapture of the true Church followed by the revealing of the Antichrist and a period of time known as the Great Tribulation. After the Great Tribulation Christ would return again and establish his kingdom on earth that would be distinguished by 1,000 years of peace and joy.

[33] The most important contribution to this impetus was the legacy of the French Revolution that shook the notion of what constituted a civilized society. The radical nature of the revolution practiced by the French undermined all aspects of social hierarchy in society and revealed the inability of elites to control society. Throughout the 1790s and beyond, events in Europe were examined for the light they could shed on the future return of Christ. Historian Nigel Aston points out that there were various responses from envisioning the end of the Papacy and the return of Christ to the restoration of a primitive church. Nigel Aston, *Christianity and Revolutionary Europe, 1750-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 235.

unity.[34] Müller was an essential contributor to the development of the Christian Brethren, in particular, the Open Brethren, but he had an even more important impact on the development of world evangelicalism.[35]

In the context of the historiography of the Brethren Müller is a key leader in the earliest development of the movement in the southwest of England. Historian Harold H. Rowdon provided the first academic study of the Brethren where Müller and Craik figure prominently as part of what he labeled, "The Bristol-Barnstaple Group." Rowdon analyzed Müller and Craik in terms of an autonomous group of Brethren independent from developments elsewhere. Rowdon envisioned Müller, who began his career as a Baptist pastor, as slowly rising to leadership of a group of Brethren.[36] Rowdon emphasized Müller's connection with British evangelicals over his German Pietist roots. Rowdon argued that Müller was at the vanguard of an ecumenical movement that sought Christian unity at a time when divisions were rife.[37] Rowdon's book appeared one year prior to another definitive academic study of the Brethren, F. Roy Coad's *History of the Brethren Movement*.[38] Coad also emphasized the ecumenical character of

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[34] Grass, *Gathering to His Name*, 221-223, 503.

[35] The Brethren originally manifested itself as a Dissent movement in the Irish city of Dublin in 1829. These individuals, including Müller's future brother-in-law Anthony Norris Groves, were attempting to formulate a Christianity that was devoid of political and cultural influence and based solely on the teaching of the Bible. The Brethren soon extended their reach beyond Ireland to England. Grayson Carter, *Anglican Evangelicals*, 195-248.

[36] Harold H. Rowdon, *The Origins of the Brethren* (London: Pickering & Inglis Ltd., 1967), 117.

[37] Ibid., 268.

[38] F. Roy Coad, *History of the Brethren Movement: Its Origins, Its Worldwide Development and Its Significance for the Present Day* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1968), 41.

Müller's work, but laid far more emphasis on the impact of Müller's method of living by faith on

Brethren attitudes about solicitation for missionary work and supporting full-time clergy.[39]

All subsequent historiography on the Brethren is indebted to Rowdon and Coad's

arguments to some degree. Historian Tim Grass argues that Brethren historiography has been

driven by a desire, in moments of uncertainty, to affirm a Brethren identity.[40] The emphasis on

identity is most clearly seen in the importance placed on Müller in Brethren histories that

acknowledge his leadership during the schism of 1848 and the break from John Nelson Darby

and the Exclusive Brethren. Histories written by H. A. Ironside, Clifton Daggett Gray, Jr., Peter

L. Embley, James Partick Callahan, Jonathan Mark Yeager, and Tim Grass have all focused on

Müller's contribution to the development of the early Brethren, his partnership with Henry Craik,

his relationship with Anthony Norris Groves, and his influence on the subsequent development

of the movement, especially in relation to the split with Darby.[41] However, the goal of these

various histories was not to examine Müller's contribution to evangelicalism in general, but to

determine his influence on the Brethren. The result of these studies that have a limited

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[39] Ibid., 56.

[40] Tim Grass, "The Quest for Identity in British Brethren Historiography: Some Reflections from an Outsider," in *The Growth of the Brethren Movement: National and International Experiences, Essays in Honour of Harold H. Rowdon*, ed. Neil T. R. Dickson and Tim Grass (Milton Keyes, U.K.: Paternoster, 2006), 11-27.

[41] H. A. Ironside, *A Historical Sketch of the Brethren Movement*, rev. ed. (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1985); Clifton Daggett Gray, Jr. "The Meaning of Membership as Perceived by Plymouth Brethren" (Ph.D. diss., Boston University Graduate School, 1963); Peter Lindsay Embley, "The Origins and Early Development of the Plymouth Brethren" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 1967); James Patrick Callahan, *Primitivist Piety: The Ecclesiology of the Early Plymouth Brethren* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 1996); Jonathan Mark Yeager, "The Roots of Open Brethren Ecclesiology: A Discussion of the Nature of the Church Compared to the Ecclesiology of the Darbyite Brethren, 1825-1848" (Th.M. thesis, Regent College, 2006); Grass, *Gathering to His Name*.

perspective is that Müller's orphanage is presented as the vehicle that brought him broader

acclaim, but no analysis is offered to explain how this came about.

In addition to the histories of the Christian Brethren that have focused on Müller's

contribution to the establishment of the Open Brethren, two additional histories need to be

mentioned for their placement of Müller and the Brethren into a specific continuum of historical

developments. The first of these is E. H. Broadbent's *The Pilgrim Church*, which placed Müller

and key Brethren into the framework of, as Broadbent explained, "certain churches of God

which, at different times and in various places, have endeavoured in their meetings, order, and

testimony to make the Scriptures their guide and to act upon them as the Word of God, counting

them as sufficient for all their needs in all their circumstances."[42] Broadbent, a member of the

Open Brethren, wrote this church history to show that the Brethren were part of a long history of

true Christians. Broadbent noted Müller's scriptural preaching, New Testament ecclesiology,

and his establishment of the orphanage that proved the effectiveness of prayer.[43] Müller,

according to Broadbent, was part of long tradition of New Testament Christians that began with

the Apostles and included a diverse list of individuals and movements from Constantine Silvanus

to Jakob Huter and from the Nestorians to the German Pietists.

In a similar manner to Broadbent's church history, Donald F. Durnbaugh, a Mennonite

historian, wrote, *The Believers' Church: The History and Character of Radical Protestantism*,

that detailed the rise and history of the Believers' Church. The "Believers' Church," according

to Durnbaugh, included various Christian groups that could be defined by the following seven

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[42] E. H. Broadbent, *The Pilgrim Church: Being Some Account of the Continuance Through Succeeding Centuries of Churches Practising the Principles Taught and Exemplified in the New Testament* (London: Pickering & Inglis, Ltd., 1931), vi.

[43] Ibid., 360-368.

traits: voluntary membership based on profession as Christ as Savior, meet as an assembly of only true believers, perform Christian works, impose communal discipline, give to the needy, practice believer's baptism (as opposed to infant baptism), and use the Bible (as interpreted with the assistance of the Holy Spirit) as their sole source of authority in all earthly and spiritual matters.[44] Durnbaugh noticed the similarities between the Brethren and German Pietist conventicles.[45] He also detailed the development of Brethren around the person of John Nelson Darby, and he highlighted the connection between Müller's orphanage and Francke's institution in Halle. Although Durnbaugh showed sensitivity to the influence of German Pietism on Brethren practice, he did not pursue this beyond making basic observations.[46] Brethren historiography is the most immediate place where Müller's contribution has been recognized, but he has also been seen as important in the history of British Christianity.

Christianity in Great Britain

The historiography of Christianity in Great Britain is an ever expanding field that should reflect the place of widely-known popular religious figures. Scholars of previous generations were less inclined to recognize popular figures or those outside of the established state church who did not influence national church piety or polity. In studies of the Victorian period that overlap with his life and work, Müller is generally forgotten as a popular religious figure. The best example of this type of oversight is found in Owen Chadwick's monumental two-part study

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[44] Donald F. Durnbaugh, *The Believers' Church: The History and Character of Radical Protestantism* (London: Collier-Macmillan Ltd., 1968), 32-33.

[45] Ibid., 162.

[46] Ibid., 166-167.

entitled, *The Victorian Church*. Chadwick recognized the influence of evangelicalism on

Victorian Britain when he argued,

> Throughout the mid-Victorian age the evangelical movement was the strongest force in British life. . . . To many Victorians evangelical doctrine was the authentic voice and the scriptural piety of Protestant Reformation. It looked to be the sharpest arrow to pierce the soul of laboring heathen. In contemplating Victorian religion we need to remember the Salvation Army as well as Oxford University.[47]

Although willing to concede the importance of evangelicalism in the history of nineteenth-

century Britain, Chadwick failed to note people, such as Müller, whose names and ministry were

of profound importance at the popular level. Although he recognized individuals, such as

Charles Haddon Spurgeon who lived and worked in London, Chadwick fails to provide a good

overview of popular religious figures who would have been widely known among Christian

Britons. An earlier work by historian L. E. Elliott-Binns, *Religion in the Victorian Era*, also

neglected Müller's contribution to Victorian religion. Elliott-Binns incorrectly assesses the

importance of the Brethren when he states, "The narrow outlook of the Plymouth Brethren cut

them off from other Nonconformists, made them self-contained and sadly crippled their

influence."[48] Whereas, historian Horton Davies in his multi-volume study entitled *Worship and*

Theology in England does refer to Müller as "the founder of a celebrated orphanage" and

mentions his affiliation with the Brethren, but does not expand on his importance.[49] Although

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[47] Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church: Part I*, 3rd ed. (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1971), 5.

[48] L. E. Elliott-Binns, *Religion in the Victorian Era* (1936; repr., Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2002), 57.

[49] Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England: Vol. 4, From Newman to Martineau, 1850-1900* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 152.

Davies does acknowledge Müller, historical studies of English Nonconformity have not

addressed Müller's influence.[50]

The lack of attention paid to Müller in the broadest historical studies of Christianity in

Victorian Britain can be linked to a number of factors. First, the rise of religious pluralism and

urbanization combined with the issue of class in the nineteenth century created a complex social

and theological environment that continues to challenge scholars. Second, popular religious

thought outside of institutional settings has not been at the forefront of the historical study of

religion.[51] Therefore, those individuals and ideas that captured the popular imagination and were

commonly known to people of the time are curiously absent from the historical narrative.

Finally, broad historical overviews of religious history often shed specificity with the aim of

presenting generalizations that capture the broadest ideas of a society and culture. Consequently,

these major religious histories of nineteenth-century Great Britain reflect the biases of

generations of scholarship in the British Isles that have continued to struggle with how best to

understand religious history outside the Church of England.[52]

A change in the historiography of British Christianity has encouraged more detailed

studies that attempt to better understand movements that have made a significant impact on the

nation as a whole. The landmark volume in this new shift is Grayson Carter's book *Anglican

Evangelicals: Protestant Secessions from the Via Media, c. 1800-1850.* Carter's study is

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[50] John Kent, *Holding the Fort: Studies in Victorian Revivalism* (London: Epworth Press, 1978); Clyde Binfield, *So Down to Prayers: Studies in English Nonconformity, 1780-1920* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1977).

[51] Richard Brown, *Church and State in Modern Britain, 1700-1850* (London: Routledge, 1991), 471.

[52] For an outstanding overview of some of the problems in British religious historiography see S. C. Williams, *Religious Belief and Popular Culture in Southwark, c. 1880-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

significant work that placed Müller in the broader of context of historical developments in Great

Britain. Carter's study examined the rise in separation from the state church based on

ecclesiological concerns that the church was not reformed enough and remained too Roman

Catholic.[53] Müller was never a member of the Church of England, but his relationship with so

many of those who separated from the Establishment, including John Nelson Darby and A. N.

Groves, made him and co-minister, Henry Craik, crucial leaders in the development of the

Brethren Movement.[54] They were participants in the Powerscourt Conferences on biblical

prophecy that debated theories about end time events.[55] Furthermore, thanks to Müller's

marriage to Mary Groves, sister of A. N. Groves, both he and Craik, according to Carter, were

heavily influenced by Groves' teachings. Carter's account has reinserted Müller into the context

of British Christianity where his influence was much broader and more significant than previous

histories recognized. Although the older general histories of religion in Great Britain do not

include references to Müller, this oversight in the historiography reveals a problem in the writing

of history that tries to encompass the complete texture and aspects of a society that is

multifaceted and complex. However, Müller's significance for nineteenth century studies of

British society has not been forgotten by historians of philanthropy.

Anglo-American Philanthropy

Müller's importance in the study of Anglo-American philanthropy is linked to a massive

change that was taking place in British society and law as a result of industrialization and

urbanization. Müller's life and philanthropic work overlapped with a change in how charity

[53] Carter, *Anglican Evangelicals*, 4.

[54] Ibid., 132.

[55] Ibid., 207.

moved from being, in the eighteenth century, one of the "resources of control" used by the gentry for maintaining power over the poor to something radically different in the nineteenth century.[56] Historians of philanthropy see the period from 1800 to 1870 as an era of a paradigm change because charities were no longer financially controlled by the Church of England, the state, or the gentry. Over this period the founding and funding of charitable institutions changed from being the domain of elites who supported philanthropic efforts as subscribers and benefactors to a system that democratized participation to include ordinary Britons.[57] Through "Voluntary Action" ordinary people, who in most cases were not even able to vote, gave pounds, shillings, spare pence and material goods to charities of their choice.[58] All Britons were empowered to help various organizations reach whatever segment of society that the charity was designed to serve.

The democratization of charitable works in the nineteenth century also paralleled the rise in social activism of evangelicals. In fact, the religious activism of evangelicals and

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[56] E. P. Thompson, *Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture* (New York: The New Press, 1993), 74.

[57] There were previous experiments that used voluntary giving to support charitable causes prior to the nineteenth century, such as with charity schools in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries. However, these schools were under the guidance of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge and, therefore, were directly linked to the wealth and power of the Church of England. B. Kirkman Gray, *A History of English Philanthropy: From the Dissolution of the Monasteries to the Taking of the First Census* (London: P. S. King & Son, 1905), 106. The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge was founded by a Church of England clergyman and for Anglican laymen with aim of "implementing a programme of evangelical philanthropy which would revive the Church of England as the Church of the nation." *The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1698-1998* (London: Hart-Talbot Printers Ltd., 1998), 12.

[58] "Voluntary Action" references the private agency of individuals to give without the coercive power of the state influencing their decision. For further explanation see William Beveridge, *Voluntary Action: A Report on Methods of Social Advance* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1948), 8.

philanthropic work went hand-in-hand. According to historian Michael R. Watts, in his landmark study of British religious Dissent, "Philanthropy revealed Nonconformity at its best."[59] Watts aptly summarized what the leading evangelical politician of the nineteenth century, Anthony Ashley Cooper, the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, also concluded when he assessed the social impact of evangelical activism. Shaftesbury claimed in 1884, "I am essentially and from deep-rooted conviction an Evangelical of the Evangelicals. I have worked with them constantly, and I am satisfied that most of the great philanthropic movements of the century have sprung from them."[60] In the context of nineteenth-century social reform, Müller's orphanage was widely heralded as a model institution and, therefore, is recognized in the historiography of Anglo-American philanthropy.[61]

The major study of evangelical social work is historian Kathleen Heasman's *Evangelicals in Action: An Appraisal of Their Social Work*. Published in 1962, the volume has yet to be surpassed for its broad overview of evangelical charities in the nineteenth century. Heasman's analysis of Müller links him to Francke and German Pietists. Her goal, however, was to affirm that Pietists, as she explained, "insisted that Christian belief should be shown in everyday

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[59] Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters: Vol. 2, The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 634.

[60] Edwin Hodder, *The Life and Work of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury K.G.* (London: Cassell & Company, 1893), 519.

[61] Evangelical social activism continues to be explored in studies that analyze individual and collective motivations for such work. For example see chapter 4 of Nigel A. D. Scotland, *Evangelical Anglicans in a Revolutionary Age, 1789-1901* (Carlisle, U.K.: Paternoster Press, 2004); Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004); Eleanor Gordon and Gwyneth Nair, *Public Lives: Women, Family and Society in Victorian Britain* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003); Gertrude Himmelfarb, *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991).

living."[62] After establishing the link between German Pietism, Müller, and the Orphan Homes

he started in Bristol, Heasman links Müller to a wide swath of homes aimed at serving children.

She noted that Müller's approach to funding the Orphan Homes, which was based on Francke's

example in Halle, became "characteristic" of evangelical orphanages.[63] She expanded on this

claim to include a list of homes that operated according to the financial principals of Francke and

Müller when she states,

> Some small homes, like Miss Cole's Orphan Homes at Kilburn and Henry Toye's
> Orphanage at Greenwich, followed George Muller closely. Others, like Mrs. Smyly's
> Homes, Miss Sharman's Homes, and Mrs. Giniver's Home at Kilburn, copied Muller's
> methods in a modified form. D. L. Moody was strongly in favour of them and followed
> the same principles in his institutions at Northfield, Chicago, U.S.A., encouraging others,
> such as William Quarrier, to do so. Dr. Barnardo had been in correspondence with
> Muller before opening his own orphanage, and had started on similar lines. But he found
> that if he were to admit every homeless and destitute child who applied to him, he needed
> more businesslike methods. So, in addition to praying for his needs, he began to
> introduce his familiar advertising campaigns.[64]

Müller's method of fundraising via prayer was an important model for evangelicals who

established charitable works independent of denominational support. However, as Heasman

indicated, many chose to modify Müller's approach to fundraising in order to better care for the

children they served.

Heasman's analysis of Müller's contribution to evangelical orphanages does not,

however, end with his unique method of raising funds. She also examined the implications of his

departure from the traditional benefactor model for admitting children into orphanages. She

states,

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[62] Kathleen Heasman, *Evangelicals in Action: An Appraisal of Their Social Work*
(London: Geoffrey Bles, 1962), 96.

[63] Ibid, 97.

[64] Ibid.

But whether or not one agrees with Muller's way of raising funds, it did have an important effect upon methods of admission to children's homes. The fact that subscribers' meetings were not held, and the names and amounts given by particular donors were not made public, meant that the children were usually selected according to their need, or all who applied were admitted. Thus the system of voting was rarely found in the Evangelical children's homes, and this example gradually led to the abolition of the voting system altogether.[65]

Heasman credits this seismic shift in the admittance process for supporting children in need to Müller. The "system of voting" she references involved wealthy benefactors and subscribers of charities being given honorary positions in the institutions. Their names were also included in publications and they were given a certain number of votes based on the amount they donated to the charity. The votes were used to select individuals for support by the charity. Because subscribing to charities was also about a display of power, wealth, and public perception of those who gave, the process of obtaining assistance in the early nineteenth century was more about pleasing donors than helping those in need.

Within this context Müller's contribution is seen as a positive force in the development of charitable giving that democratized admissions and fundraising by refusing to name donors. Müller's approach was unique. Müller believed that a donation was simply God working through a donor to answer his prayer; this belief removed the need to celebrate a person's generosity in an official report. The anonymity of donors appears to have promoted further giving since all gifts were treated with equal dignity and respect. The lack of emphasis on publicly praising those who gave enormous sums while rejoicing over the most humble donation was a groundbreaking innovation in the history of philanthropy.

In a similar manner, Gillian Wagner in her biography *Barnardo*, a study of another Victorian-era orphanage director, also focused attention on Müller's influence among

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[65] Ibid.

evangelicals for his philanthropic work that relied on, as she explained, "the power of petitional prayer."[66] However, Wagner's goal was to highlight the influence of Müller on J. Thomas Barnardo and how they went about raising funds to provide care for the children.[67] Barnardo, unlike Müller, openly solicited support from possible donors. Wagner showed tension that existed in their different approaches to fundraising when she acknowledged: "he [Barnardo] gave vent to his real feelings about colleagues who had followed Müller's example and had frowned on those who made direct appeals: 'I have always had a very strong feeling about the race of philanthropists and Evangelists generally who live 'on faith and postage stamps'.'" [68] Although Müller and Barnardo were not in agreement about how to raise support for their charities, Wagner emphasized that Müller did inspire Barnardo to begin his philanthropic work.

Martin Gorsky's study, *Patterns of Philanthropy: Charity and Society in Nineteenth-Century Bristol*, also supports the radical aspects of Müller's fundraising strategy that did not publicly recognize donors to his charity and grew "irrespective of external events."[69] Gorsky places Müller and nineteenth-century Bristol philanthropy in the context of a city that did not experience the highs and lows that other cities in Britain witnessed with massive economic growth due to industrialization. Bristol's geographic location on the Avon River, a narrow tidal river, the lack of great coal deposits nearby, and "uncompetitive" port dues all appear to have

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[66] Gillian Wagner, *Barnardo* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979), 13.

[67] Ibid., 28, 221, 309.

[68] Ibid., 198.

[69] Martin Gorsky, *Patterns of Philanthropy: Charity and Society in Nineteenth-Century Bristol* (Suffolk, U.K.: Royal Historical Society, 1999), 209.

played some role in Bristol's slower economic and, by consequence, population growth.[70]

However, middle-class voluntarism and steady economic growth did allow the wealth of the city

to be invested in local charity work.

Gorsky argues that a key aspect of philanthropic work in Bristol was linked to the city's

religious identity. Gorsky explains, "Bristol had a long tradition of dissent, embracing Lollardy

in the fifteenth century and Quakerism in the seventeenth and eighteenth; the number of

registered nonconformist places of worship had grown dramatically by the 1810s. . . . By 1850

the growing city boasted thirty-eight Anglican and forty-six dissenting places of worship."[71]

Gorsky goes on to argue that religion was essential for charitable associations in Bristol. He

claims that three factors linked religion and charity in the city. First, the churches provided the

network to accomplish charitable work. Second, the work was done as a part of religious

commitments. Third, charitable works were intended to be a method of Christian evangelism.[72]

It is within the context of Bristol's dissenting religious milieu that Müller's Scriptural

Knowledge Institution was founded to disseminate the Christian message through publications

and, eventually, through the support of the orphans. Although Gorsky pays no attention to the

role of Henry Craik, Müller's partner, he does focus on how Müller was able to raise funds when

he asserts,

> Muller eschewed the usual methods of attracting subscribers in favour of individual
> contacts, appeals from the pulpit and use of the evangelical press in which he
> mythologised his fundraising success as the direct result of the power of prayer. A key
> financial role was played by Muller's fellow emigré and co-religionists Conrad Finzel,
> the Bristol sugar magnate, who had been convinced that a serious fire at his refinery was

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[70] Ibid., 23-24.

[71] Ibid., 32-33.

[72] Ibid., 34.

God's judgement on him for failing in his charity and had henceforth vowed to donate a third of his income to good works. The orphanages appealed to both rich and poor donors, partly due to the fact that the charity published no subscription lists, and deliberately stood apart from the sectarian identities of the Bristol voluntarist world.[73]

Gorsky highlighted three main controversies that have continued to swirl around Müller since the nineteenth century. First, that his non-fundraising approach via prayer alone was a fundraising tactic. Second, the use by Müller of both the pulpit and the evangelical press to raise public awareness and, consequently, giving to the institution. Finally, the notion that there was a wealthy benefactor who enabled Müller to rejoice in the trifling sums sent by ordinary people, while all the time knowing that the major financial commitments were being met by a wealthy, silent donor like Finzel. However, Gorsky also highlights two ideas that have not received much attention. First, the unusual appeal of being able to give anonymously and, second, the absence of an articulated sectarian position by Müller, which may have put his charity in competition with other charities. Instead, as Gorsky noted, Müller avoided sectarianism and allowed the work to appeal to the broadest audience. This last claim by Gorsky, although not clearly explained, is important for understanding why Müller could expect to receive gifts and donations from a broad segment of society, even though they may not have been friendly toward the Christian Brethren.

Two studies examine Müller's influence on evangelical philanthropy in the Anglo-American world. The first is Robert Bruce Mullin's book, *Miracles and the Modern Religious Imagination*, that examines elite and popular perceptions about supernatural activity in the modern era, with an emphasis on Anglo-American views from the mid-nineteenth century through the 1920s. The book pays only passing attention to Müller and his "famous orphanages," but links them to Charles Cullis's Home for Indigent and Incurable Consumptives

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[73] Ibid., 158.

in Boston that was inspired by Müller.[74] However, Mullin observed in an endnote that, "Müller

and his orphanage were a topic of great interest among English-speaking Protestants, particularly

among those critical of the overly rational policies of the religious and benevolent societies of

the period."[75] What Mullin recognized is important for understanding where Müller fits in the

historiography of Anglo-American philanthropy. In his lifetime Müller's approach to

philanthropic work attracted the attention of those who were interested in performing great

works of benevolence in new ways.

Another important study of evangelical philanthropy was written by Norris Magnuson

and entitled, *Salvation in the Slums: Evangelical Social Work, 1865-1900*. Magnuson's study is

focused on social work in the American context but points to the transatlantic connection

between evangelicals. Magnuson emphasized Müller's influence on American evangelicals

through his widely celebrated orphan homes.[76] Magnuson noted that articles in the *Christian*

Herald connected American philanthropic ventures, like that of Dr. Charles Cullis of Boston,

with the more famous work in Bristol.[77] Magnuson included Müller as major figure among

evangelical philanthropists in the nineteenth century whose influence was felt particular in the

area of orphan work and in his writings on the Second Coming of Jesus.[78] These studies of

evangelical social work show that Müller connected Anglo-American evangelical practice of

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[74] Robert Bruce Mullin, *Miracles and the Modern Religious Imagination* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 92.

[75] Ibid., 283.

[76] Norris Magnuson, *Salvation in the Slums: Evangelical Social Work, 1865-1920* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1977), 47.

[77] Ibid., 69.

[78] Ibid., 26.

orphan care to German Pietism, but more importantly shaped how evangelicals thought about funding charitable work. The connection between Müller's fundraising technique and evangelical social work is also acknowledged by historians of Christianity.

Although Müller is important in the history of philanthropy, only a few academic studies have addressed his impact on philanthropy. Joshua James Nelson completed an M.A. thesis at California State University, Stanislaus, on Müller entitled "George Müller: His Orphan Work and Influence." Nelson engages in a scholarly study that attempts to contextualize Müller's orphan work and philanthrophy within the world of Victorian England.[79] Nelson's analysis of Müller focused on the issues of poverty, homelessness, and economic conditions in nineteenth-century Great Britain. Nelson's thesis does claim, like Heasman, that Müller was at the vanguard of evangelical orphan work in the nineteenth century, "Because he trusted God to supply all needs, he took no part in the canvassing, voting, and elections so common in Victorian charities. His orphanage was the first of its kind in Britain, and his example laid the foundations for later orphan work by evangelicals who also refused to abide by the election system."[80] Nelson holds that Müller was essential to the rise of evangelical activism aimed at improving the conditions of the most vulnerable in society, orphans.

Despite his thoughtful argument for Müller's impact on Victorian England and evangelical charities, Nelson does not reflect on Müller's self-fashioning or delve deeply into the primary source material that could have illuminated many of the claims in the thesis. Most of his arguments are based primarily on Müller's own self-reporting in his *Narrative* or secondary

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[79] Joshua James Nelson, "George Muller: His Orphan Work and Influence" (M.A. thesis, California State University, Stanislaus, 2000).

[80] Ibid., 118.

accounts by Pierson, Heasman, and Steer.[81] Although each of these sources is credible to a

degree, there does not seem to be a critical distance or outside validation for the claims that are

made. For example, Nelson argues that, "Everywhere he spoke, crowds came to see him

[Müller] because his reputation preceded him wherever he went."[82] Although such a claim for

Müller's success may seem obvious, Nelson does not attempt to answer why people found

Müller's story so compelling or worthy of their time and attention.   Furthermore, the statement

is based on only two sources, Müller's *Autobiography* edited by George Bergin and, *The Bristol*

Miracle, a publication produced by The George Müller Foundation. The problem with these

sources is that they alone cannot prove the point; some sort of evidence beyond Müller or those

with a stake in his work should have been employed. Consequently, Nelson's account is limited

like other biographical accounts that have been published over the last one hundred and sixty

years in that it does not try to ascertain from other sources why Müller was so widely celebrated.

In 1993 Dennis Stanley Parrack completed a comparative study of Street and Bristol

Nonconformists that examined Müller's orphanage in detail alongside the business enterprises of

the Quaker Clark family.[83] Parrack's research offers an insightful social history of the orphans'

daily life. Although Parrack accepts most of what Müller relates in his *Narrative* and annual

reports as accurate, he does attempt to reconstruct living conditions in the orphan homes. The

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[81] For the entire 130-page thesis, Nelson lists only seventeen primary sources. All of these primary sources, excluding an email between the former Director of the Müller Foundation, Julian Marsh, and Nelson were books or pamphlets published in the nineteenth or early twentieth century. He does not cite any newspapers, letters, or other records that were not published in these sources and may have better informed his argument. Ibid., 132-133.

[82] Ibid., 114.

[83] Dennis Stanley Parrack, "A Study of the Activities of Committed Nonconformists in the Areas of Street, Somerset and Bristol City during the 19th and early 20th Centuries and Their Impact on the Contemporary Social Environment" (M.Litt. thesis, University of Bristol, 1993).

conclusions he draws are compelling because he is able to show that life in the Ashley Down

Orphan Homes for the children included an emphasis on their spiritual, moral, intellectual, and

personal well-being. Furthermore, Parrack's study examines the transition from the nineteenth-

century social care practice to the demobilization of the homes beginning in 1938 that ended

with Orphan Home No. 3, where Müller once lived, being closed in 1958.[84] Parrack includes a

number of primary sources in his thesis and offers a compelling look at the home from the

vantage point of the orphans. Parrack concludes his study with the revealing statement, that "In

talking to evangelical Christians, of whatever background, it is difficult to discuss the matter of

God answering prayer without some reference being made to Müller and his work."[85] Parrack

recognized something important in the study of Müller's broader significance but did not pursue

that aspect of Müller's legacy.

Another academic study of Müller's philanthropic work was completed in 1957. Gladys

Steiner's Master of Religious Education thesis, "The Relation of Faith and Service: A

Comparison of George Mueller and Thomas Barnardo," attempts to ascertain how religious

conversion enabled Müller and Barnardo to found orphanages that "are monuments to the faith"

of both men.[86] The limitations of Steiner's study are directly related to the lack of primary

source evidence employed. Like Nelson, Steiner's primary source base was limited to Müller's

own *Narrative* or the Bergin-edited *Autobiography*, as well as secondary sources like Pierson's

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[84] Ibid., 193-194.

[85] Ibid., 212.

[86] Gladys Cleveland Steiner, "The Relation of Faith and Service: A Comparison of George Mueller and Thomas Barnardo" (M.R.E. thesis, The Biblical Seminary in New York, 1957), v.

account. Consequently, her account has a hagiographical tone. She concluded the thesis with the following observation:

> It has been shown that as the faith of Mueller and Barnardo increased, the desire to express their faith in a concrete manner grew also. As they served God through their homes, they received miraculous answers to prayer and were made to see the faithfulness of God. As God's faithfulness was revealed to them, their faith increased so that new ventures in service were carried forth. Thus faith increased service and service increased faith. Their faith was kept wholesome in their service of self-sacrifice. They had no time for doubts as they labored for God.[87]

Although Steiner's focus was on religious faith expressed through social action, in reality, her thesis aimed to show that as their Christian faith grew their social activism increased. However, her attestation to this development is clouded in the language of religious devotion that obscured the simple point of the thesis.

The last academic study that addresses Müller and philanthropy is Harriet Ward's Ph.D. dissertation entitled, "The Charitable Relationship: Parents, Children and the Waifs and Strays Society." Ward's thesis is an important study focused on the late 1880s and early 1890s when public and legal debate over child-aimed philanthropy in Great Britain was most acute. Ward's focus is on children's homes founded after 1860, such as William Quarrier's Homes founded in 1864, Dr. Stephenson's Home founded in 1869, Dr. Barnardo's Homes founded in 1870, along with several others. Ward, however, recognized Müller's importance when she wrote, "Perhaps the greatest accolades have gone to George Muller, who founded the Muller Orphanage in Bristol in in [*sic*] 1836. Although his work was very similar to that of the other children's philanthropists, he was of an earlier generation and his work is not described in any

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[87] Ibid., 82.

detail in this thesis."[88]   Curiously, Ward neglects to note that Müller's orphanage was the inspiration and model for many of the homes that she did include in her study. Furthermore, unlike Nelson, she does not argue for his place at the vanguard of future socially-minded benevolence in the Victorian era.

The real challenge that Müller presented for Ward was that his approach to fundraising did not fit well with what she had recognized in the other child-rescue institutions of the era. Ward was interested, as she states, in identifying the social, cultural, and "structural frameworks of society" that shaped "policies and practices."[89] As Ward explained in her introduction, "Central to the argument [of the dissertation] is the recognition that few gifts of time, money or effort are entirely disinterested; the disparate aims of those who referred children to the society, those who maintained them while in its care, and those who offered them subsequent employment are examined in detail."[90] The issue for Ward, in regard to the argument driving the dissertation, was that Müller and the many nameless benefactors appeared in the pages of his *Narrative* as answers to prayer. The challenge of quantifying Müller's donors and the thousands of benefactors who gave trifling sums to support orphans or even identify a few large donors without any public recognition presented an enormous obstacle for Ward. Furthermore, how was their giving to be quantified in terms of "policies and practices," since Müller's donors would have no direct influence over how his institution operated. Recognizing the conundrum, her solution was to relegate him to an "earlier generation" despite the obvious place of importance

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[88] Harriet Ward, "The Charitable Relationship: Parents, Children and the Waifs and Strays Society" (Ph.D. diss., University of Bristol, 1990), 424.

[89] Ibid., i.

[90] Ibid.

that he held in the history of child philanthropy, especially since he was the known inspiration

for both Quarrier and Barnardo's efforts.

To limit Müller's philanthropic work on behalf of orphans in Great Britain to simply its

religious or fundraising significance or how he inspired other evangelical social work would

undermine the importance of the Ashley Down Orphan Homes in the history of child social

services. Müller's philanthropic efforts also attracted the attention of scholars who have wrestled

with the care that children received in institutional settings. T. S. Simey,[91] in his 1960 National

Children's Home Convocation Lectureship, analyzed the approach to childcare promoted by

Müller in the Ashley Down Orphan Homes.[92] Simey's lecture was published as a book entitled

The Concept of Love in Child Care. His first and main point of contention with the Orphan

Homes on Ashley Down was the emphasis Müller gave to the apologetic purpose for the

founding of the homes over the humanitarian goal of bettering the lives of the children. Second,

Simey found fault with the austere and practical buildings that were constructed to house the

children on Ashley Down. He argued quite forcefully that, "The buildings that had been erected

as monuments to the evangelical faith, bore, in fact, an unfortunate resemblance to Victorian

workhouses or even prisons."[93] Third, Simey was also repulsed by Müller's affiliation with what

he termed, "the extreme evangelical wing of the voluntary child care movement."[94] Simey was

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[91] T. S. Simey was the Charles Booth Professor of Social Science at the University of Liverpool when he delivered the address. T. S. Simey, *The Concept of Love in Child Care* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), title page.

[92] Simey paints his picture of Müller in broad strokes and does not differentiate between the founding of the original orphan homes on Wilson Street and the latter construction of the mammoth facilities on Ashley Down.

[93] Simey, *The Concept of Love*, 23.

[94] Ibid., 25.

agitated by Müller and those who followed his model of child care, such as William Quarrier, for

their religious motivations and lack of understanding about human development. Simey reveals

this aspect of his thought in his extended critique of the orphan buildings,

> Surely those who were responsible for erecting these buildings in Bristol and elsewhere
> should have asked themselves what kind of social life would be possible in them, and
> what the effects of this life would be on the upbringing of the children? Religious
> enthusiasm seems, however, to have prevented these questions even from being asked, let
> alone answered.
> Evangelicalism of the 'strict' kind led, indeed, to a complacency that must shock
> any intelligent person, especially if he has anything like a special concern for the welfare
> of children.[95]

Simey's critique of Müller relies on a particular perception of evangelicalism void of its

historical context. The link between Müller and August Hermann Francke's massive orphan

home in Halle was not recognized. Consequently, Müller's religious and pragmatic sensibilities

are condemned and he is presented as a poor example of childcare in contrast to moderate

evangelicals, such as Thomas Bowman Stephenson and Dr. Thomas Barnardo, who are

presented as proper precursors to the modern child-welfare system.[96]

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[95] Ibid., 24.

[96] There is some irony that Dr. Thomas J. Barnardo and Thomas Stephenson are used as
undefiled examples of exemplary orphan care by Simey. The possibility of sexual abuse and
media exploitation to raise funds were a constant threat to children in Barnardo's orphanage. For
further discussion see chapter 2 of Koven, *Slumming*. Barnardo, Stephenson, and even Quarrier
saw forced emigration of orphan children to Canada as the most humane solution to their lack of
opportunity based on their social status. Most of the children would work as farm laborers or as
domestic servants and had no advantage over those prepared by Müller for work in a trade or in
domestic service in Great Britain. Marjorie Kohli, *The Golden Bridge: Young Immigrants to
Canada, 1833-1939* (Toronto: Natural Heritage Books, 2003), 138-177.

Evangelical and Pietist

Müller's origins geographically, culturally, and theologically were German.[97] Clearly the term "evangelical" applied to him in the German context, but what about placing him within the context of the transatlantic evangelical revivals of the eighteenth-century?[98] Chapter 3 will deal with this issue more thoroughly, but the First Great Awakening, or Wesleyan Revival as it is also labeled in Great Britain, was the product of interaction between German Pietists and Anglo-American evangelicals in search of a deeper experiential spiritual life. Historians have shown that John Wesley and George Whitefield were deeply influenced by German Pietist thought, which resulted in cross-fertilization of ideas and practices from one context to another. Pietism, it may be said, is the well out of which English-speaking evangelicalism was drawn.

The connection between German Pietism and Anglo-American evangelicalism is an important link in understanding evangelicalism in terms of piety, activism, and the focus on the individual.[99] The link between Müller and Pietism also holds a place of significance in the historiography. Although Müller's thought did develop over the course of his life, the most important aspects of his Christian identity were formed in the context of German Pietism.

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[97] As stated in chapter 1, the historical development of the term "evangelical" began with Martin Luther in the first quarter of the sixteenth century as he tried to "Christianize" Christendom. Scott H. Hendrix, emeritus professor of Reformation history at Princeton Theological Seminary, argues that the key point for Luther's reform effort was "to provide a religious environment in which believers would develop as fully as possible in the model Christians described by him in *Freedom of a Christian*: free through faith to serve others in love." Scott H. Hendrix, *Recultivating the Vineyard: The Reformation Agendas of Christianization* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 37.

[98] Outside of continental Europe the main problem for defining the term in English is that the term "evangelical" denotes something more than simply being Protestant, but rather has been shaped by over two centuries of thought and practice that developed in the aftermath of the First Great Awakening in the eighteenth century.

[99] F. Ernest Stoeffler, ed., *Continental Pietism and Early American Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976).

Kenneth Scott Latourette, the esteemed Yale historian, in a single-volume landmark study

entitled *A History of Christianity*, connected Müller's conversion to a "Pietist circle in Halle"

and noted A. H. Francke's inspiration for the establishment of the orphan homes in Bristol.[100]

Theologian Donald G. Bloesch in his study, *The Evangelical Renaissance*, also stated, "Mueller,

it should be noted, was directly influenced by German Pietism, as was John Wesley."[101] Mark

Ellingsen, church historian at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia, in

his book entitled, *The Evangelical Movement: Growth, Impact, Controversy, Dialog*, builds on

Bloesch's affirmation of a link between Müller and Pietism in an effort to explain the roots of

dispensationalism in German Pietism. Ellingsen asserts,

> But dispensationalism also likely bears the influence of Pietism. The chief architect of
> modern dispensationalism, John Nelson Darby, seems to have been in touch with the
> theological currents of French-Swiss Pietism. And at least one scholar also claims that
> George Müller (1805-1898), one of the founders of the Plymouth Brethren, was directly
> influenced by German Pietism.[102]

 Ellingsen, however, only offers a tenuous tie based on secondary source reading rather than a

close analysis of the primary source material. Latourette, Blosch, and Ellingsen all note the

influence of Pietism on Müller but do not pursue the evidence or expand on its significance.

The two scholars who most thoroughly expounded on the relationship among German

Pietism, evangelicalism, and Müller are the American religious historian Richard F. Lovelace

and the German church historian Paulus Scharpff. In his book *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An*

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[100] Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953), 1185.

[101] Donald G. Bloesch, *The Evangelical Renaissance* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1973), 104.

[102] Mark Ellingsen, *The Evangelical Movement: Growth, Impact, Controversy, Dialog* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1988), 133.

Evangelical Theology of Renewal, Lovelace examined the origins of evangelical social concern.

Lovelace traced out the historical development of what he describes as "[t]he Pietist concern for

orphans" from A. H. Francke, Count Zinzendorf, and John Wesley to George Müller, Dr.

Thomas J. Barnardo, and Charles H. Spurgeon.[103] Lovelace's connection between Halle and

English evangelicals is important to note. However, Lovelace did not explicitly state that Müller

was the source of inspiration for Dr. Barnardo's or Spurgeon's orphan homes. However,

Lovelace does recognize that the evangelical social ethic concerning orphans, as well as other

underprivileged groups, was firmly based in Pietist thought and works first conducted by

Francke and persisted through his influence on others.

      Scharpff placed Müller in the continuum of the influential revival theologians and

professors August Neander and Friedrich Tholuck at the University of Halle in his book, *History

of Evangelism: Three Hundred Years of Evangelism in Germany, Great Britain, and the United

States of America*.[104] Scharpff highlighted the influence of "Bible classes" conducted by

"wheelwright Wagner and of master tailor Bredow in Halle" that were instrumental in the

conversion of Müller.[105] Scharpff located Müller in the broadest context of German Pietism and

Anglo-American evangelicalism by noting the various people whom Müller influenced through

his work. For example, Scharpff noted that Müller influenced many evangelical religious

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[103] Richard F. Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of
Renewal* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 373.

[104] The original title of the book in German is *Geschichte der Evangelisation:
Dreihundert Jahre Evangelisation in Deutschland, Grossbritannien und USA*.

[105] Paulus Scharpff, *History of Evangelism: Three Hundred Years of Evangelism in
Germany, Great Britain, and the United States of America*, trans. Helga Bender Henry (Grand
Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1966), 155.

leaders, such as R. A. Torrey, Dr. Thomas Barnardo, and J. Hudson Taylor.[106] The most

significant assertion Scharpff made was that Müller's written testimony changed the landscape of

religious faith. Scharpff contends that "Georg Müller's biography helped turn others to a life of

faith and expectation. Once again people seriously accepted the Bible as a book of God's ever

present and ever real revelation of power, and saw also the reality of the living God who

continues to work even in the present. God granted the power of believing prayer to many."[107]

Although it was not Müller's biography but his autobiography that made the impact (an error

possibility the result of a poor translation from German), the point of Scharpff's argument is

clear and important in the broader context of nineteenth-century religious history. Müller's

example was inspirational and influenced a wide, though unnamed, audience of readers.

Nicholas M. Railton, a scholar of modern German ecclesiastical history, analyzed Müller

in the context of international evangelicalism. Railton explained Müller's position in this

network as being in "the missionary heart of the Anglo-German evangelical network" that

defined so much of early evangelicalism.[108] Railton's book, *No North Sea: The Anglo-German

Evangelical Network in the Middle of the Nineteenth Century*, connected Müller to Francke,

Tholuck, the Moravians, American theological professors, and Continental and British

missionary societies. He also emphasized Müller's relationship with the A. N. Groves and the

Plymouth Brethren. Although his efforts to connect Müller to German Pietism are well-

conceived, Railton does not use any primary sources in his study regarding Müller. The source

for Railton's knowledge of Müller's actions and activities relies primarily on A. T. Pierson's

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[106] Ibid., 180, 191.

[107] Ibid., 129.

[108] Nicholas M. Railton, *No North Sea: The Anglo-German Evangelical Network in the Middle of the Nineteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 145.

1899 biography.[109] Railton's study, however, intends only to connect the various groups of evangelicals on the Continent with Great Britain to analyze international missionary work.

A recent history of evangelicalism entitled *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody*, written by historian David Bebbington, records Müller's impact on English-speaking evangelicalism. Bebbington's study does more than simply draw together key personalities and ideas into a single volume. Bebbington also highlights, like Railton, the interregional influences of evangelicals upon one another in their thinking and practice. Bebbington highlights the shared emphasis on philanthropy among evangelicals like Lord Shaftesbury and Müller. Bebbington also emphasizes Müller's approach to living by faith as an inspiration for J. Hudson, A. T. Pierson, and to evangelicals who applied his approach "to finance, to healing and above all to missions."[110] Bebbington argues that "by the time of Müller's death in 1898, his approach had become a celebrated method of organizing Christian ventures."[111] The method of living by faith was an inspiration to evangelicals to such an extent that they began to use Müller's method as a framework from which to launch their own ministries and charities. Consequently, the point that Bebbington highlights about Müller's influence among evangelicals also illuminates the growing issue of his celebrity, which is at the heart of a hagiographical literature that developed with the goal of celebrating his life and work for others to imitate.

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[109] It should be noted that Railton does not even make reference to a single book by Müller in the bibliography. The other book that Railton drew on for his study was *The Principles of Christians Called "Open Brethren."* Ibid., 144-147.

[110] David W. Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 259.

[111] Ibid., 186.

The importance of the relationship among Müller, Pietism, and evangelicalism that has been noted in the historiography is paramount for understanding interconnected history of Pietism and evangelicalism. These interconnections point to a shared theological framework and social conscience that allowed Müller to negotiate and achieve recognition wherever evangelicals were found throughout the world. Consequently, Müller, a German immigrant to England, was able to achieve worldwide prominence among evangelicals because his Pietist roots matched him perfectly with the aspirations of evangelicals who shared a common source of identity. Although the current historiography concerning German Pietism, evangelicalism, and Müller has not fully recognized the implications of such a connection, it is important to note that leading English-speaking historians like Latourette suspected a broader importance for such a claim, while a German historian like Scharpff was able to more clearly articulate such links. The challenge to create a complete story that reflects the interregional character of Pietist-evangelicalism has only been attempted by period studies, such as those written by historian W. R. Ward.[112] Consequently, historical studies that embrace the multitude of layers and exchanges that constitute the complex reality of multi-generational evangelicalism are few and far between.[113] Despite this challenge, Müller is firmly located in the historical continuum that connects Pietism and evangelicalism to the present. Because these two movements so thoroughly modified the landscape of Christianity in their respective centuries, Müller's recognition extends to the broadest field this dissertation examines, the history of Christianity.

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[112] W. R. Ward, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); W. R. Ward, *Early Evangelicalism: A Global Intellectual History, 1670-1789* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[113] In addition to Ward's work, InterVarsity Press has published a multi-volume, multi-author study of evangelical history that attempts to fill the void. The contributing authors are all noted historians from Australia, Great Britain, and the United States.

Within the History of Christianity

In the literature of the history of Christianity, Müller's life of faith in relationship to his work and ministry in Bristol has attracted the most attention.   Ecclesiastical historian Williston Walker included Müller in his magisterial study, *A History of the Christian Church*, first published in 1918.[114] Walker highlighted Müller's affiliation with the Christian Brethren, as well as Müller's claim that he supported his orphans through answered prayer.[115] Another example of this focus on the Christian Brethren is found in historian E. E. Kellett's 1933 book entitled, *A Short History of Religions*. Kellett also noted that "no philanthropist has ever been more devoted than Müller of Bristol."[116] Müller's devotion to the care of the orphans and his reliance on prayer, in fact, are the main legacy that historians of Christianity have noted. The previously mentioned Kenneth Scott Latourette included Müller in both of his other major multi-volume studies in the history of Christianity.   In Latourette's, *A History of The Expansion of Christianity, Volume 4: The Great Century: Europe and the United States, A.D. 1800 to A.D. 1914*, he wrote, "George Müller (1805-1898), born in Germany but spending the greater part of a long life in England, through prayer and without directly soliciting funds, built orphanages which cared for over ten thousand children."[117] In *Christianity in a Revolutionary Age*, Latourette noted the influence of Müller on the great orphan worker of the Netherlands, Johannes van

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[114] Considered a classic study of the history of Christianity, Walker's text went through three revised editions, the last in 1970.

[115] Williston Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, ed. Cyril C. Richardson, Wilhelm Pauck, and Robert T. Handy (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959), 500-501.

[116] E. E. Kellett, *A Short History of Religions* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1957), 539.

[117] Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity, Volume 4: The Great Century: Europe and the United States, A.D. 1800 to A.D. 1914* (1941; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970), 154.

t'Lindenhout (1836-1918).[118] Latourette did not expound upon the life and influence of Müller, but instead reinforced the simple story of how he accomplished his philanthropic work when he noted, "[He] developed orphanages in Bristol and for their support depended on God in prayer."[119] Latourette's references to Müller are not critical in their assessment, but instead merely chronicle how prayer was used to support the orphan homes. For Latourette, this appears to be Müller's most notable contribution to Christian philanthropy in the nineteenth century.

Another scholar who recognized Müller's importance was the historian of religious revivals, J. Edwin Orr. Orr was interested in tracing the history of nineteenth-century revivals and included Müller whenever his work in Bristol or his story influenced the history of a revival or a significant religious personality. In his most noteworthy study of revivalism entitled, *The Second Evangelical Awakening in Britain*, Orr affirmed a link between Müller and the Revival of 1859 that began in Ireland.[120] Orr also highlighted an account of a revival that occurred among the orphans in the Ashley Down Orphan Homes that appeared in nineteenth-century periodicals celebrating the event. The affirmation of Müller's influence on the origins of the 1859 revival continued in another of Orr's major works, *The Light of the Nations: Evangelical Renewal and Advance in the Nineteenth Century*.[121] Orr also referenced Müller's influence on the Christian

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[118] Kenneth Scott Latourette, *Christianity in a Revolutionary Age: A History of Christianity in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, Vol. 2: The Nineteenth Century in Europe, The Protestant and Eastern Churches* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), 242.

[119] Ibid., 345.

[120] J. Edwin Orr, *The Second Evangelical Awakening in Britain* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Ltd., 1949), 38, 107, 202-203.

[121] J. Edwin Orr, *The Life of the Nations: Evangelicals Renewal and Advance in the Nineteenth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965), 126.

Brethren and Dwight L. Moody in another study of revival history.[122] In his book, *Evangelical*

Awakenings in Eastern Asia, Orr noted Müller's influence on Hudson Taylor,

> The prayer life of British Christians had risen to record heights. George Müller's example in launching out by faith was being followed elsewhere. The need of China was appreciated by Hudson Taylor as by few others. So he applied the prayer and faith and action as exemplified by the 1859 Awakening to China's need, and the China Inland Mission became its dynamic extension to China's millions.[123]

Orr credits Müller with making an enormous impact on Christian practice in Great Britain and, in

particular, on the life of J. Hudson Taylor. Orr extended this impact to Australia in another

volume of this study of global revivalism entitled, *Evangelical Awakenings in the South Seas*.

Orr stated,

> George Müller's ministry of almost two years in the late 1880s came at a significant time, preceding a decade of prayer and preparation for an outpouring of the Spirit on the Australasian Churches. In that movement, evangelists born or domiciled under the Southern Cross were profoundly moved by this man of prayer, whose life had likewise much impressed the many overseas visiting preachers.[124]

Orr, as the quotation above shows, was extremely sympathetic to Müller and the revivals whose

history he studied. Yet, as the footnotes to Orr's account reveal, he employed primary sources,

to show Müller's influence in geographic locations as diverse as Great Britain, China, and

Australia.

Historian Earle E. Cairns also connects Müller with Germany and the legacy of Pietism

through Francke's orphanage in Halle. However, Cairns' aim was not to contextualize Müller

and other nineteenth-century social activists, but instead to show how orphanages were the

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[122] J. Edwin Orr, *Evangelical Awakenings in Southern Asia* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1975), 23, 79.

[123] J. Edwin Orr, *Evangelical Awakenings in Eastern Asia* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1975), 7.

[124] J. Edwin Orr, *Evangelical Awakenings in the South Seas* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1976), 76.

product of religious revivals. According to Cairns, "Revival goes hand in hand with the application of Christian principles to government and with antislavery, antiwar, and temperance activities."[125] Consequently, the rise of orphanages was the direct result of the evangelical revivals.[126] Müller's orphanage, for Cairns, was simply part of the revival-inspired evangelical concern for orphans that began with Charles Wesley and George Whitefield and concluded with Dr. Thomas Barnardo. However, Cairns' reference to Müller maintained Orr and Latourette's habit of not placing Müller into a critical framework, but instead chronicling his life of prayer and faith for its inspirational qualities. This non-critical approach to Müller may, in fact, reflect the biases of some twentieth-century historians of Christianity who, possibly through their own life experiences or affiliations, were mesmerized by Müller's accomplishments and less able to critically assess his life. The inclusion of Müller in histories written by Williston, Latourette, and others indicates that scholars have recognized his impact on the history of Christianity and, specifically, evangelicalism.[127]

Despite the growing recognition of Müller's influence on the history of Christianity within the context of Pietism and evangelicalism, he was still outside the purview of most scholarly works on nineteenth-century religious history. This situation is the result of a number

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[125] Earle E. Cairns, *An Endless Life of Splendor: Revivals and Their Leaders from the Great Awakening to the Present* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1986), 275.

[126] Ibid., 298.

[127] Additional studies of the history of Christianity that reference Müller include: Tim Dowley, John H. Y. Briggs, David F. Wright, and Robert D. Linder, eds., *Eerdmans' Handbook to the History of Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977); Tim Dowley, John H. Y. Briggs, Robert D. Linder, and David F. Wright, eds., *Introduction to the History of Christianity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995); and the widely popular survey text Earle E. Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries: A History of the Christian Church*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Academie Books, 1981).

of factors. First, Müller was part of the Christian Brethren, a group that was often maligned and

misunderstood. This relegated him to the margins of historical importance by those who found

the Christian Brethren an unattractive topic of study.[128] Second, until fairly recently the effort to

revisit the dominant historical narrative focused on institutions and offer a counter historical

narrative based on popular ideas and personalities has not attracted much attention. Even though

there are a number of scholarly works aimed at dealing with the thought and practices of those

who sat in the pews, a major effort has not been made to examine the place of celebrated

individuals, stories, and pious practices as they operated in popular religious culture.[129] The

third issue that has marked much of the study of Müller has been the robust business of

producing popular accounts of his life for widespread consumption by contemporary

evangelicals. This hagiographical literature lacks any critical perspective and is responsible, in

many ways, for making Müller into a hero of the faith.

Conclusion

Within historical studies new methodological approaches have had an impact on the way

historians ask questions about the past. New approaches to primary source material based on

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[128] Historian John Kent argued, "The Brethren, the next most successful of the sectarian groups at the time, though normally ignored by historians, who prefer the more colourful Salvationists, were reported as having a total attendance of 31,065; of these nearly 17,000 were in London proper." Kent, *Holding*, 300.

[129] It should be noted that there are a number of monograph studies by scholars that do deal with the religious activities of ordinary people. However, the dominant overviews of the history of Christianity and many subfields have remained focused on institutional history. A recent challenge to this approach is published by Fortress Press in a seven-volume series entitled *A People's History of Christianity*.

broader developments social and cultural history[130] has shaped how historians are addressing the thought and religious life of ordinary people.[131] Consequently, new studies have been written by scholars who are sensitive to the role of popular religious thought and practice.[132] With the development of these newer approaches to the history of Christianity, ordinary people and the influence of popular leaders have moved to the forefront of the debate.[133] Therefore, historiography is a gage for determining what historians and groups have decided to acknowledge as significant and worthy of further reflection. The inclusion of a particular individual, event, or idea in a historical study indicates a particular importance in shaping the past. Müller, as the historiography indicates, was an important figure in the history of the Christian Brethren, Christianity in Great Britain, Anglo-American philanthropy, Pietism and evangelicalism, and the history of Christianity. The inclusion of his name in the historiography was limited, in most cases, to the most simplistic connections associated with his story. The

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[130] For an overview of cultural history theory see Anna Green, *Cultural History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

[131] The literature is rapidly expanding in this area, but some representative works in Anglo-American historiography are as follows: Richard Rabinowitz, *The Spiritual Self in Everyday Life: The Transformation of Personal Religious Experience in Nineteenth-Century New England* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1989); David D. Hall, ed., *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997); Steven E. Woodworth, *While God is Marching On: The Religious World of Civil War Soldiers* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001); Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation, 1800-2000* (London: Routledge, 2001); John Corrigan, *Business of the Heart: Religion and Emotion in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Jeffrey Cox, *Imperial Fault Lines: Christianity and Colonial Power in India, 1818-1940* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002).

[132] Hall, *Lived Religion in America*, ix.

[133] Nathan O. Hatch's *The Democratization of American Christianity* is one work that utilizes popular leaders to better understand everyday practices. Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989).

story, however, was not one that professional historians wrote, but a story formulated out of the hagiography that evangelicals wrote to remember Müller's life. Evangelicals recognized Müller because he held resonance and meaning for them in a way that religious historians found to be worth noting but not exploring.[134] Consequently, his broader influence on the practice and thought of evangelicals has not been pursued in any historical study. This dissertation intends to fill this void in the historiography and examine Müller's place in the popular mindset of evangelicals. Pietism contributed directly to the development of evangelicalism and provided it focus on a heartfelt faith, personal devotion, and prayer. Because Müller's Christian faith first developed in the context of Pietism his practices appealed to evangelicals, regardless of theological or ecclesiastical differences, because he personified the Christian piety that the evangelical tradition idealized. The next chapter will examine the place of German Pietism in the making of Müller in order to explain why his name and story became legendary among evangelicals.

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[134] Philosopher Paul Ricoueur explained the importance of recognition when he wrote, "I consider recognition to be the small miracle of memory. And as a miracle, it can also fail to occur. But when it does take place, in thumbing through a photo album, or in the unexpected encounter with a familiar person, or in the silent evocation of a being who is absent or gone forever, the cry escapes: 'That is her! That is him!' And the same greeting accompanies step by step, with less lively colors, an event recollected, a know-how retrieved, a state of affairs once again raised to the level of 'recognition.' Every act of memory (*faire-mémoire*) is thus summed up in recognition." Paul Ricoueur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 495.

CHAPTER 3

PIETISM IN THE MAKING OF GEORGE MÜLLER

A Son of Prussia

George Müller[1] is so often identified with Bristol, England, that many have not separated

his German origins from his subsequent life and ministry in Great Britain.[2] Although his life

and ministry are associated specifically with Bristol and generally with Great Britain, Müller, as

German church historian Stephan Holthaus has described him, "was German, strictly speaking

Prussian, and that through and through."[3] For Holthaus's comment to be fully appreciated,

Müller's German origins must be examined in detail since they are essential for understanding

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[1] George Müller's full name as recorded in the ledger of the Halberstadt grammar school
that he attended when he was ten and half years of age in 1815 is Johann Georg Ferdinand
Müller. "988, Johann Georg Ferdinand Müller," Halberstadt Domgymnasium Schulakte,
Halberstadt, Germany. However, when he officially signed his name and was naturalized a
British subject on December 18, 1861, he simplified and Anglicized his name to George Müller,
see "Nationalization as British Subject," George Müller and Family, Letters and Papers, Muller
House, 7 Cotham Park, Bristol, England.

[2] Stephan Holthaus explains that "Müller's biography is so strongly connected with the
English Continent and the port city of Bristol, that many people think, Müller was English!"
["Müllers Biographie ist so stark mit dem englischen Kontinent und mit der Hafenstadt Bristol
verbunden, dass viele meinen, Müller wäre Engländer gewesen!"] Stephan Holthaus, "Ein Leben
für Gott: Zum 200. Geburtstag von Georg Müller" (lecture presented at the Brethren Archivist
and Historian Network, Wiedenest, Germany, July 3, 2005), 1.

[3] Holthaus wrote that Müller "war Deutscher, genauer ein Preuße, und das durch und
durch." Ibid.

his subsequent life, thought, and impact on world evangelicalism. Because Müller's life has

been depicted as so thoroughly British in every respect, including his full embrace of Plymouth

Brethren teachings, biographers and historians of the Plymouth Brethren have detached him from

his historical context and neglected his German religious and cultural roots.[4] The thesis of this

chapter is that Müller was, in fact, far more German than he ever was British and his

understanding and practice of Christianity was firmly rooted in Pietism. The significance of

Müller's Pietist and German background is essential for grasping his appeal to evangelicals

around the world who recognized in him a form of Christian expression that reached beyond

denominational boundaries. Müller was able to become a world evangelical hero because of his

Pietist approach to Christian thought and practice. Pietism encouraged Müller to focus on

prayer, personal holiness, social activism aimed at proclaiming God's glory, and unity with other

Christians. These four ideas would all be present in Müller's thinking and actions long before he

ever immigrated to England or joined the Christian Brethren.

Born in 1805, ten years before Prussia's great nineteenth-century political leader Otto

von Bismarck, Müller would also leave his mark on the century, like his fellow German, with a

legacy that continues into the present. Although different in social class, goals, and

accomplishments,[5] both men were heavily influenced by the most dynamic form of German

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[4] The tension between a British identity and a German identity was one that Müller
initially wrestled with in his own life. Nancy Garton reports in her biography of Müller he
signed his name Miller in the parish registry where he and Mary Groves were married on
October 7, 1830. He also clearly identifies himself as a "Minister of the Gospel." Müller does
not seem to have maintained this spelling of his name for any length of time, although relatives
who later immigrated to the United States appear to have eventually embraced the English Miller
over the German Müller. Nancy Garton, *George Müller and His Orphans* (n.p.: Fleming H.
Revell Co., 1963), 35; Steve Griffths, "George Müller's Family," unpublished paper.

[5] Although Bismarck was born into a Junker family and Müller into the household of a
lower civil servant there were other similarities that they shared besides Pietism including a

Protestant religious practice, Pietism.[6] The encounter with Pietism for Müller resulted in

pursuing a life devoted to the practice and expansion of Protestant Christianity.[7] However,

events in the German-speaking kingdoms during the first half of the nineteenth century would

leave an indelible mark on him. The rise of the middle class, the Enlightenment, the

philosophical shift associated with Immanuel Kant, *Sturm und Drang* (storm and stress)

literature, the writings of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, the music of Wolfgang Amadeus

Mozart, the impact of the French Revolution, industrialization, the Napoleonic Wars, urban

growth, the rise of Romanticism, political reforms guided by Heinrich Friedrich Karl vom Stein,

the War of Liberation, and the Awakening Movement (*Erweckungsbewegung*) contributed to an

ever changing social, cultural, and political geography in the last decades of the eighteenth

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belief in a practical confessional Christianity and both died in 1898. Müller was born in
Kroppenstadt, near Magdeburg, on September 27, 1805, while Otto von Bismarck was born in
Schönhausen, Prussia, April 1, 1815. Müller died on March 10, 1898 and Bismarck died July 30,
1898. See Edward Crankshaw, *Bismarck* (New York: Viking Press, 1981), 3, 413.

[6] Although Bismarck did not begin his life as overly religious in any sense, and questions
remain about his understanding of the Christian faith, he was deeply influenced by the revival of
Pietism in the nineteenth century through Pietist friends and his devout wife, Johanna von
Puttkamer. From 1846 forward, Bismarck prayed and read the Bible daily, while also reading
literature of the Moravian Brethren. However, according to noted historian Otto Pflanze,
Bismarck, "did not find in religion a doctrinal basis for his politics." Otto Pflanze, *Bismarck and
the Development of Germany: The Period of Unification, 1815-1871* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton
University Press, 1971), 54. Bismarck himself defines Pietism in a conversation with Crown
Prince William, later Emperor William I, in 1853 as "a man who believes in the Christian
religion according to the orthodox creed and makes no secret of his belief. . . ." Bismarck goes
on to explain that being a Pietist meant "one who seriously believes that Jesus is the Son of God
and died for us as a sacrifice for the pardon of our sins." Otto von Bismarck, *Bismarck the Man
and the Statesman, Being The Reflections and Reminiscences of Otto, Prince von Bismarck
Written and Dictated by Himself After His Retirement from Office, Vol. II*, trans. A. J. Butler
(London: Harper & Brothers, 1899), 306.

[7] Gordon A. Craig, *Germany 1866-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 20-
21.

century.[8] Müller was born during this period and developed his thinking about society, culture, and the Christian life during one of the most turbulent and dynamic periods in German history. Müller was, as Holthaus has described him, a "Prussian, and that through and through" and, therefore, it is necessary to understand more fully how Prussia shaped Müller's development.

By the turn of the nineteenth century Prussia was one of the leading kingdoms in continental Europe.[9] However, the French Revolution and the subsequent wars that grew out of the establishment of the First French Republic redefined Europe and, especially, the place of Prussia in European politics.[10] Key to the change in Prussia's role was the shift in the practice of warfare initiated by France. Under Napoleon I's leadership, France redefined the nature of fighting between states and, consequently, what being a citizen of a nation or kingdom meant.[11]

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[8] For further explanation see David Blackbourn, *The Long Nineteenth Century: A History of Germany, 1780-1918* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); W. H. Bruford, *Germany in the Eighteenth Century: The Social Background of the Literary Revival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968).

[9] Historian Richard L. Gawthrop writes of Prussia in the eighteenth century that, "No other polity of the *ancien régime* had the internal cohesion needed to survive the type of ordeal that Prussia endured during the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), when it withstood assaults from the Austrian, French, and Russian armies. This feat shows the extraordinary strength of the Prussian state with particular clarity, since the combined populations of the coalition members fighting Prussia in that war outnumbered the Prussian total by more than fifteen to one. As Frederick the Great (1740-1786) himself observed, during the reign of his father Frederick William I (1713-1740) Prussia 'became the Sparta [of the North] . . . our customs no longer resembled those of our ancestors or our neighbors.'" Richard L. Gawthrop, *Pietism and the Making of Eighteenth-century Prussia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 1.

[10] Historian Marion Gray notes that "Fearful of the French events' shattering implications to themselves, both Fredrick Williams [Fredrick William II, 1786-1797 and Fredrick William III, 1797-1840] united successively with fellow monarchs in a series of political and military alliances against France and revolution." Marion W. Gray, "Prussia in Transition: Society and Politics Under the Stein Reform Ministry of 1808," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, Vol. 76, Part 1, 1986* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1986): 36.

[11] Carl von Clausewitz, the renowned military theorist and Prussian military officer who faced France in the Rhine campaign (1793-1794) and later at the Battle of Jena, noted in *Vom*

The most devastating moment for Prussia came just over a year after Müller's first birthday

(September 27, 1805) in October 1806, when the Prussian King Frederick William III and his

army were decisively beaten at the battles of Jena and Auerstädt.[12] Harvard historian David

Blackbourn writes of this period in Prussian history that the,

> Austrian and Prussian defeat led to a completely new map of Germany. Borders were
> redrawn, populations changed hands, old forms of sovereignty disappeared, new states
> emerged. On the back of its military dominance, and exploiting internal weaknesses and
> rivalries within the Holy Roman Empire, France took the driving seat in Germany: it
> disposed of territories, imposed indemnities, controlled and enforced alliances, made and
> unmade kings.[13]

The Prussian defeat shook the kingdom to its foundation, which led to a period of reform

beginning in 1807. Prussia eventually recovered and became instrumental in resisting

Napoleon's designs for the conquest of Europe. After Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo in 1815,

Prussia rose to prominence as the most powerful German state in the nineteenth century.[14] The

territorial expansion of Prussia in 1815, which nearly doubled in size, was accompanied by

social, economic, cultural, and political changes that further developed the power and

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Kreige (*On War*) that, "War had again suddenly become an affair of the people, and that of a people numbering thirty millions, every one of whom regarded himself as a citizen of the State." Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Anatol Rapoport (New York: Penguin Books, 1968), 384.

[12] Gunther E. Rothenberg, *The Art of Warfare in the Age of Napoleon* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), 47.

[13] Blackbourn, *The Long Nineteenth Century*, 61. Historian Michael Hughes explains the significance of this military defeat when he writes, "In the subsequent peace settlement she [Prussia] had to sign away all her territory west of the Elbe, her Polish lands and her territory in south Germany. The most striking aspect of the whole affair was the total collapse of morale in Prussia after 1806, symbolized in the governor of Berlin's proclamation to the people in the name of the king after Jena, stating that the first duty of the citizen was to keep quiet (Ruhe ist die erste Burgerpflicht)." Michael Hughes, *Early Modern Germany, 1477-1806* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 186.

[14] Robert M. Bigler, "The Rise of Political Protestantism in Nineteenth Century Germany: The Awakening of Political Consciousness and the Beginning of Political Activity in the Protestant Clergy of Pre-March Prussia," *Church History* 34, no. 4 (December 1965): 434.

prominence of Prussia. Preceding Prussia's military collapse and eventual triumph over

Napoleon, Müller was born into a family shaped by the Prussian military tradition.

The second son of Johann Georg Ferdinand Müller and Sophie Eleanor Haase,[15] George

was by his own account the more adored of the two brothers.[16] Müller was born in

Kroppenstadt, near Magdeburg, on September 27, 1805, which as not technically part of Prussia

in 1805 but rather Saxony.[17] So why did Müller identify himself as Prussian? At the time of

Müller's birth his father was a trumpeter in a Prussian cavalry squadron (*Reiterstaffel*), which

may have influenced his identification with Prussia.[18] Little information about the Müller

family's life from 1805 to 1810 survives. However, Müller's own recollection fills the void

when he notes in the second sentence of his *Narrative*, "In January 1810, my parents removed to

Heimersleben, about four miles from Kroppenstadt, where my father got the appointment of a

collector in the excise."[19] Although evidence has not been discovered to explain why Müller's

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[15] George's older brother, Friedrich Johann Wilhelm Müller was born two years before George in 1803. Although one could assume the two brothers were close, Müller does not indicate this in his *Narrative* and did not refer to his brother or, for that matter, to his parents by name. Griffths, "George Müller's Family."

[16] Müller cautions in his *Narrative*, "As a warning to parents I mention, that my father preferred me to my brother, which was very injurious to me, as tending to produce in my mind a feeling of self-elevation, and in that of my brother, a measure of dislike both towards my father and myself." George Müller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller, Minister of Christ, Written by Himself* (London: J. Nisbet, 1837), 1.

[17] Provinz Sachsen, where Kroppenstedt is located, became part of the Kingdom of Prussia in 1815. Hajo Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany, 1648-1840* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), 438-440; also see Ulrich Bister, *George Müller (1805-1898)* (Hammerbrücke: Missionshaus Bibelschule Wiedenest, 2005), 14.

[18] Verzeichniß der Gebohrenen 1805, Geburtsregister Croppenstedt, Kroppenstedt, Germany.

[19] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 1.

father did not remain in the Prussian army, one recent biographer has surmised that Johann

Müller may have been wounded at the Battle of Jena.[20] Regardless of the exact cause for Johann

Müller's career change, he must have possessed some connection to a state official or been

shown preference because, as Müller highlights, he received an "appointment of a collector in

the excise" in Prussia.[21]

Müller emphasized two main qualities about himself at the beginning of his *Narrative*, he

was Prussian and he was the son of a government official. The exact rationale for his decision to

emphasize these points is unknown. An awareness of social status is apparent in Müller's

writings and he is aware that such designations mattered in the German context. After being

conquered by Napoleon I's armies and ruled over by the French, Prussia, with its successful

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[20] Clive Langmead makes the argument that Müller's father may have either resigned from military service to take up the more lucrative position as a civil servant or, as Langmead suggests, "he [Müller's father] was lightly wounded in either the Battles of Jena or Auerstädt in 1806 in which Napoleon defeated the Prussian army, and in which Major Quitzlow's regiment took part, thus pushing him into civilian life by virtue of being unfit for further service in the saddle." Clive Langmead, *Robber of the Cruel Streets: The Prayerful Life of George Muller* (Surrey, U.K.: CWR, 2006), 14. The Convention of Paris in 1808 limited the Prussian army to 42,000 men. So if Johann had stayed in the army after the defeat he would have been most likely forced out by the Convention. Holborn, *A History*, 417-418; also see, Rothenberg, *The Art of Warfare*, 190-191. The reality that Johann Müller was probably wounded with Major Quizow's 4th Reitereskadrons des Regiment at the Battle of Jena may not be overly speculative, given the position he was able to obtain in the government. Sociologists Edgar Kiser and Joachim Schneider have argued that the Prussian state preferred to hire "permanently injured military veterans . . . for low-level tax collection positions, usually for collecting town excise taxes. . . as a way of using the fiscal bureaucracy [of the kingdom] as a welfare system." Johann Müller, especially with his status as a trumpeter, would have the connections to become a low-level excise collector in 1810 fitting the model of social welfare that Prussia devised to compensate injured veterans. Edgar Kiser and Joachim Schneider, "Bureaucracy and Efficiency: An Analysis of Taxation in Early Modern Prussia," *American Sociological Review* 59, no. 2 (April 1994): 195. Furthermore, there is no evidence that Johann was pressed into military service for the French as Steven Ozment notes happened to so many Germans, which may be an indication that he suffered from some sort of injury. Steven Ozment, *A Mighty Fortress: A New History of the German People* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 160-161.

[21] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 1.

repatriation of the region he lived in, became an important source of his identity. His father served in the Prussian army and, most likely, was rewarded for that service. Nineteenth-century readers outside of Germany may not have fully grasped the significance of the first and, in particular, the second sentence of the *Narrative*.

Besides identifying with the Kingdom of Prussia politically, Müller also linked his family and himself with the educated middle-class (*Bildungsbürgertum*) that was an essential element in the rise of Prussia in the nineteenth century. The Müller family, with a father as a civil servant, was in the process of moving up the social ladder, something that must have either impressed young George's mind at the time or was highlighted within the context of his family. Although speculation as to the perceived importance of the government appointment does not clarify its significance, Müller consciously chose to depict himself as Prussian and part of the rising middle-class for his British readers twenty-seven years later.

Historians define the *Bildungsbürgertum* by both their education and their choice of profession. Historian Robert M. Bigler explains, "Since the latter half of the eighteenth century, *Bildung*—meaning the broad formation of mind and character acquired by education—had become an increasingly important criterion for social repute in Prussian society, including even some segments of the aristocracy."[22] Müller identified with the educated middle class that included civil servants, professors, teachers, lawyers, doctors, engineers, and clergymen.[23] In late-eighteenth century and early nineteenth-century Prussia, many families utilized education

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[22] Robert M. Bigler, *The Politics of German Protestantism: The Rise of the Protestant Church Elite in Prussia, 1815-1848* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 77.

[23] David Blackbourn, "The German Bourgeoisie: An Introduction," in *The German Bourgeoisie: Essays on the Social History of the German Middle Class from the Late Eighteenth to the Early Twentieth Century*, ed. David Blackbourn and Richard J. Evans (New York: Routledge, 1991), 6.

and the ability to write as the primary method for obtaining social and economic power.[24] Along

with the traditional artisan wing of the middle-class (*Besitzbürgertum*), historian David

Blackbourn noted that the educated middle class also held to values that included,

> . . . a widely shared belief in hard work, competition, achievement (*Leistung*), and the
> rewards and recognition that should flow from these; in rationality and the rule of law, in
> the taming of nature, and in the importance of living life by rules. Correct table manners,
> sartorial codes, the emphasis placed on cleanliness and hygiene, and the importance
> attached to timetables (whether in the school or on the railway) all provided instances of
> the way in which these bourgeois values operated at the level of everyday life. To this
> roster of beliefs (they were, of course, perceived as virtues) one should certainly add a
> powerful shared idea of 'independence', which rested on economic security, the
> possession of sufficient time and money to plan ahead, and certain minimum standards of
> education and literacy.[25]

These values certainly form part of the social and work ethic that Müller eventually adopted after

his tumultuous youth, but reflect the values that his father attempted to inculcate through his

parenting. Müller explained in the second paragraph of his *Narrative* that his father saw money

and the ability to handle it correctly as key to the future success of his two sons, George and his

older brother Friedrich. This small glimpse into family attitudes about money and its proper use

are essential for understanding Müller's meticulously detailed financial accounts for his ministry

operations that he composed later in life. Müller also described his father as "educating his

children on worldly principles," that had the unintended consequence, according to Müller, of

leading "me and my brother into many sins."[26] Although Müller does not explicitly state what

his brother and he did with the money entrusted to them, the implied criticism of his father was

that he gave the two young boys too much money and too much freedom, which ultimately

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[24] Ian F. McNeely, *The Emancipation of Writing: German Civil Society in the Making, 1790s-1820s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 14.

[25] Blackbourn, "The German Bourgeoisie," 9.

[26] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 1.

caused their moral corruption. Despite the failure of the experiment in Müller's case, his father

did attempt to instill the virtues of thrift, responsibility, and personal improvement in his two

sons.

Educating Sons in a Changing World

Another essential component of Johann Müller's life preparation for his two young sons

was to educate them in a manner that would ensure some sort of secure economic future with,

possibly, a position in the state bureaucracy. Although sources do not indicate what vocation

Johann Müller envisioned for his first-born son Friedrich,[27] Müller informs us in his *Narrative*

that his father planned for George to become a Lutheran clergyman.[28] Because clergy are made

not born, education was a core component of preparation for this occupation.[29] Education was

the essential component to join the rising middle class in the era of the "German Restoration"

(1815-1830). Education was also necessary for service in the burgeoning bureaucracy of the

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[27] Little evidence exists about Friedrich's education, career, and life choices other than
what Müller chooses to include in his *Narrative*. Friedrich Müller died in 1838, two years before
their father, Johann.

[28] Müller clarifies his father's rationale for selecting this career working for the Prussian
state when he explains, "[F]or I had now been for some years familiar with the design of my
father, to make me a clergyman, not, indeed, that thus I might serve God, but that I might have a
comfortable living." Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 2.

[29] The radical shift in the ecclesiastical polity of the Protestant Church occurred between
1815 and 1821 under the direction of Frederick William III. Most significant was the forced
unification of the Reformed and Lutheran churches in 1817, a year that was supposed to
celebrate Luther's 300th anniversary rather than provoke outrage as the King enforced his will
on the church. Historian Nigel Aston argues that "an aggressive and systematic confessional
statism unprecedented in Prussian history, a new turn rather than a restoration." Consequently,
the Lutheran Church under the king became a well-organized department of the government that
needed educated ministers to fill its ranks. Nigel Aston, *Christianity and Revolutionary Europe,
1750-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 315-316.

Prussian state, and offered tangible rewards in terms of social mobility and, possibly, access to power.[30]

Beginning in the late-eighteenth century, Lutherans in Germany came to regard the church as simply an arm of the state. Church property was secularized in the first decade of the nineteenth century and the aristocrats heavily influenced ecclesiastical politics.[31] Historian Eda Sagarra explains that within Prussia this meant operating as "police officials in vestments."[32] During and after the Napoleonic Wars the church in Prussia took on a new patriotic role among the citizenry, and pastors who committed themselves to supporting the state were rewarded. Frederick William III took seriously the function of the church in Prussia and in 1817, the 300th anniversary of Luther's posting of the Ninety-Five Theses, joined the Lutheran and Calvinist churches into a single ecclesiastical body. The newly centralized Prussian church became even more entrenched as an arm of the state when church leaders were given temporal ranks, such as provincial governor in the case of bishops and privy councilors for archbishops.[33] The Prussian state and the Prussian people saw the church as a department of the government, which resulted

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[30] These rewards were usually related to the power, prestige, and wealth available to the office holder. Historian Hermann Beck notes that "the actual power of the Prussian bureaucracy between reform and revolution, historians agree that its authority was virtually absolute." Hermann Beck, "The Social Policies of Prussian Officials: The Bureaucracy in a New Light," *Journal of Modern History* 64, no. 2 (June 1992): 264. For further discussion on the perceived power of civil servants see Jonathan Sperber, "State and Civil Society in Prussia: Thoughts on a New Edition of Reinhart Koselleck's 'Preussen zwischen Reform und Revolution,'" *Journal of Modern History* 57, no. 2 (June 1985): 294-296.

[31] David Lasater Ellis, "Piety, Politics, and Paradox: The Protestant Awakening in Brandenburg and Pomerania, 1816-1848" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Chicago, 2002), 66-67.

[32] Eda Sagarra, *A Social History of Germany, 1648-1914* (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1977; repr., New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2003), 205.

[33] Ibid., 207-208.

in an abundance of university-educated young men vying for lucrative ecclesiastical livings.[34]

The decision, however, to pursue a career in the Prussian church required preparation that began

at a young age, something that Johann Müller would ensure his son possessed.

Education was essential for the future success of sons in the Prussian context after

1815.[35] Although it is not known how Johann Müller perceived political changes occurring

within the kingdom during this time, what he chose for his young sons is certain. He prepared

them for university study by formally educating them. The record at the cathedral school

(*Domgymnasium*) in Halberstadt indicates that Friedrich and George had previously been

educated at the municipal school in Hadmersleben.[36] At age ten and a half George began studies

at Halberstadt Domgymnasium, followed by further studies under the direction of a tutor, and

later at the Nordhausen Gymnasium.[37] Müller asserted that his preparation for university study

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[34] Part of the appeal was the potential for ministerial candidates was that they received a direct income from the government, possibly additional income from a parish church, and lifetime tenure that most held onto until they died. Furthermore, if an individual distinguished himself there was also the possibility of being awarded temporal titles. Bigler, *The Politics of German Protestantism*, 57.

[35] Friedrich Wilhelm von Humbolt worked tirelessly for educational reforms beginning 1809 in an effort to begin to restore Prussia's place in European politics. Edward J. Power, *A Legacy of Learning: A History of Western Education* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 208.

[36] "988, Johann Georg Ferdinand Müller," Halberstadt Domgymnasium Schulakte, Halberstadt, Germany. In Müller's *Narrative* he refers to Hadmersleben by the older spelling of Heimersleben. Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 1.

[37] Müller's educational record is somewhat sporadic due to his father's career moves and Müller's attempts to manipulate circumstances to suit his desires. However, the basic course of events is simple. Müller moved to Hadmersleben in 1810 around the age of five and was first educated at the municipal school in that town. In 1815 at the age of ten and half he was enrolled at the Halberstadt cathedral school. When his father accepted a new position in Schoenebeck in 1821, he was sent back to Hadmersleben to study classics under the direction of the local minister (Rev. Dr. Nagel). Müller then enrolled in Nordhausen classical school in 1822 and remained there until he began his university studies. Müller finally entered the University of

began in the *gymnasium*[38] and was quite thorough in preparing him to excel in languages. He

was fluent in written and spoken Latin and he had read ancient authors such as Cicero. He was

also highly competent in French[39] having read Voltaire and Moliere in their original tongue, and

claims to have had a "little" knowledge of Greek, Hebrew, and Dutch.[40] Müller's education and

abilities with languages ensured that he was on the proper path to the better life for which his

father hoped. However, the Prussian education system was not without some faults, as historian

E. J. Feuchtwanger noted when he explained that the "Gymnasium provided many Germans a

highly disciplined, efficient general education. It had on the other hand many weaknesses: it

created a rigid division between the academic elite and the masses at the early age of ten and was

also socially divisive, though considerably less so than the English public school system of the

19th century."[41] The intellectual atmosphere of the *gymnasium* created and reinforced a social

hierarchy based on intellectual achievement, one that Müller fully acknowledged in his

Narrative.

Halle in 1825 to study divinity. Müller, *A Narrative* (1837); also see Arthur T. Pierson, *George Müller of Bristol*, intro. James Wright (London: Pickering & Inglis, 1899), 20-26.

[38] The most famous result of Friedrich Wilhelm von Humbolt's reforms was the establishment of the University of Berlin in 1810, but another major reform centered on the *gymnasium* ("higher" secondary education) curriculum by formalizing the length of study to ten years, clearly defining the curriculum centered on German and classical languages and literature, and reinforcing the elitist stature of such an education. E. J. Feuchtwanger, *Prussia: Myth and Reality, The Role of Prussia in German History* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1970), 122-123.

[39] While a student at the University of Halle, Müller engaged in and completed the task of translating a novel from French to German, which indicated that his ability to use French was highly developed. Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 12.

[40] Ibid., 6-7, 33, 42.

[41] Feuchtwanger, *Prussia*, 124.

The preparatory education Müller received appears to have equipped him well for his

eventual success as a student at the University of Halle.[42]   Established in 1694, the University of

Halle, according to humanities professor Marcus Peter Ford, soon became noted for,

> . . . objectivity and rationalism, scientific attitudes, and free investigation. At Halle,
> German took the place of Latin as the language of instruction, lectures were substituted
> for canonical texts, elective courses were offered instead of the formalized curriculum of
> the medieval university, seminars replaced disputations, and professors were given
> almost complete control over their work. Moreover, at Halle modern scientific ways of
> thinking were encouraged.[43]

When Müller arrived at the University of Halle in 1825 he encountered a university student body

and faculty who were essentially secular and scientific in their worldview. Consequently,

Müller's claim that at the time of his enrollment there were ". . . 1260 students about 900 of

whom studied divinity, all of which 900 were allowed to preach, although, I believe, not nine of

them feared the Lord,"[44] simply meant that the vast majority of ministerial students were in

training for a civil servant position in the state ecclesiastical bureaucracy rather than on a quest to

fulfill a spiritual calling. Müller's assessment corresponds with historian Marion W. Gray's

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[42] Founded in 1694, the University of Halle was officially closed in 1806 after
Napoleon's victory over the Prussian army and occupation of the city of Halle. Napoleon later
made Halle part of the new state of Westphalia and, eventually, the university was reestablished
in 1808. In 1817, the universities of Halle and Wittenberg were officially unified as a single
university, known commonly in English as the Royal University of Halle or also as the
Friedericiana Halle-Wittenberg University. In 1933 the university was renamed Martin-Luther
University Halle-Wittenberg. W. L. V. Grafen Henkel von Donnersmark, "Germany, from the
Congress of Rastadt, to the Battle of Jena," *The Edinburgh Review* 86, no. 174 (October 1847):
360.

[43] Marcus Peter Ford, *Beyond the Modern University: Toward A Constructive
Postmodern University* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), 27.

[44] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 10. Historian Robert Bigler asserts that Halle had 900
students studying theology in 1828, while historian Stephan Holthaus puts the number at 951
students in the spring of that year. Bigler, *The Politics of German Protestantism*, 122; Stephan
Holthaus, "Kein Bristol ohne Halle: Georg Müllers frühe Jahre in Deutschland (1805-1829),"
unpublished paper.

argument that in Prussia "civil servants began to perceive themselves as products of education. University training was becoming the key to establishing professional identity . . . [and] a primary function of universities had become the training of government officials."[45] The large numbers of divinity students can be explained by the fact that the church was an arm of the state government that appeared accessible to aspiring middle-class families wanting a better life for their sons. Clearly, the link between the civil service and higher education appealed to the newly emerging *Bildungsbürgertum* and attracted more and more achievement-oriented young men who hoped to turn a university education into a lucrative career.[46]

Müller's studies at Halle began in the latter half of October in 1825. Up until this point in his life Müller asserts that, although a successful scholar, he led a decadent and dissolute life. Lying, cheating, stealing, and "gross immorality" are constant themes in his depiction of his youth. He wrote,

> My time, till I was thirteen years of age, was spent in studying, reading novels, and indulging, though so young, in sinful practices. Thus, it continued till I was above 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 being filled with strong beer, we went about the streets half intoxicated.[47]

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[45] Gray, "Prussia in Transition*,*" 41.

[46] Historian Lenore O'Boyle points out that overproduction of university educated men seeking state positions, including service in the state church, became an acute problem in the 1820s as more and more middling families invested what little capital they may have had in their sons' education. As O'Boyle explains, the government issued "repeated warnings against attendance at the universities with a view to entering state service, and in 1827 thought it necessary to make its examinations for state employment more severe." Lenore O'Boyle, "The Problem of an Excess of Educated Men in Western Europe, 1800-1850," *The Journal of Modern History*, 42, no. 4 (December 1970): 475. Historian Robert Bigler highlights that after 1830 and clearly in the 1840s university student studying theology dropped across Prussia when limited prospects for highly competitive jobs impacted enrollment. Bigler, *The Politics of German Protestantism*, 57.

[47] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 2.

Müller's youthful delinquency did not end with spending the day drunk after his own mother's death, but continued throughout his teenage years as he focused on "playing the piano-forte and guitar, reading novels, and frequenting taverns."[48] Ultimately, Müller ended up in prison for almost a month after trying to avoid paying a hotel bill that he accumulated by pretending to be a person of means.[49] A key element in contextualizing Müller's understanding of these "sinful" practices was his continued attempt to present himself as part of the cultured element of society. Müller's education provided him with a sense of social superiority that involved more than intellectual acumen. The formal schooling provided him with an awareness of etiquette and proper manners that he believed reflected those of a higher social rank. He recorded in his *Narrative* that "my superior manners profited nothing" and he was unable to avoid criminal prosecution.[50] Despite the fact that Müller presented himself as one of higher social rank he was still forced to account for the crime he had committed. Eventually, Müller's father was able to obtain his release from prison by paying his debts.[51]

By the time Müller started his theological studies at Halle, his life had been marked by the intersection of three main forces: youthful rebellion, conformity to social and cultural expectations of the *Bildungsbürgertum*, and his status in Prussian society. However, if Müller's *Narrative* is to be trusted, he also indicated that he was tormented by his inability to improve his behavior through his own willpower. The *Bildungsbürgertum* emphasized the habits associated

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[48] Ibid., 3.

[49] Müller was in jail from December 21, 1821 to January 12, 1822 in the town of Wolfenbüttel. Pierson, *George Müller*, 21-22.

[50] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 4.

[51] The judge determined that Müller's father should repay the hotel bill, the cost of keeping young George in prison, and provide the funds for George to travel home. Ibid., 5.

with being moral, respectable, and successful. Müller's less than ideal behavior violated this

way of life. Müller's ethos seemed to be more in line with Martin Luther's famous dictum to

"sin boldly"; yet, Müller applied the idea without the recognition of God's grace that Luther

proposed.[52]

According to his later assessment, Müller believed that the Lutheranism he inherited from

his family and Prussian culture was not an effective source of moral or spiritual guidance. He

notes in his *Narrative* that "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

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, giving him only the twelfth part of the

fee which my father had given me for him."[53] According to Müller, his confirmation on the

Sunday after Easter Sunday in 1820 was followed by "resolutions to turn from those vices in

which I was living," which ultimately "came to nothing, and I still grew worse."[54] Müller

blames his inability to change on the fact that he "had no regard to God, and attempted the thing

in . . . [his] own strength."[55] Müller constantly highlights that he was able, at times, to achieve a

great deal through sheer will power, but at other times gave himself over to his hedonistic ways.

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[52] Martin Luther was referring to the power of God's grace and the assurance of salvation
that the Christian should possess. In a letter to Melanchthon written on August 1, 1521, from the
Wartburg Castle, Luther wrote, "If you are a preacher of grace, then preach a true and not
fictitious grace; if grace is true, you must bear a true and not fictitious sin. God does not save
people who are only fictitious sinners. Be a sinner and sin boldly, but believe and rejoice in
Christ even more boldly, for he is victorious over sin, death, and the world." Martin Luther,
Luther's Works, Volume 48: Letters I, trans. and ed. Gottfried G. Krodel (Minneapolis, MN:
Fortress Press, 1963), 281-282.

[53] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 2.

[54] Ibid., 2-3.

[55] Ibid., 3.

When he entered the university he hoped once again to "renounce this wretched life, for I had no

enjoyment in it, and had enough sense 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 of account of offending

God."[56] Müller's desire was to find another way to live life that would ensure success in his

moral development at Halle, so he chose "better companions" with the aim of improving his own

conduct.[57] Although Müller's refashioning of himself through proper behavior was a failure up

until his entrance at Halle, while at the university he did manage to fulfill his latter hope of self-

improvement by selecting friends who could assist in his project.[58] One of his fellow students at

Halle, whom Müller refers to as Beta, was instrumental in introducing him to one of the most

powerful forces in Prussian history—Pietism.[59]

The Influence of Prussian Pietism

Pietism appeared in the German speaking kingdoms after the Thirty Years' War (1618-

1648). The movement that developed in the seventeenth century drew on several different

aspects of Christianity: medieval Catholic mysticism, the writings of Martin Luther,

Anabaptism, English Puritanism, and, most importantly, Johann Arndt's book *True Christianity*

(*Wahres Christentum*) that was published in 1606. The key contribution Arndt made was to join

Christian activism with doctrinal knowledge.   Arndt explains, "[T]rue Christian knowledge and

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[56] Ibid., 8.

[57] Ibid., 9.

[58] Stephan Holthaus notes that,"Müller later in his Autobiography, classic for neo-Pietist life depictions, makes his youthful years appear in a bad light."   ["Müller lässt in seiner späteren Autobiographie, klassisch für neupietistische Lebensbeschreibungen, die Jugendjahre in schlechtem Licht erscheinen."] Holthaus, "Kein Bristol."

[59] Christoph Leopold Friedrich Beta, Müller's friend, was also a divinity student at Halle. Stephan Holthaus, "Müller, Johann Georg Ferdinand," unpublished manscript.

understanding of Christ and pure teaching does not consist alone in words but in deed and in a holy life as Saint Paul says in Titus 1:16."[60] Arndt's book made an enormous impact on Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705) and his understanding of the Christian life. Spener directed Pietism toward the primacy of the biblical text over creedal formulas, as well as a focus on a theology of love that sought godly activism by Christians in response to Christ's love. Spener and his fellow Pietists also sought a personal reformation that changed individual behaviors and embraced an experiential relationship with God that promoted the work and role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual Christian. Spener was first and foremost a pastor who wanted to see the Lutheran Church reinvigorated with a passion for God and the Gospel. Consequently, he believed that living out these ideas would ultimately reform the Lutheran Church and transform the world with eschatological implications. As a result, church historian Kenneth Scott Latourette argued that Spener "is regarded as the immediate source of Pietism."[61] If Spener is the "immediate source of Pietism," then Arndt is, as historian Heiko Oberman labeled him, "the Father of German Pietism" due to his impact on Spener.[62]

Pietism was a reaction to Lutheran scholasticism that emphasized doctrinal purity over personal holiness. Pietism was also, like English Puritanism, a movement aimed at reforming the state church as a kind of *church within a church*.[63] Scholars note that Pietism was a reaction

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[60] Johann Arndt, *True Christianity*, trans. Peter Ebb (Berlin, 1712; New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 174.

[61] Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity, Vol. 2: A.D. 1500-A.D. 1975* (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1975), 895.

[62] Heiko A. Oberman, "Preface," in Arndt, *True Christianity*, xi.

[63] Historian Hajo Holborn notes that Puritanism made an impact on German Protestantism through Reformed churches that emphasized, "Calvin's insistence on the sanctification of the orders of the world." Holborn, *A History*, 136-137. Historian Mark Noll

to the social chaos created in the wake of the Thirty Years' War where debauchery and drunkenness appeared as the scourge that weakened German society. Pietism developed out of a need to address the problems that both the Lutheran Church and society faced in the seventeenth century. These problems shaped the theological agenda of Pietists as they focused on restoring a vital spirituality to the Lutheran Church.[64]

Pietism originated in the sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries as an effort to challenge the mechanical focus of the Lutheran Church on orthodox dogma by encouraging laypeople to embrace an active Christian life that was dynamic. The reforms aimed to reinvigorate the Lutheran Church through the regeneration of individuals, while also reinvigorating society with a new moral vision. Historian Steven Ozment reveals the initial excitement associated with the movement in Prussia when he explained, "Pietism promised to accomplish what its adherents believed state authority and orthodox Protestantism, Lutheran and Calvinist, could never do: reconstruct Germany spiritually, morally, and socially. In a society of rigid class divisions, formulaic religions, and iron rule, Pietism's promise caught the imagination of many."[65] Pietists made many gains in the early eighteenth century, even convincing Frederick

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also points to the translation of Puritan writers into German. Mark A. Noll, *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997), 229.

[64] Historian Mary Fulbrook explains that, "Pietism in Germany arose a good century after the reformation. Yet it too, like English Puritanism, originated as a movement for the further reform of what were considered to be incompletely reformed Protestant state churches. Pietists argued that while Luther had initiated a revolution in doctrine, there had not been a corresponding reformation of life: the *Reformation der Lehre* [reformation of doctrine] required completion with a *Reformation des Lebens* [reformation of life]. The institutional reforms proposed by Pietists arose out of the compelling desire to produce a stronger church, bringing a living faith to the people, achieving improved religious knowledge, moral and social discipline." Mary Fulbrook, *Piety and Politics: Religion and the Rise of Absolutism in England, Württemburg and Prussia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 23.

[65] Ozment, *A Mighty Fortress*, 129.

William I to join their ranks in 1711.[66] However, as they joined practical knowledge and Christian morality to shape Prussian society, Pietists were too reliant on their political connections and fostered bitterness from churchmen and politicians. The result was that Pietists lost their ability to influence the official direction of the Lutheran Church and moved to the periphery of church politics by the late eighteenth century. Although unable to directly shape the policies of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, Pietists remained a vital and active part of Prussian religious life throughout the remainder of the eighteenth century, and continued to be important through the nineteenth and into twentieth centuries. In 1905, Fritz Barth, the father of the famous Protestant theologian Karl Barth, would declare in a lecture on contemporary church history that "even today it [Pietism] is a major force that must be respected."[67]

A number of attributes defined how Pietists dealt with the world around them. First, early Pietists were concerned with when and how Christ would return. Pietist eschatology was linked with the ongoing struggle between Protestantism and Catholicism in Germany that began during the Reformation. The Roman Catholic Church was seen as an enemy that could cause the people of God (Protestants) to change their ways and stop following the true teachings of Christ reflected in the writings of the Protestant reformers. Furthermore, Pietists held that the Second Coming of Christ would be preceded by the regeneration of the *true* Church (i.e., the Protestant Church), the regeneration of individuals (i.e., a personal awakening in Christ), and even the

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[66] Ibid.

[67] Quoted in Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barth and the Pietists: The Young Karl Barth's Critique of Pietism and Its Response*, trans. Daniel W. Bloesch (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 11.

conversion of the Jews (i.e., a focus on missionary work).[68] The hope for the start of the

millennial reign of Christ was rooted in the constant threat of war, especially with the Turks,

which was a plausible scenario in seventeenth-century Europe. For some Pietists, fear of war

moved chiliastic interpretations of current events to the forefront of their religious thought and

became their defining issue.[69]

The second major area of Pietist thought challenged the passive role of hearing pure

doctrine preached from the pulpit followed by the partaking of communion as the sole

fulfillments of a Christian's duty. Instead Pietism promoted an active and experiential Christian

faith that placed emphasis on personal conversion, the centrality of the Bible, guilt and

forgiveness. A third emphasis of Pietism aimed to combat passivity on the part of the laity.

Pietists demanded that laypeople take an active role in the development of their own life of faith

through participation in a small group (*collegia pietatis*). These small groups promoted a

devotional form of Christianity concerned with creating a "spiritual priesthood." Small groups

did not intend to undermine the role or authority of the clergy but promoted a democratized

spiritual life.[70] A fourth area of concern for Pietists was the notion that biblical ideas must be

practiced in everyday life, which resulted in a heavy emphasis on personal holiness and right-

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[68] Spener's *Pia Desideria* was, according to Peter Erb, "written within an eschatological context, a 'hope for better days.'" Peter C. Erb, ed., *Pietists: Selected Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 6.

[69] Hans Schneider, a leading historian of Radical Pietism, argues "that the great significance eschatology was afforded in Pietism only increased in Pietism's radical representatives. For some figures and groups, it almost became the focal point of their theology and piety." Hans Schneider, *German Radical Pietism*, trans. Gerald T. MacDonald (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2007), 6.

[70] Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, trans., ed., and intro. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), 92.

minded action. Finally, Pietists sought to place "heart" religion above doctrinal issues.

Essentially, Pietism was an attempt to infuse Lutheran Christianity with a simple, relevant, and

devotional quality that could actually be expressed in everyday life through a variety of activities

from charitable giving to prayer.[71]

Müller never used the terms Pietist or *Pietism* to describe the form of Christianity that

shaped his experience in Halle. Although the terminology is absent from his *Narrative*, the

religious world Müller encountered was Pietist. Nevertheless, Müller's refusal to acknowledge

this raises issues about what he is trying to achieve in the *Narrative*. Was there a conscious

decision made to avoid the term Pietist for fear of possible misconceptions by English readers?

Müller might, however, have only intended to present his early experiences with Pietists in Halle

in terms that were biblical in order to emphasize practices and behaviors that, from his

perspective, marked them as *real* Christians. The distinction here is significant because the story

Müller fashioned has an overarching ecumenical element that would be attractive to the widest

swath of his readers. The avoidance of the term Pietist or even "awakened" Lutherans removed

any conceptual fear that might have been created and moved the story from the periphery of

Protestant divisions to the center of Protestant unity. Müller focused on how Christ's grace and

atoning work through the activities of devout Christians made godless young men like himself

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[71] Gerald R. Cragg, *The Church and the Age of Reason, 1648-1789* (New York: Penguin Books, 1970), 100-101; Williston Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, revised by Cyril C. Richardson, Wilhelm Pauck, and Robert T. Handy (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959), 444-445. Margaret R. Miles, *The Word Made Flesh: A History of Christian Thought* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 350. For an explanation of the difficulty associated with defining Pietism see F. Ernest Stoeffler, "Introduction," in *Continental Pietism and Early American Christianity*, ed. F. Ernest Stoeffler (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1976), 8-11. For the best historical explanation of the broad impact of Pietism on Protestant Christianity, see W. R. Ward, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) and W. R. Ward, *Early Evangelicalism: A Global Intellectual History, 1670-1789* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

seek Christ. Müller also could have been simplifying the situation in order to communicate clearly to a non-Lutheran audience. The goal for Müller was not to create division but to emphasize a vibrant Christian community that humbled him to the point that he desired salvation.

According to Müller's *Narrative*, he was taken "one Saturday afternoon, about the middle of November 1825" by Beta to a small group meeting in the home of a local layman in Halle by the name of Johann Veit Wagner.[72] Wagner, by Müller's account, was the first to present to him a form of Christian expression that he had not experienced in the Lutheran Church. The format of the meeting was rather simple: the group sang a hymn, a layman by the name of Kayser said a prayer over the meeting, read a chapter of the Bible, then read a printed sermon, and, in conclusion, as a group they all sang another hymn.[73] The simplicity of the event conducted by laymen made a profound impact on Müller whose only previous experience in a religious setting was at orchestrated events conducted in a parish church.[74]

Müller's view of the humble group of believers gathered in Wagner's home provides some insight into the remnant of Pietism that operated in early nineteenth-century Halle.[75] The

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[72] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 11.

[73] Müller indicates that Kayser became a missionary with the London Missionary Society and served in Africa. Kayser's full name was Frederick Gottlieb Kayser. He established the mission station of Knapp's Hope in honor of his mentor and professor at the University of Halle, Dr. G. C. Knapp, who died in 1825. Knapp held the Chair of Theology later occupied by Friedrich August Gottreu Tholuck. J. J. Freeman, *A Tour in South Africa, with Notices of Natal, Mauritius, Madagascar, Ceylon, Egypt, and Palestine* (London: John Snow, 1851), 93.

[74] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 2.

[75] Remnant is really the best word to describe the small size of this group. According to Professor August Tholuck, prior to the time he arrived at the University in Halle, "Out of nine hundred students, he [Professor Knapp] had found five who, being revived by the aid of a Christian craftsman [Johann Wagner], believed in the Divinity of Christ." It was this small group

first and most obvious recognizable component is the leadership of lay people in guiding and

directing their own spiritual lives through conventicles.[76] These small groups of Christians

coming together for mutual support and edification were still an important feature of Pietism in

the first quarter of the nineteenth century, as they had been in the earlier history of the

movement. Müller's testimony indicated that the small group was not only for believers, but

also for "poor sinners" who had expressed an interest in "caring about the things of God."[77] This

simple statement is also helpful in understanding a second aspect of Pietism, a focus on a

theology of experience meant to encourage regeneration or conversion through openness and

persuasion. As a third point of interest, there is an emphasis on biblical literacy directly

promoted through the reading of the biblical text and a selected sermon. Fourth, in Müller's

account there is an interaction between Wagner and Müller in which the latter apologized for

coming and Wagner responded by saying, "come as often as you please; house and heart are

open to you."[78] In this single statement one gains insight into two key aspects of Prussian

Pietism: right living and an active love.[79] The kindness Müller recalled extended beyond the

material world and the space of the Wagner's home. Included in Müller's recollection is the

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to which Müller had been introduced by his school friend Beta. August Tholuck, "Evangelical
Theology in Germany: Survey of My Life as a Teacher of Theology," trans. Leopold Witte, in
*History, Essays, Orations and Other Documents of the Sixth General Conference of the
Evangelical Alliance, Held in New York, October 2-12, 1873*, eds. Philip Schaff and S. Irenæus
Prime (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1874), 86.

[76] Dale W. Brown, a theologian affiliated with the Church of the Brethren, notes that
"early Pietism worked to eliminate the great chasm which separated clergy and laity." Dale W.
Brown, *Understanding Pietism*, rev. ed. (Nappanee, IN: Evangel Publishing House, 1996), 42.

[77] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 11.

[78] Ibid., 12.

[79] Brown, *Understanding Pietism*, 22.

notion of the "heart" being "open" to him as well. Such a statement relates directly to Pietism

being "a *love theology*," as theologian Dale W. Brown highlighted in his seminal study

Understanding Pietism.[80] Pietists held that goodness, when combined with active love, needed

to find expression in the material world through the actions of individuals who would transform

society by their actions. Consequently, as Brown argues, "the Pietist strategy has been that of

changing society through changed individuals."[81] This last aspect is evident in the account that

Müller provides of his experience with this group of Pietists and became a dominant aspect of

Müller's own life and practice.[82]

Before Müller was able to invest himself in the Pietist form of Christianity he

encountered he needed to abandon, at least consciously, his own elitist attitudes about

Christianity. He would write twelve years after the meeting that Wagner's closing prayer

profoundly moved him. His recollection illuminated another social reality when he explained,

"Whilst he [Wagner] prayed my feeling was something like this; I could not pray as well, though

I am much more learned than this illiterate man."[83] Müller's memory of the event is defined by

his perceived social and intellectual superiority. Although Müller, as will be shown in this study,

was perceived by his critics to be both simple and unsophisticated in his approach to Christian

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[80] Ibid., 21.

[81] Ibid., 97.

[82] Holthaus argues that, "Eines wird dadurch deutlich: Die Überzeugung vom
allgemeinen Priestertum, vom weltweiten Leib Christi jenseits der Konfessionen und von der
absoluten Priorität der Bibelauslegung fur die Christliche Existenz lernte Müller nicht erst von
der Bruderberwegung in England, sondern vom Wagnerschen Kreis in Halle an der Salle."
[From the evidence, the conviction of a universal Priesthood, from a global body of Christians
beyond denominations, and the absolute priority of Biblical interpretation for the Christian life
Müller learnt not only from the Christian Brethren in England, but also from the Wagner circle in
Halle.] Holthaus, "Kein Bristol."

[83] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 12.

theology and practice, within the Prussian context he was, and he envisioned himself to be, part

of an aspiring social and cultural elite. Therefore, the transformational power of Pietism for

Müller was that it offered something that his education and previous experience with the

Lutheran Church could not offer, namely, a living reality that was not defined by social norms

but by pious action that empowered even the most humble of men.

Another aspect of the Pietist meeting that profoundly affected Müller was the kneeling to

pray, which was part of the group's religious practice. Müller was moved by the physical act

because, as he states, "I had never either seen any one on his knees, nor had I ever myself prayed

on my knees."[84] This physical action by the Pietists he encountered symbolically represented the

spiritual transformation that Müller believed was operative in his life from that moment forward.

His conversion experience was not marked by a crisis moment in emotional or intellectual terms.

Rather, Müller described a simple awareness parallel to the religious experience he had within

the context of the small group meeting. Müller explained,

> When we walked home [from the meeting], 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 I do not remember; but this I
> know, that I lay peaceful and happy in my bed. This shews that the Lord may begin his
> work in different ways. For I have not the least doubt, that on that evening the Lord
> began a work of grace in me, though I got joy without any deep sorrow of heart, and with
> scarcely any knowledge. But that evening was the turning point in my life.[85]

Although he acknowledged that the spiritual transformation did not equate to instant holiness and

the end of "sin" in his life, especially since he continued with his translation work of French

novel into German that he considered an inappropriate. He did confirm that this was a pivotal

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[84] Ibid.

[85] Ibid.

moment.[86]   However, it should be noted that his depiction was not typical of Anglo-American

evangelical conversion experiences in that there was no crisis moment that led to a dramatic and

emotional catharsis. Instead his account highlighted the "joy" of conversion that Albrecht

Ritschl described as a definitive trait of Halle Pietism.[87] Müller noted that he felt "happy" and

"peaceful." Müller indicated that his conversion experience was a deviation from the evangelical

ideal that linked a crisis moment to salvation. Müller explained, "the Lord began a work of

grace in me, though I got joy without any deep sorrow of heart, and with scarcely any

knowledge."[88] Müller did not suffer the soul wrenching torment of Luther. Instead Müller

stumbled upon God in a completely un-dramatic manner, but still he held to that moment as the

key for his spiritual awakening.

By the time Müller entered the University of Halle, Pietism appeared also to have lost

much of its vigor and faded into the historical background of the university that was once noted

for being the center of Pietism.[89] However, in the aftermath of Waterloo and the subsequent

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[86] Ibid., 12-13.

[87] Ritschl, the famous nineteenth-century German theologian who wrote a three-volume
study of Pietism entitled *Geschichte des Pietismus*, contends that "[t]he antecedents of this
consummation [i.e., conversion experience] may vary in different cases, but in every instance the
Halle Pietism, in the conversion which it demands, insists on a similar experience of the intense
consciousness that *my* sins are forgiven, and on the commencement of a concomitant feeling of
joy, which puts an end to any unhappiness that may have gone before." Albrecht Ritschl, *The
Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation: The Positive Development of Doctrine*,
ed. H. R. Mackintosh and A. B. Macaulay, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: T &T Clark, 1902), 156.

[88] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 12.

[89] Augustus Hermann Francke (1663-1727) was hired as one of the key professorial
appointments at the University of Halle in 1694 as the chair of oriental languages. In 1698
Francke was appointed Professor of Divinity. Several other Pietists were appointed as professors
including: Joachim Justus Briethaupt, Paul Anton, and Joachim Lange. F. Ernest Stoeffler,
German Pietism During the Eighteenth Century (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 42-44. Church historian
Justo L. Gonzáles explains the founding of the University of Halle as a struggle between
Lutheran orthodoxy and Pietism when he writes, "Soon Spener and Francke were involved in

Congress of Vienna, Protestantism, like Roman Catholicism, was experiencing a revival among

European nations that had been battered and destabilized during the Napoleonic Wars. Historian

Nigel Aston argues, "what assisted revival in the 1815-1830 period was that virtually every

polity from Britain to Russia and from Sweden to Naples was concerned to foster (and supervise)

the growth of belief and practice rather than restrict it, seeing in the Churches the most important

forces for stabilizing the foundations of the Restoration order."[90] In Prussia, the Awakening

Movement (*Erweckungsbewegung*) would also make a profound impact on the world Müller

inhabited and reinvigorate it with a new sense of Christian vitality.[91] The importance of a small

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controversy with the theologians of the universities of Leipzig, Wittenberg, and others. J.
Deutschmann, one of the Wittenberg theologians, charged them with two hundred and eighty-
three heretical teachings, and most orthodox theologians concurred on many of these. As a
result, the Pietists were forced to found the University of Halle (1694), which soon became a
center out of which their inspiration spread throughout Germany and even—through the Pietists'
interest in missions—to the rest of the world." Justo L. Gonzáles, *A History of Christian
Thought: Volume 3, From the Protestant Reformation to the Twentieth Century*, rev. ed.
(Nashville: Abingon Press, 1987), 302-303. The influence of Pietism did not end with the death
of A. H. Francke in 1727, but continued on through the eighteenth century thanks to his son,
Gotthilf August Francke, who continued to send out Pietist ministers and missionaries around the
world who were concerned first and foremost with a "Practical Christianity" focused on
salvation over doctrinal dogmatism. Tomas Parnell Bach, "Throne and Altar: Halle Pietism and
the Hohenzollerns: A Contribution to the History of Church State Relations in Eighteenth-
Century Brandenburg-Prussia" (Ph.D. diss., Syracuse University, 2005), 18-19.

[90] Aston, *Christianity and Revolutionary Europe*, 297.

[91] "Revival" and "awakening" are terms based on the New Testament word for
"resurrection" found in Romans 13:11 that is conceptualized as awakening from slumber or
sleep. Those who have embraced this concept see "revival" as a reference to leaving sin behind
and embracing holiness as part of a personal spiritual "awakening." A similar argument for
"revival" is also based on Ephesians 5:14 that reads, "For this reason it says, 'Awake, sleeper,
And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you'" (NASB). These metaphors are directed
at individuals rather than churched, local communities, or entire societies. New Englander
Cotton Mather may have been the first to use the term "revival of religion" in 1702 as a reference
to spiritual awakening in a communal sense. The use of *Erweckung* (awakening) as a communal
event in the German speaking context dates from Moravian writers in the 1770s. For further
exploration of the term see Matthijs Dirk Geuze, "Some Remarks on Revival, Its Terminology

group coming together in worship and fellowship shaped Müller's idea of Christian community. He later replicated this practice of meeting in a small group with his fellow students at the university.[92] Besides the vital Christianity Müller found among the small laity-led Pietist group in Halle, there was also a Pietist professor[93] who arrived at the University of Halle in 1827 that Müller noted as having a profound impact on his development as a Christian.[94]

A Spiritual Father: Friedrich A. G. Tholuck

Friedrich August Gottreu Tholuck (1799-1877), from the University of Berlin, was a young scholar who arrived at Halle as a new professor of divinity.[95] Tholuck, hired to serve in

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and Definition," in *Erweckung am Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Ulrich Gabler and Peter Schram (Amsterdam: Universitat Amsterdam, 1986), 23-32.

[92] A. T. Pierson highlighted the influence of the Pietist group on Müller and emphasized its connection with the start of English-speaking evangelicalism when he wrote, "The meetings continued at Mr. Wagner's house; and on the Lord's day evenings some six or more believing students were wont to gather, and both these assemblies were means of grace. From Easter, 1827, so long as he remained in Halle, this latter meeting was held in his own room, and must rank alongside those little gatherings of the 'Holy Club' in Lincoln College, Oxford, which a hundred years before had shaped the Wesleys and Whitefield for their great careers. Before George Müller left Halle the attendance at this weekly meeting in his room had grown to twenty." Pierson, *George Müller*, 48.

[93] Historian Robert M. Bigler indicated the social prestige of German university professors when he explained, "Certainly the educated middle classes, who now insisted on personal accomplishment as a criterion for judging the value of men, tended to look upon professors—who presumably achieved their status through superior personal achievements, not through the accident of birth—as their heroes and as living symbols of a coming liberal era." Bigler, *The Politics of German Protestantism*, 77.

[94] Jonathan Mark Yeager, "The Roots of Open Brethren Ecclesiology: A Discussion of the Nature of the Church Compared to the Ecclesiology of the Darbyite Brethren, 1825-1848" (Th.M. thesis, Regent College, 2006), 27.

[95] Tholuck was a brilliant scholar of humble origins who, through the help of friends who recognized his intellectual capabilities, was able to attend a local *gymnasium*. Tholuck, who knew nineteen languages, was instrumental for the continued development of Pietist theology in the nineteenth century. He, like Müller, "was awakened" in the Christian faith when he was a twenty-year-old university student, the same year he completed his three-year period of study at

place of Professor G. C. Knapp who died in 1825, was not welcomed as an appropriate substitute

for the distinguished elder scholar who represented the last link between the university and

Pietism.[96] According to church historian Philip Schaff, who was educated in the early

nineteenth-century German university system,

> The Univeristy of Halle was at that time in a most deplorable condition as regards
> orthodoxy and piety. Knapp had been for years the only evangelical teacher in the place,
> and although his learning and piety, working on quietly, were not without a blessing, he
> was thrown into the shade by the celebrity of Gesenius and Wegscheider, who continued
> almost to the end of their lives, to be the guides of the theological students, and
> systematically disqualified them for the office of the Christian ministry.[97]

Tholuck's appointment as professor *ordinaries*[98] at Halle, according to Karl Barth, was "as a

corrective to [Julius] Wegscheider and the equally rationalist Old Testament scholar [Wilhelm]

Gesenius."[99] The rationalism of the Enlightenment was under attack at Halle and Tholuck was

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the University of Berlin. Tholuck, upon completion of his studies in 1819, became a
Privatdozent at Berlin, which meant that he gave lectures but did not hold an appointment at the
university and received no funding from the state. In 1823 Tholuck was made a professor
extraordinarius at Berlin, which provided him with a regular state-funded income beyond the
fees paid by students to hear lectures. Tholuck at this time began to publish a number of books
that distinguished him as a scholar and ensured his eventual promotion to a full member of the
faculty as a professor *ordinaries*. Philip Schaff, *Germany; Its Universities, Theology, and
Religion* (Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1857), 278-294; Bigler, *The Politics of German
Protestantism*, 85-87.

[96] The Swiss-born and German-educated Philip Schaff, who also studied under professor
Friedrich August Gottreu Tholuck, indicates that 1826 was the year of Tholuck's appointment at
the University of Halle. Schaff, *Germany*, 285.

[97] Ibid.

[98] In the German university system an *ordinaries* was a regular or full-time member of
the faculty. Ibid., 43.

[99] Karl Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century: Its Background and
History*, trans. Brian Cozens and John Bowden (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 496. For
additional information about Wilhelm Gesenius see Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation: Past
and Present* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 277.

leading the charge.[100] The new professor's arrival caused enormous controversy among his

colleagues in the theology faculty and the city of Halle, but Tholuck was elated by the

opportunity to serve at the university where one of his heroes, A. H. Francke, had once been a

professor. [101]

Tholuck's appointment reflected a change that was occurring within the broader context

of German Lutheranism. Although few references appear in English historical works to the

Erweckungsbewegung (Spiritual Awakening) that occurred at the beginning of the nineteenth

century in Germay, Tholuck was in the vanguard of the movement.[102] The esteemed Protestant

theologian Karl Barth argues that "one man, Tholuck, was and remained a pure theologian of the

Revival, and there was no one beside him; and if the impact of the Revival movement is

important enough for the whole of the theological problematic of the nineteenth century to

deserve our attention here, we must keep to this one man."[103] Barth's assessment was based on

Tholuck's significance in reviving German Pietism. Frederic Auguste Lichtenberger, once head

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[100] Rationalists embraced reason as the primary key to a proper hermeneutic methodology and rejected everything in the text that could not, as Philip Schaff contends, be "comprehend[ed] with their common sense." Supernaturalists, according to Schaff, "Maintained the necessity of a divine revelation, the inspiration and authority of the Bible, and the fundamental doctrines of orthodox Protestantism." Schaff, *Germany*, 241.

[101] For further insight into the battles waged among Professor Tholuck and his colleagues, Professor Gesenius and Professor Wegscheider, see "Great Excitement at Halle in Germany," *The Christian Advocate* 8 (July 1830): 370-373. John Larkin Lincoln, studied in Halle in 1842, and became closely acquainted with Tholuck. He writes in his diary that, according to what he had learned, when Tholuck first arrived at Halle as a professor, "he was compelled to bar his windows and doors against the rude assaults of a tumultuous mob bent upon the most open and violent demonstrations of their hatred on his theological opinions and deeply religious character." John Larkin Lincoln, *In Memoriam* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1894), 56.

[102] Bigler, *The Politics*, 85-87.

[103] Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, 495.

of the Protestant faculty at the University of Paris, in his nineteenth-century study of German

theology, asserted, "Tholuck may be called the father of modern pietism."[104] Tholuck was the

source of a revival that also influenced evangelicals in Great Britain and North America.[105]

The scope of Tholuck's impact on nineteenth-century evangelicalism has yet to be fully

appreciated by scholars in the United States and Great Britain.[106] It should be noted that Tholuck

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[104] Frederic Auguste Lichtenberger, *History of German Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. and ed. W. Hastie (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1889), 474.

[105] In the nineteenth-century the transatlantic relationship between German Pietists and Anglo-American evangelicals was affirmed and recognized on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. H. S. Burrage, "Augustus Tholuck," *The Baptist Review* 1, no. 1 (1879): 33-49; Tholuck was also quite aware of the importance of these international relationships. Tholuck, "Evangelical Theology in Germany," 85.

[106] In 1857, church historian Philip Schaff noted, "Next to [Johann] Neander, no German divine of the present century is more extensively known in the Protestant churches of France, Holland, England and America, than Dr. Frederick Augustus Tholuck, of Halle." Schaff, *Germany*, 278. Although Tholuck was an important figure in transnational evangelicalism he is rarely, if ever, referenced in evangelical historiography. The problem for Tholuck is twofold: within Germany he was not one of the divines who earned acclaim by adhering to new critical methodologies and, second, English-speaking scholars who should be interested in his international impact have shown little interest studying his and other German influences on English-speaking evangelicalism. The result was that he did not become famous for radical thinking, but for maintaining orthodox views of scripture and piety. By the 1950s an attempt was made to give his thought broader recognition in the American context with the re-publication of his sermons on Jesus' Passion. Friedrich August Tholuck, *Light From the Cross: Sermons to Students*, trans. R. L. B., intro. J. C. Macaulay (Chicago: Moody Press, 1952), 11. However, this book did little to remedy the situation. The full extent of the relationship between the Tholuck and Anglo-American evangelicals has not been included in the general historical accounts. For example, David Bebbington makes no mention of Tholuck in his important volume, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody*, which is published in a series entitled, *A History of Evangelicalism: People, Movements and Ideas in the English-Speaking World*. Tholuck's work was translated into English, made available to English-speaking audiences, and endorsed by leading ministers. Consequently, Schaff, the great German-American church historian of his age, is right in his assessment of Tholuck that is quoted above. According to references in nineteenth-century periodicals, Tholuck was widely known and appreciated in the English-speaking world. Martin Bretcht, emeritus professor of church history at the University of Münster, clearly identifies the root of the problem when he writes, "The present-day exchange of British and German research into church history can hardly be described as flourishing. Very seldom are historical topics from the other country ever

operated as the agent for connecting German Pietists to British and American evangelicals and

was later an important force in the founding of the Evangelical Alliance in 1846.[107] Tholuck's

rise to prominence was the result of his writings as well as his personal involvement in the lives

of his students.[108] He held regular meetings in his home with his students that took on the

quality of Spener's *collegia pietatis* where sermons, devotional literature, or the biblical text

were read and discussed.[109] Prayer and hymn singing occurred and the spiritual life of the

individual was encouraged through intimate community. Tholuck was also known for taking

daily walks with "two or three of them [students]," as nineteenth-century church chronicler

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investigated. This even applies to those areas where the paths of German and British church history have met." Martin Brecht, "The Relationship Between Established Protestant Church and Free Church: Hermann Gundert and Britain," trans. David Meldrum, in *Protestant Evangelicalism: Britain, Ireland, Germany and America 1750-1950, Essays in Honour of W. R. Ward*, ed. Keith Robbins (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 135. Only a few historians have even attempted to remedy the problem in the study of the international character of evangelical history that Brecht highlighted. For examples see Timothy C. F. Stunt, *From Awakening to Secession: Radical Evangelicals in Switzerland and Britain* 1815-1835 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000); Nicholas M. Railton, *No North Sea: The Anglo-German Evangelical Network in the Middle of the Nineteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2000); for the early development of these networks also see Daniel L. Brunner, *Halle Pietists in England: Anthony William Boehm and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge* (Göttingen: Vandehoeck & Ruprecht, 1993).

[107] For an example of Tholuck's impact on American evangelicals in the 1830s see Walter H. Conser, Jr., "James Marsh and the Germans," *The New England Quarterly* 59, no. 2 (June 1986): 259-266. Also see Walter H. Conser, Jr., *Church and Confession: Conservative Theologians in Germany, England, and America* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984).

[108] Tholuck's most famous book *Guido und Julius. Die Lehre von der Sünde und vom Versöhner, oder die wahre Weihe des Zweiflers* (Guido and Julius, The Doctrine of Sin and of the Reconciler, or, The True Consecration of the Doubter) published in 1823 was a key work in the literature of the German *Erweckungsbewegung*. The book is a series of conversations between two friends concerned with finding truth who soon realize that the truth they seek is available through Christianity. The book is a meditation on Tholuck's own story of coming to faith while a student at the University of Berlin in 1818.

[109] Nicholas M. Railton, *Transnational Evangelicalism: The Case of Friedrich Bialloblotzky (1799-1869), Band 41 Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Pietismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 50.

Henry C. Fish recorded, "twice a day—before dinner and supper—in spite of rain and mud in muddy Halle."[110] The personal impact of Tholuck on Halle[111] and German Pietism was tremendous as Reverend Dr. George U. Wenner proclaimed to the Evangelical Alliance at its jubilee meeting in 1896 in London.[112] Wenner states, "Tholuck went to Halle, and thenceforward Halle became the spiritual birthplace of hundreds who, in turn, became the apostles of a vigorous and all-conquering Christianity."[113] Tholuck's emphasis on the spiritual condition of his students, however, was not the only focus of the busy professor. He was in constant contact with the transnational evangelical community and wrote letters to American and British churchmen and scholars. He also made several trips to the United Kingdom where he cultivated relationships with missionary societies and leading theologians.[114]

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[110] Henry C. Fish, *Pulpit Eloquence of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Dodd & Mead, 1874), 35.

[111] Tholuck would play an important role in the lives of a number of "awakened" students during the 1830s at Halle. Some of these students, such as August Kahnis, were also assisted by Francke's Foundation like Müller. Kahnis would later be involved in developing Pietism at the universities of Wittenberg, Berlin, and Breslau. Bigler, *The Politics*, 81-82.

[112] George Unangst Wenner (1844-1934), educated at Yale and Union Theological Seminary, was pastor of the German Lutheran Christ Church congregation in Manhattan, New York, a church he founded in 1869, and had the distinction of being the "oldest U. S. minister in point of service" just prior to his death on November 1, 1934. See "Religion: In the Churches," *Time* (Monday November 5, 1934), in the Time Magazine Archive, http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,882588,00.html (accessed July 20, 2009).

[113] A. J. Arnold, ed., *Jubilee of the Evangelical Alliance: Proceedings of the Tenth International Conference Held in London, June-July, 1896* (London: John F. Shaw, 1897), 203.

[114] Tholuck was very interested in the vitality of British evangelicalism and sat in on Methodist meetings in Oxford, as well as made connections with leaders of the Continental Society for the Diffusion of Religious Knowledge over the continent of Europe. Railton, *Transnational Evangelicalism*, 53-66. Tholuck took seriously the contribution of British evangelicalism and even translated a copy of George Whitefield's biography into German. August Tholuck, *Leben Georg Whitfields* (Leipzig: Varlan von Carl Berger, 1834).

Tholuck's connection with German Pietism, the *Erweckungsbewegung*, and transnational

evangelicalism are important for understanding the kind of impact he had on Müller. Although

heavily influenced by Friedrich Schleiermacher and Johann August Wilhelm Neander[115] at the

University of Berlin, Tholuck's most important spiritual mentor was Baron Ernst von Kottwitz, a

Moravian.[116] Kottwitz's attachment to the Moravians shaped Tholuck's thinking about the

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[115] The connection between Pietism and the University of Halle reappeared with Johann Neander who studied at Halle under G. C. Knapp beginning in 1806. Johann Neander was forced to leave Halle when Napoleon dissolved the university in 1811, which was later reestablished. Neander, therefore, studied under the only representative of Pietism left at the university who would also play a role in Müller's life through one of his students (i.e., Frederick Gottlieb Kayser who was part of the small group Bible study that Müller attended with Beta at Wagner's home). Neander would become well known among American biblical and theological scholars for his book *Christian Theology*, first published in the United States in 1831. True to the experiential and biblical emphasis of Pietism, American reviews of the work asserted that "he [Knapp] adhered to the principles of Spener and Franke, professedly making the holy scriptures and Christian experience the source of his instructions." "Reviews," *The Baptist Magazine for 1841, Vol. 33* (London: Houlston and Stoneman, 1841): 621-622. Also see George M. Adams, "Life and Character of Dr. Neander," *Bibliotheca Sacra and American Biblical Repository, Vol. 1* (Edinburgh: Forbes and Wilson, 1851): 366.

[116] Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768-1834), the great Prussian theologian and philosopher, was also heavily influenced by the Moravians in his youth. Schleiermacher's family on both his mother and father's sides included ministers in the Reformed Church, and he had an uncle who was a theology professor at the University of Halle. However, his father, Gottlieb, while serving as a Reformed chaplain in the Prussian army, as Ernest L. Boyers explains, "came into contact with a Moravian Community there [in Gandenfrei] and experienced a pietistic awakening." After their father's religious awakening, Schleiermacher and his sister Charlotte were left by their parents in the Moravian community where they received their spiritual and intellectual education. Schleiermacher would also experience his own awakening at Gnadenfrei prior to being sent to a Moravian school in Niesky in June of 1783. After completing his studies at Niesky, Schleiermacher attended the Moravian seminary at Barby from 1785 until 1787 when he left the Moravians disillusioned with their understanding of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Schleiermacher spent the next two years of his educational career studying at the University of Halle, after which he served in various capacities as a Reformed minister, chaplain, private tutor, intellectual, and eventually as a professor at the University of Halle and later at the University of Berlin. Kenneth Scott Laurette notes the significance of Schleiermacher's experience with the Moravians when he writes that Schleiermacher "declared himself to be still one of them, 'only of a higher order . . .'" later in his life. The key to this statement by Schleiermacher is that he highlighted the role of "personal experience" over sources of authority such as Scriptures or doctrinal creeds. This emphasis on personal experience was first nurtured

simplicity of faith and Tholuck adopted Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf's motto, "I have but one

passion, and that is He, and He alone," as his own.[117] Tholuck was also deeply committed to the

idea of missions and eventually became the representative for several missionary societies after

being unable, due to poor health, to take up his own appointment with the British and Foreign

Bible Society on the island of Malta. However, what makes Tholuck's appointment at Halle

even more significant for himself and for Müller is that Tholuck, according to theologian J. C.

Macaulay, ". . . had been profoundly influenced by reading the life of August Hermann Francke"

who had held the chair in theology at Halle while also becoming "one of the greatest

philanthropists of all time."[118] Macaulay goes on to explain, "So impressed was Tholuck with

the story of this saintly scholar-philanthropist that it had become his ardent ambition and his

daily prayer that he should one day minister from the same post."[119] Müller, in December of

1836, indicated that he was aware of Francke's legacy and its profound importance for Tholuck

when he wrote,

> And in the same way in which that blessed man of God, A. H. Frank looked to the Lord
> for supplies as it regards the Schools and the Orphan House, so have I been enabled since
> March 5, 1834 to establish schools for poor children. Six Day-schools, One Sunday
> School and one Adult School are now through my prayers supplied w [*sic*] means. When
> I have no money I pray to the Lord and H [*sic*] condescends to hear my prayer. This year

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in the context of Moravian pietistic spirituality. Ernest Boyer, Jr., "What is Religion?":
Shaftesbury, the German Enlightenment, and Schleiermacher" (Th.D. diss., Harvard University,
2002), 234-253. Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, 1121-1124. For further discussion of the
impact of Schleiermacher's thought, see Paul Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought: From Its
Judaic and Hellenistic Origins to Existentialism*, ed. Carl E. Braaten (New York: Touchstone,
1972), 386-410.

[117] Tholuck, "Evangelical Theology in Germany," 86. Also see J. C. Macaulay,
"Biographical Introduction," in Friedrich August Tholuck, *Light From the Cross*, trans. R. L. B.
(Chicago: Moody Press, 1952), 12.

[118] Ibid., 12-13.

[119] Ibid., 13.

I have also been honored by the Lord to establish two Orphan Houses, which have been fitted up, for 66 Fatherless and Motherless children, who are provided with food, and clothes, and education. Thus this dear man of God Frank, though dead, yet speaks [*sic*]; for his faith has been instrumental in strengthening me for this work. Great has been the faithfulness of God towards me. I see day by day his hand.[120]

In a follow-up letter written by Müller to Tholuck on May 1, 1838, Müller explained once again how his own work in Bristol was modeled on one of his professor's heroes. Müller stated, "Through the help of God I have been enabled to establish 3 Orphan Houses, in which provision is made for 100 fatherless & motherless children, who are boarded, clothed, & educated. Like Franke I commenced in dependence upon God, with a small beginning, & two years the Lord has already provided."[121] Müller's reference pointed to a foundational tie between him and Tholuck concerning the legacy of Francke.

The Father of Halle Pietism: A. H. Francke

Given the circumstances that surrounded Müller while a student at the University of Halle, he experienced firsthand the living legacy of Augustus Hermann Francke (1663-1727), who had founded an orphanage that became famous for its reliance on unsolicited donations to support its operation.[122] Francke was perhaps the most dynamic force in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Pietism due to his university professorship, his lifestyle, his preaching, and

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[120] George Müller to Professor Tholuck, 26 December 1836, Friedrich August Gottreu Tholuck Papers, Signatur B III 1638, Archiv der Franckeschen Stiftungen zu Halle, Germany.

[121] George Müller to Professor Tholuck, 1 May 1838, Friedrich August Gottreu Tholuck Papers, Signatur B III 1782, Archiv der Franckeschen Stiftungen zu Halle, Germany.

[122] According to Adam Storey Farrar, a fellow of Queen's College, Oxford, in the nineteenth century, "The university of Halle became the home of Pietism; and the orphan-house established in that town [by Francke] was renowned over Europe." Adam Storey Farrar, *A Critical History of Free Thought in Reference to the Christian Religion* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1863), 424.

his charitable works.[123] Several key aspects of Francke's approach to Christian practice are noteworthy because they appear to have become part of Müller's religious life after he moved to England. First, Francke promoted the idea "that faith in God must be absolute, or, as he puts it, 'childlike.'"[124] Francke believed in the fundamental nature of God's sovereignty as it related to all aspects of life. What he held to was that all opportunities, whether they worked out or not, were directed by God to accomplish his work in the world. Consequently, Francke believed that Christians should not be burdened with worry or anxiety but should trust that God will meet their needs. Second, Francke asserted that the Christian life must be lived with a sense of thankfulness that is displayed properly when helping one's neighbor, especially the poor. Third, Francke held that an active love (*tätig Liebe*) must define Christian living. For Francke there was no longer the option to engage the world passively as a Christian, but rather the fullness of Christ's love compelled Christians to dedicate themselves fully to the work of God in their life. According to F. Ernest Stoeffler, this activity included ". . . self-examination, daily repentance, prayer, hearing the Word, and participating in the Sacrament."[125] Francke's thinking about Christianity provided him with the foundation to do more than serve as a pious pastor. His conclusions forced him to take decisive action.[126] He ran his orphanage by adhering to the "faith

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[123] According to Holborn, Halle became through the effort Francke the "'new Jerusalem' of the new piety." Holborn, *A History*, 138.

[124] Stoeffler, *German Pietism*, 20.

[125] Ibid., 21.

[126] According to Hans-Christoph Schmidt-Lauber, Francke's influence on Halle's form of Pietism emphasized three distinct ideas that include: "a definite moment of conversion, a strict separation between the children of God and the children of the world, and an understanding of theology as knowledge of the Bible with Christ as 'the heart of Scripture.'" Hans-Christoph Schmidt-Lauber, "The Lutheran Tradition in the German Lands," in *The Oxford History of*

principle," organized schools for all social and economic levels in Halle, established a printing house to publish inexpensive religious pamphlets and Bibles for distribution to the poor, and was instrumental in the development of German missionary ventures, the most well-known of which was the Halle-Danish mission in South India. Francke, in fact, may have been the key figure in the development of the Evangelical Movement in the eighteenth century.[127]

The first encounter Müller had with the legacy of Francke was while a divinity student at the university, almost one hundred years after the death of the latter. Müller explains that in the period after his conversion when he was first beginning to preach in local churches, he made the decision to stop accepting funds from his father during his last two years of university studies, after he failed to convince his father and brother that they, too, needed Christ.[128] Müller claims

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Christian Worship, ed. Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen B. Westerfield Tucker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 407.

[127] Francke's impact on the early development of evangelicalism was significant. Both John Wesley and George Whitefield were deeply impressed by Francke's serious practice of the Christian faith. Wesley first read Francke's *Pietas Hallensis*, the book that would later inspire Müller, in November of 1735, while traveling to Georgia in the company of Moravian missionaries. In July of 1738 Wesley even ventured to Halle to meet with Francke's son and was so inspired he wrote in his journal, "August Herman Francke whose name is indeed precious as ointment. O may I follow him, as he did Christ! And 'by manifestation of the truth, commend myself to every man's conscience in the sight of God!' He [Francke's son] was not in town. However, we were at length admitted into the Orphan-house; that amazing proof, that 'all things are' still 'possible to him that believeth.'" John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley: Volume 1, Journals From October 14, 1735, to November 29, 1745*, 3rd ed. (1872), 129. Wesley continued to read Francke's writings and eventually introduced them to George Whitefield. Whitefield, the most famous preacher of the First Great Awakening, established an orphan home in Georgia based on the example of Francke's Orphan Home in Halle. Geoffrey Nuttall, "Continental Pietism and the Evangelical Movement in Britain," in *Pietismus und Reveil: Referate der Internationalen Tagung: Der Pietismus in den Niederlanden und seine Internationalen Beziehungen, Zeist 18.-22. Juni 1974*, ed. J. van den Berg and J. P. van Dooren (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 210.

[128] Based on Müller's own account he left the Orphan House in September 1826, which meant that he probably began his residence in the Francke Orphan Home in July of 1826. Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 23.

that this was a difficult decision because he was so close to completing his studies, but that he

believed that he should rely on God to meet his needs. This was his first attempt to live by faith

and was practiced in the environment where Francke initiated this radical approach to the

Christian life. Furthermore, Francke's Orphan Home in Halle offered rooms to poor divinity

students at the university and this was something that Müller also took advantage of for two

months. Müller's decision to live by faith was reinforced by the material monument of the

famous orphanage founded by Francke.[129] The experience made an impact of immeasurable

importance on the young university student, since Francke's approach to faith and charitable

work became the basis for Müller's lifestyle of living by faith and the establishment of the

orphan homes in Bristol a decade later.

Francke's place in Müller's story is of great significance because of Francke's

contribution to Müller's approach to piety and publishing. Francke was a leading figure in

German Pietism who gave the movement a distinctive practical nature and international

character.[130] Francke's leadership and vision were not limited by his vocation as a university

professor or the resources he had at his disposal. He was the leading personality in Halle and

developed the city's educational system, established charitable institutions, founded and ran a

publishing house, and promoted the expansion of Christianity through missions. The ability of

Francke to establish, fund, and direct these institutions points to his keen organizational and

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[129] Ibid. Also see R. Morris, *Faith, Prayer, and Work: As Illustrated in the Life, Character, and Labours* [of] *Mr. Müller, The Founder of the Orphan Houses, Ashley Down, Bristol* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, & Co., 1866), 6-8.

[130] Francke was a student of Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705), the leading voice of Pietism in the seventeenth and early-eighteenth century. For further study of Spener's career see Ward, *Early Evangelicalism*, 24-39.

leadership skills, which played a crucial role in his success. Francke, however, provided Müller with an example of faith and devotion to God that he could only hope to mirror.

Moravian Ministrations

In addition to seeing and living amidst Francke's work in Halle and being influenced by Tholuck and the *Erweckungsbewegung*, Müller also visited the Moravian village of Gnadau a number of times.[131] What is significant about Müller's visit was his interaction with the Moravian community there. Müller wrote, "Through the instrumentality of the brethren, whom I met there, my spirit often was refreshed."[132] The Moravian community of Gnadau was, according to Müller, "only about three miles distant from the place where my father then resided."[133] He noted that it was difficult in Halle to hear "truth preached, for there was no enlightened clergyman in the town. And when it happened so that I could hear 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."[134] The Moravian community at Gnadau, therefore, served to provide Müller with a place to hear the gospel preached in a manner that appealed to his Pietist sensibilities. The question that must be asked, at this point, is what kind of Christianity did Müller see as real or correct Christianity? He certainly embraced the teaching and friendship of Tholuck, the example of Francke, but why did he emphasize his having attended Moravian meetings?

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[131] Müller states that he visited "In the vacations, Michaelmas 1826, and Easter 1827, and at other times . . ." Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 27.

[132] Ibid.

[133] Ibid.

[134] Ibid.

The Moravians have a long and distinguished history of global evangelicalism, but one that has not always been fully appreciated. They are rightly credited with influencing the spiritual development of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism. However, Müller does not seem to indicate a familiarity with Wesley's story in this part of the *Narrative*.[135] So what was Müller aiming his readers toward in his depiction of the Moravians influencing his spiritual formation? The basic point that Müller made was that they were a likeminded-community of Christians, and they encouraged him to live out the Christian faith in everyday life through their preaching.

The Moravians were formed under the direction of Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf[136] from a group of persecuted Bohemian Brethren (*Unitas Fratrum*) who settled on his estate at Berthelsdorf.[137] Zinzendorf, in 1722, invited these persecuted Christians from Moravia to come and live on his land, which allowed them to maintain their religious community and build a new life for themselves free from oppression. Herrnhut was the name of the town they built on

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[135] It should be noted that Arthur T. Pierson, when reflecting on the spiritual development of Müller's life, made an important comparison to the role that small groups played in creating great men of faith. Pierson, consequently, linked John and Charles Wesley as well as George Whitefield to Müller when he wrote, "so long as he remained in Halle, this latter meeting was held in his own room, and must rank alongside those little gatherings of the 'Holy Club' in Lincoln College, Oxford, which a hundred years before had shaped the Wesleys and Whitefield for their great careers." Pierson, *George Müller*, 48.

[136] Henry Rimius, *A Candid Narrative of the Rise and Progress of the Herrnhuters, Commonly Call'd Moravians, or Unitas Fratrum* (London: A. Linde, 1753), 16.

[137] Erb, *Pietists*, 288. The Bohemian Brethren or in Czech *jednota bratrská* (society of brethren) were initially followers of reformer Jan Hus in the late fourteenth century. Over the course of time the movement was fragmented even more due to repeated persecution from the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries and eventually ended up abandoning homes and moving to Zinzendorf's estate in the eighteenth century. Kaspar von Greyerz, *Religion and Culture in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1800*, trans. Thomas Dunlap (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 106-107; Donald F. Durnbaugh, *The Believers' Church: The History and Character of Radical Protestantism* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968), 51-63.

Zinzendorf's land. From this base of operation they transformed the history of Christianity. At the heart of Zinzendorf's vision was his own spiritual vitality that had been fostered directly under the mentorship of August Hermann Francke. Francke was the spiritual mentor of Zinzendorf and also was his professor at Halle.[138] Consequently, Zinzendorf's view of Christianity was decidedly Pietist. The Moravians became one of the great missionary movements in the eighteenth century thanks to their utilization of what historian Robert D. Linder calls the "Evangelical International Network" that allowed them, and especially Zinzendorf, to make connections with Evangelicals across confessional lines and around the world.[139] They utilized laymen and laywomen, regardless of race, to take the teachings of the gospel to the lowest social and economic groups, including slaves.[140] The Moravians were firmly entrenched in a tradition of radical Christianity that was formed under the direct influence of Halle Pietists, but, according to Dale Brown, placed more emphasis on "a more joyful and personal relationship with the Savior."[141] Moravians were also more inclined to embrace an ecumenical vision of Christianity within the German context and saw themselves as a movement

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[138] J. E. Hutton, *A Short History of the Moravian Church* (London: Moravian Publication Office, 1895), 109-110.

[139] Robert D. Linder, "The Evangelical Triangle: The Connections of the Pietist Renewal, the Wesleyan Revival, and the First Great Awakening," paper presented at the Local, Regional, and Global Constructions of Christianity: Religious Communication Networks 1680-1830, German Historical Institute Conference, July12, 2007, London, England. Jared Scott Burkholder in his dissertation also highlights the vibrant international network between Moravians and the transatlantic world during the First Great Awakening, see Jared Scott Burkholder, "Disenfranchised Awakeners: Anglo-Moravians, Religious Competition, and Evangelical Identity in the Mid-Atlantic Colonies" (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 2007), 7.

[140] The best example of the Moravians being actively involved in using every means available to spread Christianity in the Caribbean and even along the Gold Coast of Africa is present in Jon Sensbach, *Rebecca's Revival: Creating Black Christianity in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

[141] Brown, *Understanding Pietism*, 103.

within the broader Lutheran church rather than as a separate denomination.[142] The Moravians legitimized Müller's claim that he "got joy without any deep sorrow of heart" during his conversion moment.[143] The ecumenical nature of the Moravians also shaped Müller's attitude toward other Protestant Christians. For him, the line of spiritual separation was marked by those who were "awakened" and those who were not, regardless of denomination. With Pietism firmly entrenched in Müller's thought and life through Tholuck, Francke, and the Moravians, it should come as no surprise that Müller's future activities are characterized by their influence.

A Soldier or a Missionary

Müller's experience of "grace" transformed his view of the world. He notes that in January 1826, he began reading missionary periodicals and that he was, as he states, "greatly stirred up to become a missionary myself."[144] He claims that the only distraction he had about becoming a missionary was from his romantic interest in a young woman he described as being "the only pious female of my own age, whom I knew."[145] However, the distraction of a possible wife was not enough to end his goal of becoming a missionary. The Pietists since Francke's lifetime followed the mandate in Matthew 28:19 to "go therefore and make disciples of all nations."[146] This meant that missionary activity was not something easily shunned in favor of some other activity. Müller, in fact, remained committed to missionary work throughout his life and even as an elderly man embarked on global preaching and missionary tours. Consequently,

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[142] Ibid.

[143] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 12.

[144] Ibid., 13.

[145] Ibid.

[146] Holy Bible (NASB).

Müller claims that around Easter of 1826, he was challenged by the example of "a devoted young brother, a learned man, and of wealthy parents" who decided to become a missionary to the Jews in Poland. The sacrificial example of service by a peer whom Müller considered to have distinct advantages in life made, as he explains, "a deep impression" that forced him to reconsider his own decision to give up "the work of the Lord, and, I may say, the Lord himself, for the sake of a girl."[147] With a renewed sense of calling to missionary service Müller sought his father's approval for an appointment in a German missionary society. George's father responded with an emotional tirade that ranged from disowning him as his son to pleading through tear-soaked eyes for his son to change his mind. The efforts of Johann proved fruitless. However, Müller was not completely unshaken in his resolve to become a missionary. He decided to test the issue with God by developing his own variation on the Moravian practice of casting lots and bought a lottery ticket.[148] If he won, Müller would know that God had called him to missionary work, but if he lost maybe his father was right and he would reconsider. The lottery ticket proved a winner and supported his view that God had called him to missions.[149] Müller applied to the Berlin Missionary Society with the hope of serving in India, but was turned

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[147] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 13.

[148] The use of a lot among Moravians was originally employed to determine leadership positions in the community, but was later applied to many different situations including marriage. Lots usually consisted of two written statements (assumed to be the will of God) that were placed in a container, and one was drawn out and followed as reflecting God's will in the situation. Aaron Spencer Folgeman, *Jesus is Female: Moravians and Radical Religion in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 91.

[149] Müller makes clear in his *Narrative* that his decision to "ascertain the Lord's mind by the lot," that is by gambling, was a decision made in ignorance of Christian teaching regarding gambling. He then goes on to explain that a more mature way of discerning the directives of God would be through prayer, Bible study, and learning "more knowledge of divine things." Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 17.

down, according to him, because his father refused to give "his consent" as the society required.[150]

Müller's desire to be a missionary, however, was not curbed by his father. Tholuck served as the agent in Müller's missionary plans, since Tholuck was a representative for several missionary societies and was already a noted leader in the transnational evangelical community. Eventually his father gave his permission for Müller to be sent by the Continental Society to Bucharest as a missionary, but this, too, failed to materialize due to political events.[151] At this point Tholuck intervened to play a decisive role in the direction that Müller would soon take. Prior to coming to Halle, Tholuck worked to establish relationships with a number of Christian missionary organizations. In 1822, he became the secretary for the Mission to the Jews and, in 1823, he began serving as a "representative of the London Society" for the ministry to the Jews. Tholuck encouraged Müller to travel to England for training as a missionary, which may provide some insight into one of the major elements in Müller's view of the end times. Tholuck's involvement with the Mission to the Jews and the London Missionary Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews is indicative of the Pietist focus on missionary work among the Jews in hopes of bringing them to Christianity and, consequently, assisting in bringing about the end times. Although it has been assumed that John Nelson Darby and the Christian Brethren provided the basis for Müller's eschatology, the seeds for his thought on this issue may, in fact, be rooted in his experiences in Halle. In the mission to the Jews, Anglo-American evangelicals

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[150] Ibid., 16.

[151] According to Müller, "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 thoughts of sending a minister to Bucharest, as the neighbourhood of it was the field of battle between the two armies." Ibid., 34.

and German Pietists embraced a similar chiliastic view of world events that sought the salvation of the Jews as a key to the arrival of the Kingdom of God.

Tholuck wrote to the Society on Müller's behalf in December 1827, but a response from the society did not arrive until March of 1828. After answering the questions put to him by the Society, Müller finally received a letter of acceptance in June 1828.[152] However, Müller was not yet free of the military service obligation that he owed the Prussian state, because as a university graduate he was required to serve one year in the army at his own expense. After appealing to both government ministers and influential Christians to be exempted from military service, Müller was taken ill by some sort of stomach ailment that plagued him from August 1828 through January 1829.[153] The decision was finally made, on the advice of a major in the Prussian army, to stand for the physical in January 1829 with the hope of being declared unfit for service. With his body still suffering from sickness Müller failed the army physical and was free to obtain a passport for travel to England, which he did promptly. Müller now found his plan for working as a missionary to the Jews finally underway. He arrived in London from Rotterdam on March 19, 1829.[154]

Joining a Missionary Society

When Müller arrived in London in 1829 to work with the London Missionary Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews, he joined a tradition that reached back to 1801, when the first three Germans arrived in England to work with the interdenominational London

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[152] Ibid., 35.

[153] Letter from George Müller to Professor Tholuck, 10 November 1828, Friedrich August Gottreu Tholuck Papers, Archiv der Franckeschen Stiftungen zu Halle, Germany.

[154] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 36-43.

Missionary Society as missionaries to the Jews. Joseph Samuel Christian Frederick Frey,

himself a converted Jew, was one of the three German missionaries who began working to

present Christianity to the Jews. After an eight-year affiliation with the London Missionary

Society, Frey decided that he could better achieve success through an organization completely

devoted to the needs of the Jewish community. In 1809, the London Society for Promoting

Christianity Amongst the Jews was established independent of the London Missionary Society.

The newly formed group aimed at making the New Testament available in Hebrew, assisting

new converts with vocational training, and founding schools and community clubs. The goal

was to win Jews to Christ and support them once they made such a decision, which often resulted

in alienation from family, friends, and the Jewish community.[155] The society was conceived

during a period of political and military turmoil in Europe and, consequently, reflected

apocalyptic hopes and fears that saw in the Napoleonic Wars the possible arrival of Christ's

millennial rule.[156] According to historian S. C. Orchard, "there seems almost a conspiracy of

silence by biographers about the evident millenarian tinge of much Evangelical thinking."[157] An

eschatological vision that included the Jews as key contributors to end times events was common

among members of the Society. In 1815, Thomas Babington, M.P., spoke on this point to the

Society when he said,

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[155] Miriam Elizabeth Burstein, "Protestants Against the Jewish and Catholic Family, c. 1829 to c. 1860," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 31 (2003): 335.

[156] Early members of the society included leading evangelicals in the Church of England including William Wilberforce, Joseph Milner, Charles Simeon, Lord Ashley, Duke of Kent, and at various times the Archbishop of Canterbury and leading Anglican bishops. Thomas D. Halsted, *Our Missions: Being a History of the Principal Missionary Transactions of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews from its Foundation in 1809, to the Present Year* (London: William Macintosh, 1866).

[157] S. C. Orchard, "English Evangelical Eschatology, 1790-1850" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 1968), 121.

the Jews were the first missionaries, and it was more than probable that they were intended to be the last, since their dispersion into every nation of the earth seemed peculiarly to fit them for that service, when they should be converted to the faith of the Gospel.[158]

The Society believed winning the Jews over to Christianity would lead to a transformation of world missionary efforts that could impact all peoples and nations.[159]   In 1866 Reverend C. J. Goodhart, secretary of the Society beginning in 1853, wrote in his introduction to the chronicle of the Society's missionary efforts that,

> [the Jews] are the only people who have a certain and defined future; and God in His Word has made them the key of our world's position; for only upon their being restored shall all the ends of the earth see the salvation of God. With their restoration, however, to their own land, and the glory which is to follow, when they shall dwell in righteousness and peace under the rule of their own King Messiah, in the land given to their fathers by an everlasting covenant—with this restoration and glory, as objects of Christian effort, we believe the Christian Church and the Society have nothing to do, beyond supplicating the hastening of that blessed consummation. The Lord may use our work as preliminary and introductory to all this; and probably He will; but that rests with Himself.[160]

Their desire to convert the Jews to Christianity and see them restored to their homeland in Palestine was not an arbitrary notion but formulated within a framework of prophecy based on the biblical text. Consequently, the Society did not simply hold to the importance of Jewish conversion, but also reflected a theological shift within British Evangelicalism toward premillennialism.[161]

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[158] Quoted in Orchard. Ibid., 123.

[159] Orchard also noted, "[Charles] Simeon urged, from texts in Romans and Isaiah, the conversion of the Jews, so that they might instantly commence the work of preaching to the Gentiles. The signs were that the time had come, for the Jews were anticipating the Messiah at any time, and the 'Mahometans and Hindoos in India' were expecting that one general religion would replace theirs, intelligence that Simeon no doubt had gleaned from one of his Bengal friends." Ibid.

[160] Halsted, *Our Missions*, xvi.

[161] Orchard, "English Evangelical Eschatology, 1790-1850," 129.

Premillennialism holds that Jesus will return to earth prior to a thousand year period of

righteousness and peace that is described in the Apocalypse of St. John, most commonly referred

to in the New Testament as the book of Revelation.[162] Key proponents of premillennial thought

in the Society were Edward Irving, Lewis Way, and Henry Drummond. They separated

themselves from the Anglican tradition that held to a postmillennial view that the Second

Coming of Jesus came after the millennium.[163] In contrast, the proponents of premillennial

thought were building on the historical events of the French Revolution, the rise of Napoleon

Bonaparte, and the belief that contemporary events could be found in the biblical texts, if the

proper lens were used to decipher them.[164] Among the Society's members, Edward Irving rose

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[162] Historian Robert G. Clouse explains this idea further when he states, "Also called chiliasm, this is the belief that there will be a 1,000-year reign of Christ at the end of the present age. This teaching is based on Revelation 20:1-10, elaborated by certain Old Testament texts, such as Isaiah 55-66, which teaches that there will be a time of justice, peace and righteousness on earth. Generally, premillennialists believe that the kingdom of Christ will be preceded by certain signs such as the preaching of the gospel to all nations, a great apostasy, wars, famines, earthquakes, the appearance of the Antichrist and a period of great tribulation. These catastrophes will end with the establishment of Christ's rule over the earth through a sudden and overwhelming display of God's power." R. G. Clouse, "Premillennialism," in *Dictionary of Christianity in America*, ed. Daniel G. Reid, Robert D. Linder, Bruce L. Shelley, and Harry S. Stout (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 929.

[163] Clouse explains the postmillennial approach to Christian eschatology in the following statement, "The belief that the return of Christ will take place after the millennium, which may be a literal period of peace and prosperity or else a symbolic representation of the final triumph of the gospel. This new age will come through Christian teaching and preaching. The Holy Spirit will use such activity to shape a new world characterized by prosperity, peace and righteousness. Evil will not be totally eliminated, but it will be reduced to a minimum because the moral and spiritual influence of the church will be greatly increased. During the new age Christians will solve many of humankind's most persistent social, economic and educational problems. The millennium will not necessarily be limited to 1,000 years because the number can be used symbolically. The period closes with the Second Coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the last judgment." R. G. Clouse, "Postmillennialism," in *Dictionary of Christianity in America*, 919.

[164] As historian Ernest R. Sandeen argued, ". . . the identification of the events of the 1790s with those prophesied in Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 provided biblical commentators with

to unusual heights of notoriety for his views of end times and speaking in tongues.[165] Lewis

Way eventually separated from the Society over its "moderation" regarding the place of

prophecies and missionary activity and went on to establish several projects aimed at the

conversion of the Jews.[166] Henry Drummond also became a leading force in the prophetic

interpretation school of British evangelicalism and eventually rose to lead the Catholic Apostolic

Church.[167] What can be noted here is that the Society was a hotbed for the new theories

regarding eschatology.[168]

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a prophetic Rosetta stone. At last a key had been found with which to crack the code. There
could now be general agreement upon one fixed point of correlation between prophecy and
history. After 1799, in Egyptology as in prophecy, it seemed as though there were no limits to
the possibility of discovery." Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and
American Millenarianism 1800-1930* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), 7.

[165] Irving's thought on premillennialism was based on a translation he made of an
eighteenth-century Chilean Jesuit by the name of Manuel Lacunza (1731-1801). Lacunza's
work, *The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty*, was a massive two-volume work that he
completed around 1791. However, it was not published in Spanish until after his death in 1812
and was immediately placed on the list of banned books by the Vatican for its attack on the
clergy and the papacy. Irving obtained a copy that he translated into English and published in
1827. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, 17-18. Irving also held to a high view of
missionary service and argued for a radical lifestyle of faith that embraced the supernatural as
relevant and real in the present. Edward Irving, *For Missionaries After the Apostolical School: A
Series of Orations* (New York: E. Bliss & E. White, 1825), xvii-xviii.

[166] Orchard, "English Evangelical Eschatology," 132.

[167] Grayson Carter, "Drummond, Henry," in *Dictionary of Evangelical Biography 1730-
1860: Volume 1*, ed. Donald M. Lewis (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), 326-327.
The Catholic Apostolic Church was, as historian David Bebbington asserts, "a strange blend of
adventism, tongues, elaborate liturgy and punctilio over ecclesiastical order." The Church never
achieved much influence in the United Kingdom and has, in Great Britain, ceased to function
since the original twelve apostles and all of their appointed priests died in the late-nineteenth and
twentieth century. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 79, 91; also see Timothy
George Grass, "The Church's Ruin and Restoration: The Development of Ecclesiology in the
Plymouth Brethren and the Catholic Apostolic Church, c. 1825-c.1866" (Ph.D. diss., King's
College London, 1997).

Müller indicated that he obtained his first orientation to premillennial eschatology during

his studies with the Society.[169] He developed an interest in the subject early on in his life in

England and even attended meetings hosted by Lady Theodosia Powerscourt in Ireland to study

the various theories regarding end time events.[170] In fact, it appears that many of Müller's ideas

about the Christian faith were refined during this period of study.[171] When reflecting back on

this time in his life thirty-six years later Müller wrote,

> . . . between July, 1829, and January 1830, I had seen the leading truths connected with
> the second coming of our Lord Jesus; I had apprehended the all-sufficiency of the Holy

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[168] Ian S. Rennie, "Aspects of Christian Brethren Spirituality," in *Alive to God: Studies in Spirituality Presented to James Houston*, ed. J. I. Packer and Loren Wilkinson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 198.

[169] W. Elfe Tayler, *Passages From the Diary and Letters of Henry Craik, of Bristol*, intro. George Müller (London: J. F. Shaw & Co., 1866), xii.

[170] Müller and Craik were invited to Powerscourt Castle in Ireland by Lady Theodosia Powerscourt in 1833. Lady Powerscourt had developed an interest in biblical prophecy in the mid-1820s and had probably attended, as Grayson Carter notes, "Edward Irving's congregation at Regent Square during one of her visits to London and, although out of step with his odd Trinitarian notions, she entered enthusiastically into the burgeoning English prophetic movement which aimed to arouse an adventist concern in 'Gospel circles.'" The meetings at Powerscourt were linked to the Albany prophecy conferences that included many who were associated with London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews. Grayson Carter, *Anglican Evangelicals: Protestant Secessions from the Via Media, c. 1800*-1850 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 202. Stewart J. Brown, *The National Churches of England, Ireland, and Scotland, 1801-1846* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 256-257. During the conference Müller and Craik discussed prophecy, speculated about "Mystic Babylon," and tried to better understand what the future held according to biblical teaching. Müller was given the privilege of preaching on the last day of the conference, Saturday, 28 September 1833, and appears to have made an impact on Lady Powerscourt and others in attendance. Tayler, *Passages From the Diary*, 166-169.

[171] Much of Müller's thought about Christian practices were worked out after his conversion moment in Halle and in his first eight months in England. An example of his early thinking on a subject preceding his arrival in England can be noted when Müller recalled, "For instance, I brought out how profitable I had found the inquirers' meetings from my earliest days in the ministry; for although they were comparatively new in England, yet they were not new to me, as I had begun to hold them in Germany in 1828." George Müller, *Jehovah Magnified: Addresses* (London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1876), 295.

> Scriptures as our rule, and the Holy Spirit as our teacher; I had seen clearly the precious doctrines of the grace of God, about which I had been uninstructed for nearly four years after my conversion; and I had learned the heavenly calling of the Church of Christ, and the consequent position of the believer in this world.[172]

Here Müller specifically states that while a student under the supervision of the Society, he came to embrace a view of the Second Coming, which was clearly premillennial.[173] Müller noted that his fellow students were primarily Germans who were preparing for missionary work among the Jews. Müller, like many other Germans who associated with the Society, seemed to have been predisposed toward radical interpretations of end time events, which was probably due to the influence of German Pietism.[174]

Making New Acquaintances

In the course of his time at the Society's missionary training school, Müller was able to benefit from the classical education he had received in the Prussian *gymnasium* and at the University of Halle. Consequently, he was excused from all language study in French, German, Greek, and Latin, and was only required to study Hebrew with his fellow students as he prepared for missionary service.[175] It was during his time in the seminary that Müller indicates that he first learned of Anthony Norris Groves (1795-1853), a dentist who gave up his vocation to serve

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[172] Tayler, *Passages From the Diary*, xii.

[173] Müller's premillenialism is also dispensational because he divides *heilsgeschichte* (salvation history) into specific periods of time he refers to specifically as a "dispensation." George Müller, "The Second Coming of Christ," in *The Second Coming of Christ* (Chicago: Moody Press, n.d.), 59-73.

[174] Schneider, *German Radical Pietism*, 59; also see, Stephan Holthaus, "Prämillenniarismus in Deutschland: Historische Anmerkungen zur Eschatologie der Erweckten im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert," in *Band 20 Pietismus und Neuzeit: Ein Jahrbuch zur Geschichte des neueren Protestantismus*, ed. Harmut Lehmann, Rudolf Dellsperger, Martin Brecht, Ulrich Gable, Friedrich de Boor (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 196-197.

[175] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 43.

overseas as a missionary. Groves' new life also involved a radical method for obtaining the material necessities of everyday life. Groves would be "simply trusting in the Lord for temporal supplies."[176] Groves embraced a form of Christian practice that immediately attracted Müller's attention. Groves practiced the life of faith in a manner similar to the renowned Halle Pietist August Hermann Francke. Groves, too, relied on God to meet his everyday needs even though he had the ability through his professional work as a dentist to easily supply those needs. Furthermore, Groves was putting into practice, on a more public and grander scale, the approach to living by faith, which Müller had adopted as a student at Halle. Müller's radical step of faith forced him to rely on God for his material needs to be met, while Tholuck appears to have been aware of the situation and began directing some tutorial work to Müller to help him meet his needs. Therefore, when news of Groves' living by faith reached Müller he was inspired to write in his *Narrative*, "I not only marked it down in my journal, but also wrote about it to my German friends."[177] Müller was impressed that someone in England had embraced an approach to the Christian faith that mirrored Francke's radical devotion.

Although Müller only learned of Groves and his life of faith a few months after arriving in England, he was soon able to gain access to the Groves household through a friendship he developed with Henry Craik. Soon after Müller arrived in England, he recorded that the illness that ended his military obligation to the Prussian Army had returned. After a bit of convincing by some English friends, he decided to travel to the countryside in order to rest and recover. While in Teignmouth, Müller met Henry Craik. The two men formed a friendship that had a profound impact on their lives and work. F. Roy Coad, a historian of the Brethren Movement,

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[176] Ibid., 44.

[177] Ibid.

writes that the partnership of Craik and Müller was "as fruitful a partnership in practical

Christianity as any the world has known."[178] Craik was previously employed by Groves who

was in the process of finishing a degree at Trinity College, Dublin, for ordination in the Church

of England. Groves hired Craik to prepare him for his examinations at Trinity and also to tutor

his children. Craik arrived with a degree in hand from the University of St. Andrews where he

had studied under the celebrated Scottish professor and churchman Thomas Chalmers.[179] While

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[178] F. Roy Coad, *A History of the Brethren Movement: Its Origins, its Worldwide Development and its Significance for the Present Day* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1968), 36.

[179] Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847) was born March 17, 1780, in Anstruther Easter, Fife, Scotland, as the sixth child of John and Elizabeth Chalmers. Chalmers attended the University of St. Andrews at the age of eleven and began studies in Divinity at the age of fifteen. He finished his studies in 1798 and in 1799 was given a "special dispensation" that allowed him to preach before his twenty-first birthday. He continued his education in mathematics, science, and moral philosophy at the University of Edinburgh. In 1801-1802, he obtained the post of lecturer at the University of St. Andrews in the Mathematics Department. He was also installed as minister in the rural Kilmany parish in Fife. In 1810, at the age of thirty, he experienced an evangelical conversion. Two years later, in 1812, he married Grace Pratt and, eventually, they had six daughters together. In 1815, he moved to Glasgow to serve Tron parish and established St. John's parish to reach the urban poor. Chalmers was widely celebrated for his work as a pastor. Chalmers later served from 1823 to 1828 as the Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of St. Andrews where he influenced the lives of several students, including Henry Craik. In 1828, Chalmers returned to the University of Edinburgh where he took up the post of Professor of Divinity, which he maintained until 1843. On May 18, 1843, Chalmers led the Disruption in the Church of Scotland, which resulted in one third of the pastors following him away from the state church to found the Free Church of Scotland. In conjunction with the break from the Church of Scotland, Chalmers took up the position of Principal of the Free Church theological school, more commonly known as New College, where he was also Professor of Divinity. Chalmers died at home in Edinburgh on May 30, 1847. Thomas Chalmers, *Miscellanies; Embracing Reviews, Essays, and Addresses* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1856); A. C. Cheyne, *The Transforming of the Kirk: Victorian Scotlands Religious Revolution* (Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1983), 19; Stuart Piggin and John Roxborogh, *The St. Andrews Seven: The Finest Flowering of Missionary Zeal in Scottish History* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1985), 51; John Roxborogh, "The Legacy of Thomas Chalmers," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 23, no. 4 (October 1999): 173-176.

a student at St. Andrews, Craik became closely involved[180] with the famous "St. Andrews

Seven" whose members had a profound impact on missionary work in India.[181] Craik himself

had considered missions work in India and even met with the famed Baptist missionary William

Carey on December 10, 1829, in an effort to determine if he should join Carey's work in

Calcutta.[182]

Besides his interest in missions, inspired by study at St. Andrews, Craik also developed

into a serious student of the biblical text, especially the Hebrew language, and was hired to serve

the Groves household as a tutor. Craik, in fact, became a respected Hebrew scholar in Britain

through his publications and mastery of the language.[183] Although Müller initially met Craik in

July 1829, he did not immediately join together with his acquaintance in a joint ministry

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[180] Craik became a member of the St. Andrews University Missionary Association at its second meeting in January of 1825. Stuart Piggin and John Roxborogh, *The St. Andrews Seven: The Finest Flowering of Missionary Zeal in Scottish History* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1985), 51.

[181] The "St. Andrews Seven" included six University of St. Andrews students, Alexander Duff, John Adam, John Urquhart, William Sinclair Mackay, David Ewart, and Robert Nesbit along with their renowned professor Dr. Thomas Chalmers. Ibid., ix. Of this group John Urquhart was Craik's closest friend, see Tayler, *Passages From the Diary*, 64-65.

[182] The meeting did not lead to Craik's pursuing the matter any further. Tayler, *Passages From the Diary*, 118.

[183] Craik was a world-class exegete of the biblical text. He wrote books dealing with the study of Hebrew and twice was offered honorary doctorates, by the University of St. Andrews for his scholarly work, both of which he turned down,. Tayler, *Passages From*, xvi. Craik fought against higher critical readings of the Bible that denied the supernatural events depicted in the text. Henry Craik, *The Authority of Scripture Considered in Relation to Christian Union: A Lecture* (Bristol: W. Mack, 1863), 12-15. Also see Henry Craik, *The Hebrew Language: Its History and Characteristics, Including Improved Renderings of Select Passages in Our Authorized Translation of the Old Testament* (London: Bagster, 1860); Henry Craik, *Principia Hebraica: Or an Easy Introduction to the Hebrew Language, Exhibiting in Twenty-Four Tables, the Interpretation of all the Hebrew and Chaldee Words, Both Primitives and Derivatives, Contained in the Old Testament Scriptures* (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1863).

project.[184] Instead, after a recovery period of almost four months in Devonshire, Müller returned

to London in early September rejuvenated for his work with the Society.

Conclusion

Within days of returning to London, Müller recorded that his health faltered once again,

and he wrote to the Society for an assignment that would send him to the mission field. The

Society, according to Müller, did not respond to his request, and after waiting for "about five or

six weeks," he questioned the logic of seeking an official "appointment to missionary work from

my fellow-men."[185] Instead he shifted the emphasis to a calling from God that required no

official recognition by an agency for him to do what he felt called to do. He then began to serve

as an independent minister among London's Jewish population.[186] Müller requested autonomy

from the Society in December of 1829 and received the following response to his request,

> 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 rejoiced 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 opinion on that point, the committee cannot consider him as a missionary student; but should more

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[184] Tayler explained the development of the Craik and Müller friendship in his editorial remarks in *Passages From the Diary and Letters of Henry Craik, of Bristol* with the following observation: "Mr. Craik first met with Mr. Müller in July, 1829, at Teignmouth, where Mr. Müller was spending a month for the benefit of his health. They did not meet again till January, 1830, when Mr. Müller came to reside at Teignmouth. From this time, till the period of Mr. Craik's lamented death, they continued intimate friends." Ibid., 128.

[185] Ibid., 50.

[186] Ibid.

mature reflection cause him to alter that opinion, they will readily enter into further communication with him.[187]

Müller had effectively ended the relationship with the Society by simply requesting that he have autonomy to minister where he felt directed by God. When W. T. Gidney, a secretary and chronicler of the Society, later reflected on Müller's past relationship with the missionary organization, he wrote, "The death, in 1898, of George Müller of Bristol, at the patriarchal age of 92, re-opened a very old page in the history of the Society, in whose service he was for a short time, as far back as 1829, but he gave up the work owing to temporary failure of health."[188] Clearly, Müller's relationship with the Society was one that neither side wanted to admit was a failure. Müller, for his part, claimed in his *Narrative* published in 1837 that "[m]ore than seven years have passed away since, and I have never, even for a single moment, regretted the step I took, but have to be sorry that I have been so little grateful for the Lord's goodness in that matter."[189] With the end of his relationship with the London Society, Müller now relied on faith in God to supply his material needs and give him a new sense of direction.[190] Soon friendships,

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[187] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 56.

[188] W. T. Gidney, *The History of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews, From 1809-1908* (London: London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews, 1908), 514.

[189] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 56.

[190] In November of 1828, while waiting for permission from the Prussian government for release from military service, Müller wrote to Professor Tholuck the following: "Ich möchte auf keinen Fall Missionar werden, ohne deutlich zu wißen, daß es der Wille Gottes ist." ["I would like to become under no circumstances a missionary, without knowing clearly that it is the will of God."] This seems to indicate that for Müller his vocational options were open until he knew for certain that God was directing him clearly toward missionary service. This approach to missionary work by Müller may also explain why, once he was in Great Britain and introduced to new people and opportunities, he no longer felt compelled to seek an appointment with the London Society. Letter from Georg Müller to Professor Tholuck, 10 November 1828, Friedrich August Gottreu Tholuck Papers, Archiv der Franckeschen Stiftungen zu Halle, Germany.

marriage, and the call to the pastorate in Nonconformist chapels would follow, but he could entertain the notion that God was intimately involved in every step as he physically and mentally reoriented himself to his new life as an immigrant to England.

CHAPTER 4

CHRONICLE OF A DISSENTER

Introduction

The kindred souls that Müller befriended when he arrived in England formed the

foundation for a ministry that would extend beyond his adoptive city of Bristol and reach around

the world.[1] The relationships he formed with Henry Craik, the Groves family, and other

evangelicals would, in fact, serve to help him launch pastoral, missionary, and philanthropic

ventures. Chapter 3 examined the role of Müller's initiation into the Christian faith via Prussian

Pietism that connected his Christian practice to the Anglo-American evangelical tradition.

However, it was Müller's pastoral and philanthropic work that formed the basis of his appeal to

nineteenth-century audiences. As knowledge of his unusual methods for pastoral compensation

and supporting philanthropic work circulated in autobiographical publications, he was

legitimized as a model of Christian piety. Unlike most conversion stories, Müller's testimony

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[1] Brethren historians continue to emphasize the British context for the development and
thinking of Müller. However, Müller's background in Prussian Pietist circles and his exposure to
the Moravians are largely ignored in relationship to his individual piety. Even though Müller
was an essential contributor to the development of the Open Brethren practice of expecting
preachers and missionaries to live by faith, this is still not seen as a product of his German
background, but due to his association with A. N. Groves. Dickson, a Brethren scholar, also
gives preference to Groves' influence on Müller. Neil T. R. Dickson, "'The Church Itself is
God's Clergy': The Principles and Practices of the Brethren," in *The Rise of the Laity in
Evangelical Protestantism*, ed. Deryck W. Lovegrove (London: Routledge, 2002), 229.

did not end with his initiation into the Christian faith. Instead he made his testimony into a

written record that chronicled the course of his life. Because living by faith involved a constant

reckoning with the needs of everyday life, his ongoing chronicle enabled him to add new details

as long he lived.[2]

Even more dramatic was his decision to place himself center stage in a written record that

was available for public scrutiny. The orphan homes that he directed were evidence that could

be evaluated according to the criteria he established in his ongoing chronicle of God's

faithfulness. The testimony that Müller presented to the public in the form of his *Narrative*, is a

Christian practice that dates to the New Testament Gospels.[3] His published testimony of

answered prayer was endorsed by those who used their reputations to legitimize his chronicle.

Müller's claim that he relied on prayer to meet everyday needs triggered a debate among

evangelicals and others about his methods. However, the credibility Müller garnered from

supporters, along with the longevity of his work, resulted in his story being esteemed as a model

of Christian piety. This chapter will analyze how Müller rose from a local Dissenter in Bristol to

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[2] Speaking in 1881, Müller's second wife explained his trials as normal when she stated, "for the path of faith is the path of trial, and when God gives faith He always tries it, in order that by trial it may be strengthened." Susannah Müller, "Brief Account of the Life and Labours of Mr. George Müller, given at a Ladies Union Prayer Meeting, Broadway Tabernacle, New York, February 1881," George Müller and Family, Letters and Papers, Muller House, 7 Cotham Park, Bristol, England.

[3] Biblical scholar Richard Bauckham argues that the Gospels are eyewitness testimonies to the life and teachings of Jesus. Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 5. For a critique of Bauckham, see John J. Pilch, review of *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 70, no. 1 (January 2008): 137-139. The *testamonia* theory of James R. Harris argues for a literary tradition that preceded the New Testament Gospels and drew on the sayings of Jesus and the Old Testament to provide arguments for the conversion of the Gentiles and to silence Jewish critics. Alessandro Falcetta, "The Testimony Research of James Rendel Harris," *Novum Testamentum* 45, no. 3 (2003): 280-299; also see Carlo Ginzburg, *Wooden Eyes: Nine Reflections on Distance*, trans. Martin Ryle and Kate Soper (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 81.

a widely respected public figure who was recognized first and foremost for his prayer life, his

philanthropic work, and his publishing ventures.[4] All three were interconnected and materialized

in his chronicle that led to widespread acclaim in newspapers, periodicals, and books that

celebrated his life as worthy of imitation.[5]

Marriage and Ministrations

Although the relationship with the London Society to Promote Christianity Amongst the

Jews was a failure, moving to England to prepare for future missionary service with the Society

laid the foundation for Müller's future. After his separation from the Society he accepted the call

to a pastorate at Teignmouth in a small independent Baptist chapel called Ebenezer in early

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[4] Historian Boyd Hilton defines the term when he explains, "Dissent implied resentful opposition to the political establishment from which its members felt excluded, whereas nonconformists more positively basked in the sure and certain hope that God was on their side. This would make Nonconformity a cultural movement in its own right, with a unique institutional setting—chapel—and traditions of full-throttle hymn-singing and communal participation." Müller identified himself as a Dissenter in the 1830s and Craik indicated that he and Müller "have frequently found more union of spirit to those connected with our national Establishment." Therefore, Hilton's point reflects how Müller and Craik understood their early work in Bristol within Dissent. As late as 1869 Müller was still supportive of an established church, particularly in the case of the Church of Ireland, over the complete disestablishment of state churches that most Nonconformists promoted. However, by 1874 Müller noted that he was the last of the "Nonconformist ministers" to still be ministering in the city from when he arrived in 1832. Clearly, the terms and ideas associated with each overlapped within Müller's life time and he modified his language according to common usage and the expectations of his audience. Boyd Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People? England 1783-1846, The New Oxford History of England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 527; Henry Craik to Thomas Chalmers, June 30, 1833, CHA4.202.73, New College Library Special Collections, University of Edinburgh; "Mr. Müller on the Present Religious Crisis," *The Gospel Magazine* 43 (July 1869): 386; George Müller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller, Fifth Part* (London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1874), 614.

[5] The editor of *Footsteps of Truth*, C. R. Hurditch, expressed a desire for additional books and tracts to take Müller's story to even a broader audience. Hurditch's hope, however, was already realized on a global scale by 1883. "Notice of Books," *Footsteps of Truth* 1 (August 1883): 420.

1830.[6] Not far away in Shaldon, Henry Craik was serving as a pastor at the Baptist Chapel.[7]

During this period Müller embraced adult or believer's baptism based on a conversation with an

unnamed woman in the congregation who suggested he rethink his position based on the New

Testament.[8] Müller examined the biblical text a came to a new viewpoint—the Baptists were

right about believer's baptism.[9]

As his decision to embrace believer's baptism reveals, Müller endorsed the practice of

accepting a literal reading of the biblical text. He held that a correct reading of the biblical text

involved prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.[10] He, most likely, first developed this

hermeneutic in his early experiences with Pietists in Halle.[11] This approach to the Bible was re-

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[6] Some have surmised that this chapel was a Brethren Chapel from the moment Müller arrived. However, this was the chapel where Müller was convinced by lay people that he did not understand baptism correctly. The evidence indicates that Ebenezer Chapel was a Baptist chapel when Müller was appointed as pastor. J. S. Teulon, *The History and Teaching of the Plymouth Brethren* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1883), 16-17.

[7] W. Elfe Tayler, *Passages From the Diary and Letters of Henry Craik, of Bristol*, introduction by George Müller (London: J. F. Shaw & Co., 1866), 124. George Müller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller, Minister of Christ, Written by Himself* (London: J. Nisbet, 1837), 57-59.

[8] According to the *Record of Christian Work*, edited by D. L. Moody's son William, Henry Craik baptized Müller in Teignmouth. "The Orphan's Friend," *Record of Christian Work* 17, no. 5 (May 1898): 230.

[9] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 65. Also see W. T. Stead, "George Müller: A Character Sketch," *The American Monthly Review of Reviews* 17, no. 5 (May 1898): 575.

[10] Ibid., 62. Also see George Müller, "Leaning Upon the Beloved," *The Christian* (June 15, 1871): 3. Illumination of the biblical text via the Holy Spirit was part of Pietist practice. Peter C. Erb, ed. *Pietists: Selected Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 5.

[11] Christian Frederic Schwartz (1726-1793), a second generation Halle Pietist, foreshadowed Müller's literal approach to the Bible. In Protestant fashion, Schwartz attempted to "awaken" Roman Catholics into a "New Birth." Schwartz was also committed to missionary work, an ascetic lifestyle, and establishing an orphanage like his hero A. H. Francke. Within the

enforced through his experiences with Dissenters in England. Müller looked for a biblical

rationale for all Christian practice. He embraced divine election and the perseverance of the

elect based on an examination of the Bible alone.[12] His view of war was subjugated to the

Sermon on the Mount, and he practiced pacifism.[13] He opposed smoking, but he was not a

teetotaler and drank wine.[14] He abandoned an optimistic postmillennial eschatology that held

that Christian labor would perfect the world for a thousand years of peace prior to Christ's

return. Instead, he adopted the urgency and hope for the quick return of Christ presented in the

New Testament.[15] This eschatological perspective manifested itself in his adopting a

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context of India, where he served as a missionary from 1750 until his death in 1793, Schwartz's work brought him acclaim from both the indigenous population and European observers who regarded him as an exemplary Christian. *Remains of the Rev. C. F. Schwartz, Missionary in India, Consisting of His Letters and Journals; With a Sketch of His Life*, 2nd ed. (London: Jaques and Wright, 1826), 4, 6, 59, 109, 114, 120, 137, 139, 142.

[12] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 47. Also see "Faith in God as to Temporal Things," *The Local Preachers' Magazine and Christian Family Record* (November 1856): 405-406. It should be noted that Müller's Pietist background may have influenced him on this point since early Pietists were deeply influenced by Calvinism. Although there is no evidence Müller read Calvin, Calvinist ideas may persisted among the Pietists he associated with in Halle and influenced his interpretation of the biblical text. Erb, *Pietists*, 4.

[13] Peter Brock, "The Peace Testimony of the Early Plymouth Brethren," *Church History* 53, no. 1 (March 1984): 33-34.

[14] James Baker, *Literary and Biographical Studies* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1908),186; Edward Kennaway Groves, *George Müller and His Successors* (Bristol: n.p., 1906), 267. W. H. Bennet, *Robert Cleaver Chapman of Barnstaple* (Glasgow: Pickering & Inglis, 1902), 38-39.

[15] Müller's view of the end time, though influenced by his early experiences in Great Britain as noted in chapter 3, also kept pace with German Pietist thinking of the era that interpreted recent political events and missionary work, especially to the Jews, as foreshadowing the end to world history with the Second Coming of Christ. Hartmut Lehmann, "The Mobilization of God's Pious Children in the Era of the French Revolution and Beyond," in *Band 34 Pietismus und Neuzeit: Ein Jahrbuch zur Geschichte des neueren Protestantismus 2008,* ed. Udo Sträter, et al (Göttingen: Vanddenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 189-198.

dispensational premillennialist view of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ,[16] which meant that

he was certain that he lived in the end times and that Jesus could return at any moment.[17] He

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[16] The eschatology that was put forward John Nelson Darby and enshrined in the Scofield Bible of 1909 was, as historian F. R. Coad noted, "regarded as a touchstone of orthodoxy in wide sections of the [Brethren] movement as elsewhere in evangelical circles." F. R. Coad, "Into a Changing Future: The Evolution of a Movement and Coping with Change," lectures presented at Regent College, July 2-6, 1990, The Christian Brethren Archive, The John Rylands University Library, The University of Manchester, England.

[17] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 48-49. Questions have arisen concerning Müller's understanding of dispensational premillennial eschatology. The issue centers over whether Müller believed in a pretribulation rapture of Christians prior to the appearance of the Antichrist. Edward K. Groves claimed that, "Mr. Müller never held the Lord's return as an immediate possibility, but shared with Mr. B. W. Newton the expectation of a personal Antichrist who would precede this event." Groves, *George Müller and His Successors*, 8. Church historian Tim Grass also agrees with Groves on this point but argues that in his later years Müller abandoned the idea that the Antichrist would appear before the Second Coming and that the rapture would follow the Great Tribulation (rather than precede it as most dispensational premillennialists believed). Tim Grass, *Gathering to His Name: The Story of the Open Brethren in Britain and Ireland*, foreword by David Bebbington (Milton Keynes, U.K.: Paternoster, 2006), 168. Müller's wife confirmed, primarily thorough silence on the issue of a secret pretribulation rapture, that Müller believed certain events would precede the Second Coming. She quoted her husband as saying, "my mind has long been settled on this point and I have not a shadow of a doubt about it." Susannah Grace Müller, *The Preaching Tours and Missionary Labours of George Müller*, 2nd ed. (London: J. Nisbet, 1889), 141. Also see, "Monday, January 24th," *Bible Notes: Daily Scripture Readings* (January 1898): 12. In article that was based on two sermons Müller delievered at the Christian Conference at Clifton, October 4 and 5, 1870, he cautioned, "We should be careful not to give a handle to those who speak evil of the truth, and not lay too much stress on certain events, which may not be God's instruments in ushering in the return of the Lord." Müller was referencing the assumption many made about the return of Jesus Christ in 1829 due to political events, specifically the war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, which some thought would result in the restoration of Israel as a nation. George Müller, "Waiting For Christ," *The Christian* (November 10, 1870): 3. Müller's views seem to have been shaped by the circumstances of the moment. The most intimate example of Müller's belief in the immediacy of the Second Coming is found in a handwritten dedication that he wrote to his only surviving child, Lydia. Written on November 29, 1840, when she was only 8-years old, Müller hoped that by reading the book Lydia would be blessed by the content and that "she may in early youth be led into such a course as to avoid her Father's sins" and live a Christian life. His final comment gives insight into the heightened eschatological expectation. Müller stated that Lydia should have, if she adhered to her father's example of living according to the will of God, a life of "everlasting joy and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." His assumption was that she would experience the Second Coming of Jesus Christ in the course of her earthly life. The

believed in an open ministry—meaning that all male participants in the congregation could be empowered by the Holy Spirit to speak to their fellow Christians.[18] In addition to this, weekly communion—the "breaking of bread"—was embraced as the central rite of Sunday gatherings.[19] Müller also enjoyed an interdenominational view of Christianity and encouraged Christians to join in fellowship with any church that preached the Gospel and people expressed love for Jesus.[20] Müller's decision to orient all of his life on his interpretation of the New Testament must have made an impact on his parishioners. He claimed that by the time he left the church in Teignmouth the congregation had grown from eighteen attendees to a substantial body of fifty-one.[21]

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argument could also be made that he expected to also experience the Second Coming prior to his own death. This particular copy of Müller's *Narrative* with the inscription to Lydia is held in the Yale University Library, New Haven, CT. George Müller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller*, 2nd ed. (London: J. Nisbet, 1840), frontpage. Also see, F. Roy Coad, "Prophetic Developments with Particular Reference to the Early Brethren Movement," *C. B. R. F. Occasional Paper Number 2* (Pinner, U.K.: C. B. R. F., 1966), 22.

[18] Müller's embrace of an open ministry mimics the Prussian Pietist habit of spiritual leveling in the context of the small-group prayer meeting.

[19] According to Edward K. Groves, ". . . Mr. Müller and Mr. Craik, at Teignmouth, had commenced the weekly breaking of bread, connected with an open ministry, more than three months before anything of the kind was known in Plymouth, and while Mr. Darby, the subsequent leader of the Exclusives, was preaching in the pulpits of the Church of England." Groves claimed that Müller and Craik were, in fact, the first to put Brethren practices into place before either Plymouth or Darby, which would mean that Teignmouth was the true source of the Brethren movement. Groves, *Conversations*, 141. Historian Grayson Carter followed in the line of Grayson Carter, *Anglican Evangelicals: Protestant Secessions from the Via Media, c. 1800-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 207.

[20] George Müller, *Counsel to Christians* (London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1878), 12. Müller was influenced by his Halle Pietist background on this point as well. He was also a member of the Evangelical Alliance that Tholuck had helped develop as an international movement. "New Members," *Evangelical Christendom* 25 (September 1, 1881): 283.

[21] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 95.

Besides his literal reading of the Bible, Müller's marriage to Mary Groves reinforced his commitment to the life of faith. The sister of Anthony Norris Groves, Mary married Müller on October 7, 1830.[22] Mary also engaged in the life of faith along with her new husband and, by all accounts, shared in the everyday challenges. They rejected the income provided by Ebenezer Chapel because the salary was derived from pew-rents, which they believed affected poor members of the congregation more severely than the wealthy. They used prayer as the primary means to provide for their daily needs. They also followed Luke 12:33 and sold everything they had and gave it to the poor.[23] Müller's *Narrative* praises Mary's steadfast support in their life of faith and ministry responsibilities.[24] Mary died on February 6, 1870, after thirty-nine years of marriage. Over the course of their married life she suffered two miscarriages,[25] and also gave birth to a son, Elijah (1834-1835), who died as an infant, and a daughter, Lydia (1832-1890), who eventually helped manage the orphan homes.[26] After Mary's death Müller married Susannah Grace Sanger (1817-1895) in 1871 who became his second partner in ministry.[27] In addition to his family, the friend who influenced Müller most was Henry Craik (1805-1866).[28]

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[22] Ibid., 68.

[23] Ibid., 68-69.

[24] E. K. Groves noted that his aunt Mary was "the 'better half' of George Müller" when he wrote, "It is hardly possible to describe the intensity of affection with which she was regarded by the matrons, teachers and children. In character she formed the exact complement of her husband and supplied the gentleness and sympathy which he did not possess." Groves, *George Müller and His Successors*, 30.

[25] Steve Griffths, "George Müller's Family," unpublished paper, 2.

[26] In 1871 Lydia married, James Wright, who was later named Müller's co-director and successor. Prior to Lydia and James' marriage in November, she stated in the 1871 census that she was the "Superintendent" of the Orphan Houses. Ibid.

As noted in chapter 3, Craik and Müller first met in Teignmouth in July of 1829.[29]

Looking back after decades of working together Müller claimed, "I became acquainted with Mr. Craik, and *his warmth of heart towards the Lord* drew me to him. It was this which was the attraction to me."[30] Besides the "warmth of heart towards the Lord" that Müller emphasized, the two men shared a number of similar experiences and ideas that drew them together. Both men were transformed by their university experience and shared a profound admiration for a professor who had shaped their spiritual development. Craik's relationship with Thomas Chalmers, the greatest Scottish churchman of the age, was as important to him as Tholuck was to Müller.[31] In addition to the great respect for their university professors, according to Müller a number of common bonds drew the two men together. They were the same age, possessed a

[27] Müller apparently caused quite a disturbance in the Bethesda church community with his selection, at God's direction, of Susannah Grace Sangar to be his second wife. Susannah Müller traveled the world with her husband and died on January 29, 1895, after a period of illness. During her illness her aged husband was her sole nurse. E. K. Groves recorded of her memorial service that, "Mr. Müller conducted the service in Stokes' Croft Chapel over his wife's remains, but did not accompany them to the Cemetery. He spoke exactly in the same strain as when announcing her death at Bethesda on the previous Sunday; again he quoted his favourite verse, and taking off his spectacles pointed to the coffin below, adding with charming simplicity, 'and that too shall work for my good.' I do not remember anything that I ever found harder to listen to with unmoved countenance. The union of the pathetic with the humorous as I reflected on what she had cost him, made me cover my face to hide these mingled feelings." Groves, and those loyal to Müller, held strong feelings about Susannah and were incapable of seeing her contribution to Müller's global fame. Groves' interpretation highlights the disdain Susannah may have suffered among the Bristol Brethren. Groves, *George Müller and His Successors*, 31-32, 149-151.

[28] W. Elfe Tayler, *Passages From the Diary and Letters of Henry Craik, of Bristol*, intro. George Müller (London: J. F. Shaw, 1866), xi.

[29] Müller and Craik after this introductory meeting in the summer of 1829 did not meet again until January of 1830 when Müller moved to Teignmouth. Ibid., 128.

[30] Emphasis original. Ibid., xii.

[31] Henry Craik to Thomas Chalmers, December 1825, CHA 4.104.37, Special Collections, New College, University of Edinburgh, Scotland.

university education, enjoyed the study of Hebrew, and both professed a belief in Christ as their savior while university students.[32] What Müller failed to mention was their passionate interest in missionary work. By 1826, while still a student at the University of St. Andrews, Craik mused in his diary, "Meditated on the subject of Missions and Missionaries, and felt very great zeal in the cause. I must expect that his zeal and ardour will soon cease, or at least become less strong; but I am almost persuaded now, THAT MY FINAL DESTINATION will be that of a DESPISED MISSIONARY."[33] Although many things brought the two men together when they first met in Teignmouth, their common bond was most powerfully realized in the preeminence each gave to missionary work. This focal point became the cornerstone of the ministry they developed in Bristol.

Besides their interest in missions, both men desired to establish institutions that could help the most impoverished in British society.[34] Richard Glover, writing about Craik and Müller's relationship at the end of the nineteenth century, noted, "If Müller was the Luther, and Craik was the Melanchthon of the new movement; and during all their fellowship supplied an invaluable influence. The strength of the one and the gentle and kindly wisdom of the other worked in noble harmony."[35] Müller and Craik's respect for each other enabled their close friendship to span thirty-six years. Müller and Craik maintained very busy daily schedules oriented around meetings with individuals, prayer meetings, preaching engagements, travel,

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[32] Tayler, *Passages From*, xi.

[33] Emphasis original. Ibid., 53.

[34] Henry Craik to Thomas Chalmers, May 15, 1825, MS 30385153, Department of Special Collections, University of St. Andrews Library, Scotland.

[35] Richard Glover, "George Müller," *The Sunday at Home, 1897-1898* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1898): 421.

study, and oversight of their ministries.[36] The congregations they led often witnessed tension as

men and women challenged their theological opinions,[37] their method of leadership, and their

influence over so much of Bristol's religious life.[38] The result of their collaboration was a whole

host of missionary, philanthropic, and publication efforts that would extend their influence

beyond Bristol to Great Britain, continental Europe, and the world.

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[36] Henry Craik, "Daily Record [Diary]," Library, Muller House, 7 Cotham Park, Bristol, England.

[37] Müller and Craik also embraced a broad sense of Christian unity that claimed, as Craik did, that, "All who are born of God are essentially one." Craik clarified this when he wrote, "Let us rather cherish the far more comforting and exhilarating conviction that all who truly love the Saviour compose His church, and that all such, being united to Him now, shall continue to be united to Him, and to each other, throughout the ages of eternity." Henry Craik, *New Testament Church Order: Five Lectures* (London: Snow & Co., 1863), 30.

[38] The expansion and leadership of their ministry was not always positive, and some individuals left their congregations due to conflicts over the practice of Christianity. In the case of Gideon Chapel, apparently Müller and Craik were not able to force their will on the congregation and gave the church up after eight years of pastoral ministry. Cyprian Thomas Rust, *The "Brethren": An Examination of the Opinions and Practices of the New Sect Usually Denominated "Plymouth Brethren"* (Colchester: J Backett, 1844), 50-56. The most startling example is found in Ellen S. Craik, the oldest daughter of Henry Craik. Considered an heir of her father's intellectual gifts, after Henry's death she separated herself from Müller's ministry at Bethesda Chapel and became a missionary with the Baptist Missionary Society. Her reason for leaving the church was due to "a change in some of her theological opinions." She died of cholera only one year after arriving in India as a missionary. According to Edward K. Groves, Craik and Groves' sister, Agnes, were forced to separate from the Bethesda because they embraced the doctrine of conditional immortality (annihilationism) from an evangelist visiting Bristol. Conditional immortality held that the soul was not immortal on its own, but became immortal when "Spiritual Regeneration" occurred. This meant that when a person died who was not a Christian they did not suffer eternal punishment in hell, but simply ceased to exist. "Miss Ellen S. Craik," *The Sunday Magazine* (London: Dalby, Isbister, & Co., 1878): 648. Also see Groves, *George Müller and His Successors*, 31, 407. Tim Grass indicates that E. K. Groves was forced out of fellowship with Bethesda Chapel in 1900 for embracing conditional immortality. Grass also explains that the teaching met the full force of Müller's wrath and that no one was allowed to maintain fellowship who embraced the teaching. Grass, *Gathering to His Name*, 169-171.

The City of Bristol

After their initial forays into separate Baptist pastorates in Teignmouth and Shandon, in 1832 Müller and Craik moved to Bristol to assume pastoral responsibilities at Gideon Chapel[39] and develop a congregation at Bethesda Chapel.[40] Soon after arriving in Bristol, Müller and Craik came face-to-face with the reality of urban England.[41] The southwestern port city

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[39] Gideon, an independent chapel, was founded by the radical evangelical and hyper-Calvinist William Huntington, S.S. in 1810. Huntington's importance in Müller's ideas about the life of faith will be examined more thoroughly in chapter 5. M. Caston, *Independency in Bristol: With Brief Memorials of its Churches and Pastors* (London: Ward and Co., 1860), 155-157. Carter, *Anglican Evangelicals*, 132. Edward K. Groves believed that the Gideon Chapel congregation was comprised of independents who appreciated Müller and Craik's biblically-based preaching, but they did not embrace believer's baptism or other ideas that defined Brethren practice at Bethesda. Consequently, Gideon was abandoned by Müller and Craik in 1840 and a new church opened in 1842 called Salem Chapel. Groves, *Conversations*, 15; E. R. Short, *The Story of "Bristol Bethesda": An Address Given on the Centenary Day at Bethesda Chapel, July 6th. 1932* (Bristol: Bible and Tract Depot of Scriptural Knowledge Institution, 1932), 10.

[40] Bethesda Chapel was originally an independent Baptist chapel that was not associated with Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland. Clifton Daggett Gray, Jr., "The Meaning of Membership as Perceived by Plymouth Brethren" (Ph.D. diss., Boston University Graduate School, 1963), 84-85. After Müller and Craik acquired Bethesda Chapel, the chapel eventually became a mother church that influenced the establishment of a number of Brethren assemblies, such Salem Chapel (1842), Unity Chapel (1862), Clifton Bethesda (1872), Merrywood Hall (1889), Stokes Croft (1878). Short, *The Story*, 22-27. According to Müller, in his "Errata" page at the end of the first edition of the *Narrative* there were 68 believers at Gideon when he and Craik assumed their pastoral responsibilities. He went on to note that there were, in 1834, 132 members at the Gideon church and 125 at the Bethesda church. Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 91-97, 119-120, 192. An account of a Bethesda Chapel meeting from 1840 described the following: "Bethesda, a large, bare Chapel, half empty. A very few grave-looking men and women came in and knelt down for a few moments, then rising sat with closed eyes till the Service began. The sisters' dress was grotesquely ugly. A coarse brown woollen [*sic*] dress with a drab shawl, a straight speckled straw bonnet with drab or brown veil, servants and mistresses all alike. Soon a brother rose and prayed. Now we were at once in the presence of God. It was Spirit-led prayer. I forgot the dress and all else, then a pause, then a hymn, sung like a funeral dirge with closed eyes and all sitting, and very badly sung too. Another prayer and then the bread and wine were passed round; pause again, then Prayer. Nor Mr. Craik stood up to speak. All had their Bibles and used them. His exposition of Scripture was quite a new feature of worship to me, and it was indeed marrow and fatness." Quoted in Short, *The Story*, 8-9.

[41] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 99-100.

straddled the River Avon and was linked with the rise of British commerce dating back to the 1600s. Once a leading center of the slave trade, Bristol grew and accommodated the expansion in international trade created by the Industrial Revolution. Sugar, tobacco, cotton, and other imported goods flowed through Bristol's port.[42] Because Bristol functioned primarily as a port city, the ancient town did not experience the turbulence of industrialization that transformed the physical landscape of other cities, such as Manchester and Liverpool. Instead, the sixth largest city in England witnessed many of the benefits associated with the growth of commerce without the tragedy of rapid and unplanned urban expansion. The city was also noted for offering a warmer, though rainy, climate that made the city more livable, especially for the poor.[43] The city numbered around 59,000 residents in 1831[44] and experienced regular outbreaks of disease, such as cholera.[45] Although Müller and Craik did not come to Bristol with the goal of establishing any sort of social relief work, given the realities of the city they soon discovered that the need for charity was acute, particularly for orphaned children.

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[42] By the middle of the nineteenth century trade goods modified significantly, which resulted in a shift to corn, timber, coal, iron, hides, and chemicals being the primary items contributing to port traffic. David Large, *The Municipal Government of Bristol 1851-1901* (Bristol: Bristol Record Society, 1999), 14.

[43] In 1845 H. T. De La Beche described Bristol's living environment as beneficial to the poor, "The mildness of the climate is necessarily of great importance to the poor man, saving him that expenditure in clothing and fuel which the dampness may not require to be provided." Rainfall between 1836 and 1842 ranged between 29 and 38 inches annually. Every month in the year saw a minimum of one inch of rain over that seven year period. See H. T. De La Beche, *Report on the Sanatory* [*sic*] *Condition of Bristol* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1845), 2.

[44] In a report published in 1845 H. T. De La Beche determined that the population of Bristol was 59,074 in 1831. Also see C. M. Law, "Some Notes on the Urban Population of England and Wales in the Eighteenth Century," *The Local Historian* 10 (1972): 23.

[45] "Cholera," *The Bristol Mercury*, August 11, 1849, 8.

The history of the city was also deeply marked by the legacy of Dissenters who established chapels in the mid-seventeenth century and later witnessed the evangelical revival in the eighteenth century.[46] George Whitefield, the celebrated preacher of the Great Awakening, was born in Bristol[47] and was highly esteemed by Müller.[48] John Wesley's New Room Chapel, the former center of his itinerant preaching empire, was located in the heart of the city. Charles Wesley's home was only a short distance from the New Room Chapel. The famous eighteenth-century evangelical writer, abolitionist, and philanthropist Hannah More was also associated with the city and the region. Consequently, the city still lived in the shadow of major personalities of evangelicalism that dated back to the eighteenth century, but none of these individuals were as closely identified with the city of Bristol as Müller and Craik became over the course of their careers.

Establishing the Scriptural Knowledge Institution

Although the Open Brethren did not officially endorse a professional pastorate,[49] Müller and Craik established themselves as pastors[50] over their congregations and ministry operations.[51]

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[46] Caston, *Independency in Bristol*, 25.

[47] Harry S. Stout, *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 2.

[48] A. T. Pierson, *George Müller of Bristol and His Witness to a Prayer Hearing God*, intro. James Wright (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., n.d.), 137; William Henry Harding, *The Life of George Müller: A Record of Faith Triumphant* (London: Oliphants, n.d.), 250-251; Müller, *The Preaching Tours*, 32-34.

[49] Müller's second wife, Susannah, makes the point clear that he was a pastor. Susannah Müller, "Brief Account of the Life and Labours of Mr. George Müller, given at a Ladies Union Prayer Meeting, Broadway Tabernacle, New York, February 1881," George Müller and Family, Letters and Papers, Muller House, 7 Cotham Park, Bristol, England. In the 1851 Census Müller designated himself as the Director of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad, and Minister of the Gospel in connection with Bethesda and Salem Chapels, Bristol." "George

In the first edition of his *Narrative*, Müller was described in the title as a "Minister of Christ."[52]

He and Craik were clearly seen as the pastors of the churches and the directors of the ministries

they oversaw.[53] On March 5, 1834, they founded the institution that was fundamental to

Müller's future fame. The Scriptural Knowledge Society for Home and Abroad, after 1840

known as the Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad (SKI), operated as the

coordinating institution for an educational, publishing, and missionary empire. Similar to A. H.

Francke's Halle institutions, SKI eventually obtained a global reach. Schools, missionaries,

tracts, books, and Bibles were all funded through SKI and aimed to take the gospel message to

the world. When Müller and Craik established SKI they articulated four goals for the institution.

First, through SKI they hoped to fund and establish schools—day-schools, Sunday schools, and

adult schools—for teaching biblical principles to students. Second, they wanted to place poor

children in the day-schools so they could learn about God and obtain the necessary knowledge

for life. Third, they intended SKI to provide inexpensive or free Christian literature, especially

Bibles, to the poor. Fourth, SKI would have a global impact by supporting missionaries and

missionary schools overseas. To accomplish his vision for SKI, Müller emphasized that he

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Müller (HO107/1953)," 1851 England Census (database online). Provo, UT: MyFamily.com, Inc., 2005. http://search.ancestry.co.uk/cgi-bin/sse.dll?=&rank=1&gsfn=George&gsln=Muller&r (accessed March 15, 2006).

[50] Historian David N. Hempton has pointed out that "most of the public representatives of premillenialism had deeply authoritarian views of society." David N. Hempton, "Evangelicalism and Eschatology," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 31, no. 2 (April 1980): 183.

[51] Even in 1874 Müller referred to his work at the Bristol churches as his "pastoral position" for which he did not collect, like Anglican clergy, "fees for burials, baptisms, marriages, or any thing [*sic*] else." Müller, *A Narrative, Fifth Part* (1874), 605.

[52] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 97-98. He also indicated that he was a "Dissenting Minister" in the 1861 census. Griffths, "George Müller's Family," 1.

[53] Groves, *George Müller and His Successors*, 19.

relied on God alone through prayer to meet the financial needs, although SKI used a variety of fundraising techniques.[54] Ultimately, the orphanage would be organized in connection with SKI and Müller hoped, at least when he first established the work, to fund the orphanage through endowments and subscribers.[55]

As SKI added the work of the orphanage along with its educational and publishing ventures, it eventually grew to command the bulk of Müller's time and energy.[56] Neil Summerton asserts in his study of SKI that Müller and Craik disagreed in how SKI should operate and, ultimately, Müller took control of the enterprise in much the same way that he directed the Orphan Homes, as the sole director.[57] Although there was evidently tension, at times, between the two men in terms of their approach to leadership, they appear to have cast aside dissension in favor of cooperation as each was able to pursue his individual goals.[58]

"Craig-and-Muller-ites"

The early years for Müller and Craik were not without controversy as they established their local ministry in Bristol. The most defining moment, in terms of religious identification, came with the fracturing of their relationship with John Nelson Darby and the broader Plymouth

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[54] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 112-113. Early donors for SKI had their names publicly acknowledged in reports, see Ibid., 146-147.

[55] Ibid., 147.

[56] Groves, *George Müller and His Successors*, 20.

[57] Neil Summerton, "George Müller and the Financing of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution," in *The Growth of the Brethren Movement: National and International Experiences, Essays in Honour of Harold H. Rowdon*, ed. Neil T. R. Dickson and Tim Grass (Milton Keynes, U.K.: Paternoster, 2006), 61.

[58] Craik, in fact, was a staunch defender of Müller's reputation against critics. Henry Craik to Thomas Chalmers, June 30, 1833, CHA4.202.73, Special Collections, New College, University of Edinburgh, Scotland.

Brethren community. The controversy created a permanent division among the Brethren.[59] The

conflict was based on the end times teaching[60] of Benjamin W. Newton, a leading Brethren

minister in Plymouth, England.[61] Müller and Craik found themselves caught in the middle of the

commotion when they allowed members from Newton's Ebrington Street congregation to attend

Bethesda without censure. This enraged Darby who believed that those who had been affiliated

with Newton should be cut off from the community and barred, in particular, from receiving

communion.[62] Müller and Craik found Darby's strictness stifling and refused to obey his

[59] *The Church Advocate* in Dublin, Ireland, explained that the root of the split that
resulted in the development of the Darbyites, Mullerites, and Newtonites was based, "upon the
interpretation of the prophetic Scriptures. Both [Darby and Newton] were Pre-Millenarians, and
the point in dispute was purely speculative and of no practical importance." "The Origin of
Plymouthism," *The Church Advocate* 516 (September 1, 1880): 234.

[60] J. S. Teulon claims that the split was due to Newton's assuming a position of
leadership marred by "clericalism" and contrary to the open ministry of the Brethern. Teulon,
The History and Teaching of the Plymouth Brethren, 16. Newton also put forth ideas that Jesus
Christ was marred by sin thanks to his association with human beings. This also provoked
Darby and the Brethren and resulted in Newton being labeled a heretic. For a further accounts
see Harold H. Rowdon, "A Nineteenth-Century Nestorius," *Vox Evangelica* 1 (1962): 60-75;
Jonathan Mark Yeager, "The Roots of Open Brethren Ecclesiology: A Discussion of the Nature
of the Church Compared to the Ecclesiology of the Darbyite Brethren, 1825-1848 (Th.M. thesis,
Regent College, 2006), 34-42.

[61] Newton put forward the idea, in opposition to Darby, that the rapture or removal of the
Church would not occur until after the appearance of the Antichrist and a period of time called
the Great Tribulation. Darby held that the rapture or secret removal of the Church would occur
before the Antichrist appeared and the Great Tribulation began. Groves, *Conversations*, 144.
The literature on the split between Darby and Müller is biased by loyalty to either the Open or
Exclusive Brethren. For examples beyond E. K. Groves see W. Trotter, *The Whole Case of
Plymouth and Bethesda* (London: Gospel Book Depot, n.d.); *The Origin of (so called) Open-
Brethrenism* (Kingston-on-Thames: Stow Hill Bible and Tract Depot, n.d.); Napoleon Noel, *The
History of the Brethren, Volume 1*, ed. William F. Knapp (Denver, CO: W. F. Knapp, 1936),
216-226.

[62] Robert H. Baylis, *My People: The Story of Those Christians Sometimes Called
Plymouth Brethren* (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1995), 44-49.

directive.[63] Ultimately, they too would judge Newton's teaching as unsound,[64] but the split

between the Darbyite Brethren and the Bristol Brethren fostered a bitter legacy.[65] Müller and

Craik, consequently, assumed leadership of their brand of Brethrenism that became widely

referred to as the Open Brethren, while Darby led those known as the Exclusive Brethren.[66]

They appear to have relied almost solely on their own judgment in matters of leadership, the

exception being Robert Chapman of Barnstaple whom Müller greatly revered as a friend,

financial supporter, and confidant.[67]

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[63] Craik and Müller refused to judge those who had joined them from Newton's assembly. Their response is very similar to the German Pietist view of aiming for love over condemnation. This refusal to judge another Christian was something that Müller experienced in his own relationship with Professor Tholuck in Halle. Others, however, saw in their openness the direct influence of Anthony N. Groves. Peter Mearns, *Christian Truth Viewed in Relation to Plymouthism* (Edinburgh: William Oliphant & Company, 1874), 21-24.

[64] Groves, *Conversations*, 152.

[65] Harold H. Rowdon, *The Origins of the Brethren* (London: Pickering & Inglis, Ltd., 1967), 258-263.

[66] Müller did indicate in a letter written in 1883 that Darby had attempted to speak with him, but the wound was too deep and Müller's time too precious for reconciliation. Müller wrote, "In July 1849 Mr. Darby came to me to the New Orphan House No1 1 [*sic*] on Ashley Down, Bristol, and said: 'As you have judged Newton's tracts, there is no longer any reason, why we should be separated.' My reply was, 'I have this moment only ten minutes time, having an important engagement before me, and as you have acted so wickedly in this matter, I cannot <u>now</u> enter upon it, as I have no time.' I have never seen him since." Letter from G. Müller to ?, April 30, 1883, Box 9, File 23, The Christian Brethren Archive, The John Rylands University Library, The University of Manchester, England. Edward K. Groves records a slightly different statement by Müller that ends with the following response to Darby, "'I have only ten minutes now free, having an engagement at one o'clock, and therefore I cannot *now* enter on this subject; for you have acted so wickedly in this whole affair, that many things have to be looked into before we could really be united again.' On this Mr. Darby rose and left and thus ended their last interview." Groves, *Conversations*, 152-153.

[67] Bennet, *Robert Cleaver Chapman*, 49-52. Robert Cleaver Chapman (1803-1902) became a leader of the Brethren. Son of a wealthy merchant, Chapman was a solicitor in London who had an evangelical conversion experience in 1823. He later took a pastor call in 1832 and moved to Barnstaple in Devonshire where by the end of 1832 he knew Müller and J. N. Darby.

The Open Brethren, or Brethren as they preferred, over whom Müller and Craik came to exercise influence were not completely understood or appreciated by the broader British public, especially those affiliated with the Church of England.[68] One of the earliest critiques of Müller and Craik's work in Bristol appeared in 1840 in *The British Critic and Quarterly Theological Review* edited John Henry Newman, the famous leader of the Oxford Movement.[69] The unnamed author of the article took aim at the popular religious leaders whose names were connected with church buildings and sectarian movements, particularly among evangelicals in the United States and Great Britain. The article bemoans "religion becoming more and more a matter of popular names, preachers, and influential persons."[70] The author goes on to state,

> But amongst other dissenters there is scarcely a meeting-house which is not generally styled Mr. Such-a-one's chapel, nor does the individual referred to usually decline this proffered homage. In one instance, two heads amicably divide the honours:—An

It appears that he came to know the early Brethren through another friend William Hake. Hake first introduced Müller to Mary Groves in 1830. Chapman exercised influence with Müller and his successor James Wright; Chapman was a vocal supporter of the orphan work. Harold H. Rowdon, "Chapman, Robert (Cleaver)," in *Dictionary of Evangelical Biography 1730-1860, Volume 1*, ed. Donald M. Lewis (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), 214-215. Frank Holmes, *Brother Indeed: The Life of Robert Cleaver Chapman "Barnstaple Patriarch"* (London: Victory Press, 1956), 44-45.

[68] The early Brethren presented an identification condundrum for many observers. The 1838 report on births or baptisms, deaths, and marriages for England and Wales listed Müller and Craik as being part of the "Three Denominations"—Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists. Müller and Craik were listed as the ministers of Gideon and Bethesda Chapels but identification with the Three Denominations was qualified with the statement "no particular denomination." *Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the State, Custody, and Authenticity of Registers or Records of Births or Baptisms, Deaths or Burials, and Marriages, in England and Wales, Other Than the Parochial Registers* (London: W. Clowes and Sons, 1838), 8-9, 52.

[69] John Henry Newman, the famed leader of the Tractarian or Oxford Movement, was the editor of the *British Critic* from 1838 through summer of 1841. Sheridan Gilley, *Newman and His Age* (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1990), 177, 212.

[70] "Article III: Religious State of the Manufacturing Poor," *The British Critic and Quarterly Theological Review* 28, no. 56 (October 1840): 345.

insignificant nest of fanatics, which is developed from a binomial root, rejoices in the euphonious compound appellation of Craig-and-Muller-ites.[71]

Bristol's "insignificant nest of fanatics" as the *British Critic* labeled those under the leadership of Müller and Craik were charged as possessing one of the worst characteristics associated with popular dissenting piety, having the names of both of their leaders define their peculiar practice of Christianity.

The *British Critic*, however, was not the only one to the notice odd name given to those attracted to the preaching of the German émigré and the Scotsman. Mary E. Elton, the seventh daughter of Sir Charles Elton of Clevedon Court,[72] in a letter to her younger sister, Jane Octavia Elton, dated April 1840 comments on the state of religion in Bristol when she wrote,

> Houses are springing up very fast [around Bristol], but I think the finest of the new buildings is the Irvinite chapel, on St. Augustine's Parade. The Craig and Mullerites seem very plentiful in Bristol, and resemble the Plymouth Brethren in their manners and customs; but the name is quite a *quiz* upon Dissent: you know the Tauntons belong to this sect.[73]

The "quiz," for Elton, was trying to figure where to place these oddly labeled Dissenters in the

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[71] Ibid.

[72] Sir Charles Abraham Elton (1778-1853), Sixth Baronet of Elton, was a classicist, historian, poet and brother-in-law of Henry Hallam the noted nineteenth-century historian. Besides his translations of classical literature, Elton is noted for being a patron of the arts, in particular Alfred, Lord Tennyson and William Thackeray. "Obituary—Sir Charles Abraham Elton, Bart.," *The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Review* 40, New Series (July 1853): 88-89.

[73] Mary E. Elton to Jane O. Elton, 22 April 1840, in *A Few Years of the Life of Mary Elizabeth Elton, From Letters of Her Own and of Those Whom She Loved, with Poems and Illustrations*, ed. Arthur Hallam Elton (Clevedon Court, U.K.: n.p., 1877). The Tauntons were, according to Elton, a member of one of Müller's Bristol congregations; however, the church membership book that would confirm the family's association with Müller has been misplaced although the record is still, most likely, in the possession of the Müller Foundation.

context of popular evangelical religion.[74] Although the name denoting the Brethren in Bristol was perplexing for Elton, she does not give any indication that she knows of any distinctive practices that would separate them from the Plymouth Brethren.[75] However, she did note that within the context of Bristol they attracted a significant number of followers, including family friends.[76]

The name "Müllerites" was also employed to describe the Bristol Brethren. In 1847, *The Belfast News-Letter* reported "At Ashley Down, near Bristol, a large asylum is being erected at a cost of £10,000 for a sect known as Mullerites."[77] Even as the New Orphan Houses on Ashley

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[74] Elton displayed a sophistication in her approach to religion and revealed in a letter from March 27, 1838, that she was reading some of the the Oxford Tracts and a book by one of the Tractarians who would later convert to the Roman Catholic Church, William Dodsworth. However, she recognized the limits of the Tractarian critique of the Church of England when she wrote, "There seems now an influence required to restore the visible Church to its primitive authority, just as the influence of the Methodists, and of zealous and pious men, was required and blest to arouse the Church from sloth and from worldliness in the last century. *Their* word was with power and with the Holy Spirit; but as in many things they erred, and as in restoring the neglected truth of Salvation by Faith they too much dreaded and avoided the doctrines of obedience and good works, so also the apostolical party [Tractarians] may err—so also in flying from dissent *they* may approach the superstitions of Romanism." Mary E. Elton to Anne Sturges Bourne, March 27, 1838, in *A Few Years*.

[75] The number of ministers who seceded from the Church of England in the early decades of the nineteenth century due to theological reasons created a confusing theological milieu for those unfamiliar with the distinctive practice and thought of each group. For further discussion of this situation see Harold H. Rowdon, "Secession From the Established Church in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Vox Evangelica* 3 (1964): 76-88.

[76] Timothy C. F. Stunt observed that many of the early leaders of the Brethren were aristocrats or enjoyed university educations and were part of the professional classes. The Open Brethren, after the split with Darby in 1848 and especially after the Revival of 1859-1862, would later be identified as working class. Timothy C. F. Stunt, "Elitist Leadership and Congregational Participation Among Early Plymouth Brethren," in *Elite and Popular Religion*, ed. Kate Cooper and Jeremy Gregory (Woodbridge, U.K.: The Boydell Press, 2006), 327-336.

Down attracted more attention from the British press, derogatory labels continued to be used in

the press. The *Illustrated London News* reported in a similar manner to the Belfast newspaper

that,

> In the county of Somerset there has lately sprung up a new religious sect, known by the inconvenient and undeclinable [*sic*] name of Craik-and-Müllerites, whose prime article of belief is, the power of prayer. Whatever they require, these people simply demand it of God; and, as they allege, it is bestowed on them. The text, 'Ask, and it shall be given unto you,' they adopt in its literal sense, and with a result which is marvelous, if a tithe of what they assert can be accepted in their own literal spirit. The sect of the waiters on Providence is likely to spread, if they can establish their premises.[78]

The article focused on the literal manner in which the Bristol Brethren interpreted and used

prayer in everyday life. The article highlights how outsiders viewed Müller and Craik as leading

a Dissenting sect that could "spread" if they were able to convince others that their unique

approach worked in everyday life. In general, the criticism of Müller and Craik reflected the

broad criticism of Dissent that was often defined by the names of leaders who were envisioned as

overemphasizing an aspect of the Bible in their preaching and practice.[79]

The most biting critique of the "Müllerites" as a disingenuous Dissenting sect was

launched by an intimate of their congregation. Charles Alfred Hooper[80] openly challenged

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[77] "Costly Mullerite Asylum," *The Belfast News-Letter* (Tuesday, September 28, 1847): n. p. This same article is also in the *The Northern Star* see "Miscellanies," *The Northern Star* (October 9, 1847): 3.

[78] "New Orphan House, Ashley Down," *The Illustrated London News*, October 12, 1850, 295.

[79] Christians who viewed Müller's idea of open communion as suspect also attacked him publicly. R. Dillon, "George Muller and Open Communion," *The British Millennial Harbinger, Devoted to the Spread of Primitive Christianity* 14 (London: Arthur Hall and Co., 1861): 188-190.

[80] According to a hand written note by Hooper inside this particular tract he was 22 when he publicly confronted Müller. Charles Alfred Hooper, *The "Müllerites," and the Orphan Asylum, Versus Charity, i.e. Love. Letters, Recently Sent to the Pastor, Mr. George Müller, and to the Deacons of the "Gathering," Meeting at Bethesda and Salem Chapels, Bristol: Together*

Müller's leadership over the issue of employing church members in the construction of the New Orphan House.[81] Hooper claimed that Müller did not ask any of the craftsmen in the church to work on the new building, but instead turned to outside workers because the men under his pastoral leadership "were not men of capital" and had not built such a large building before.[82] Hooper then pointed out that Müller taught the churchgoers not to become men of capital because they were expected to follow Müller's example and lay-up treasures in heaven. Hooper's point was that Müller was not living out his own creed to show love to the brethren first—specifically the congregants of Bethesda.[83] Hooper highlighted tensions that erupted over Müller's shrewd business skills, but also revealed a divide between what Müller said, did, and how he was perceived.[84] Ultimately, Hooper's account of the struggle exposed the unchallenged leadership Müller possessed as leader among the Brethren in Bristol.[85] Hooper's attack, though widely known in Bristol did not have a lasting impact on Müller's reputation,[86] but the tract did

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With a Statement of Facts, and Remarks, Shewing the Unscriptural and Uncharitable Character of their Determination Not to Allow the Tradesmen and Mechanics, who are Members of Their Church, to be Employed in the Structure of the Orphan Asylum, on Ashley Down (Bristol: Robert Joy, 1847), v.

[81] Ibid., 12-13.

[82] Ibid., 11.

[83] Ibid., 10.

[84] Müller's advice for operating charitable works was openly sought out by his fellow evangelicals. Samuel Hinds Wilkinson, *The Life of John Wilkinson: The Jewish Missionary* (London: Morgan & Scott Ltd., 1908), 204.

[85] Hooper, *The "Müllerites,"* 29-30.

[86] An advertisement appeared in the *Bristol Mercury* in November of 1847 that condemned Müllerites for "showing the unscriptural and uncharitable character of their determination not to allow the Tradesmen and Mechanics who are Members of their Church to

reveal that there were caustic divisions even in his churches that did not appear in the pages of his *Narrative* or the annual reports.[87]

The disparaging label "Müllerites" persisted well-beyond 1840s and 1850s. On April 3, 1861 *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post* reported that,

> Mr. Müller is the founder of a sect, confined we believe to Bristol, which goes by his name and whose leading principle is "A living faith in a living God," which is carried to such an extent by Mr. Müller himself, that he practically takes no thought of to-morrow; he leaves all to Providence, and although frequently, after consuming one meal, he knoweth not where the next is to come from—yet come it does with never failing certainty.[88]

The article that promoted Müller's orphanage as "an Institution which is without its equal in the kingdom," also struggled to place Müller into a theological context.[89] According to the article, Müller led a Dissenting sect that took seriously Jesus' teaching to not worry about tomorrow. The problem, even for Müller, was that such simplistic rhetoric masked the real burden of feeding, clothing, and educating small children who were solely dependent upon him for their support.

Managing Orphans

The desire to found the orphan homes in Bristol was born out of a need that was prevalent in the city. Cholera had taken a toll on the population and Müller felt compelled to respond. He, accordingly, brought his experience with Halle Pietism into the context of British

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be employed in the structure of the Orphan-Asylum, on Ashley-down." "The 'Müllerites' and the Orphan Asylum," *The Bristol Mercury* (November 20, 1847): 4.

[87] Written on the cover of Hooper's tract, held in the collections of Emory University, is the following: "Written at a time when I had not the Knowledge & experience I have had since— C. A. H. April, 1881." Ibid., i.

[88] "The Modern Miracle," *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post* (April 3, 1861): 6.

[89] Ibid.

philanthropy. The result was that Müller became a forerunner of later developments in British

social work.[90] Evangelical social thought in the early and mid-nineteenth century held that the

destitute, forlorn, and poor suffered in their predicament because of sin. Poverty, therefore, gave

Christians an opportunity to exercise charity in a laissez-faire and paternalistic manner.[91]

Individual evangelical social action was, consequently, usually limited to the local poor but

sometimes included the needy on a regional or national level.[92] Although he framed the entire

project as an apology for God's power, Müller desired to show the poor how God could work in

the most humble circumstances to meet everyday needs.[93] The enterprise was innovative

because Müller acted like a Halle Pietist not a British evangelical.[94]

The original objects of Müller's benevolence were young girls were who had lost both

parents due to death, regardless of their religious faith. The requirement was extraordinary in

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[90] In fact, directors of other orphanages in England visited Ashley Down to better grasp how to serve large numbers of orphans as their institutions grew. "London Orphan Asylum," *The Daily News* [London], February 24, 1859, 6. Harriet Ward, "The Charitable Relationship: Parents, Children and the Waifs and Strays Society" (Ph.D. diss., University of Bristol, 1990), 424.

[91] Gerald Parsons, "Social Control to Social Gospel: Victorian Christian Social Attitudes," in *Religion in Victorian Britain: Vol. II Controversies*, ed. Gerald Parsons (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 42-43.

[92] Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters: Vol. II, The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 636-639.

[93] Andrew Reed (1787-1862), a high-Calvinist Congregational minister, established a number of charities to help orphans, the poor, and the sick. Reed established the London Orphan Asylum in 1813, the East London Infant Orphans' Asylum in 1827, and the Asylum for Fatherless Children in 1844. He also established a savings bank for the London poor, two asylums for the mentally deficient, and the Royal Hospital for Incurables. Reed did all of this out of desire to express Christian charity to the poor and needy. Ibid., 639-640. Also see Ian J. Shaw, *High Calvinists in Action: Calvinism and the City of Manchester and London, c. 1810-1860* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 279-322.

[94] George Müller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller, Fourth Part*, 4th ed. (London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1886), 219-200.

166

that it was intended to discriminate between the truly destitute child who had no living parent

and those who had an irresponsible parent. Furthermore, he admitted to the homes only those

who were the offspring of a legal marriage.[95] The social respectability of the orphans, despite

their parentless state, was never to be questioned. The initial focus on young girls was based on

the belief that they were most vulnerable to abuse if left to fend for themselves as orphans.[96]

Application to the homes was made by adults, sometimes extended family or caring strangers,

who appealed to Müller for help. There was no admissions committee, and Müller himself, at

least in the first few decades of the work, was intimately involved in the admission of children to

the home.[97] The children who were admitted to the homes could be dismissed for bad behavior

or returned to their Parish Unions if they were too ill to be cared for adequately by the

orphanage.[98]

Besides renting a home on Wilson Street, the early operation took an enormous amount

of labor to organize daily life for the children, enlist workers, and attract orphans. Eventually

Müller would expand the work to include three homes on Wilson Street. When these rented

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[95] Dennis Parrack notes that other orphanages followed Müller on the point of requiring the children to be the legitimate offspring of a married couple because they wanted to discourage the notion that children from a promiscuous union could be abandoned and cared for by an evangelical orphanage. Dennis Stanley Parrack, "A Study of the Activities of Committed Nonconformists in the Areas of Street, Somerset and Bristol City during the 19th and early 20th Centuries and Their Impact on the Contemporary Social Environment" (M.Litt. thesis, University of Bristol, 1993), 119.

[96] Ibid., 32.

[97] Müller worked to ensure that vacancies were filled quickly. Letter from Geo. Müller to ? About Admitting a Girl to His Orphanage at Bristol, June 3, 1852, Ladd/4453, Special Collections, The University of Birmingham, England.

[98] George Müller, *Brief Narrative of Facts Relative to the Orphan Houses and the Other Objects of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad* (London: J. Nisbet, 1848), 65.

facilities failed to meet the needs of the children and neighbors had had enough of the growing operation, Müller purchased land to build a dormitory-style orphanage he named "The New Orphan-House," that was opened in 1849.[99] The expansion of the orphanage continued with the addition of four more massive homes added to the property, so that by 1870 there was a total of five homes each named New Orphan House followed by its number, from 1 to 5, in its order of construction—No. 1 (1849), No. 2 (1857), No. 3 (1862), No. 4. (1868), No.5 (1870).[100] Müller firmly identified his efforts with the work of Francke when he wrote on January 14, 1851, "he [Francke] spoke to my soul in 1826, and he is speaking to my soul now; and to his example I am greatly indebted for having been stirred up to about poor children in general, and about poor Orphans in particular."[101] After the completion of the Orphan Home No. 5 Müller could house 2,050 orphans and roughly matched the number of children that Francke's orphanage in Halle served.[102]

Müller also had a cadre of faithful workers who kept the organization functioning through their labor, sacrifice, and even, at times, their own financial support.[103] Müller's first wife Mary was the key individual in the management of the orphan homes and appears to have fully and completely devoted herself to the task of caring for the children. Müller's Prussian background manifested itself in his disciplined and orderly management style. He masterfully

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[99] Ibid., 23.

[100] Müller, *A Narrative* (1874), 42-45, 104.

[101] Müller, *A Narrative, Fourth Part* (1886), 220.

[102] Ibid.

[103] George Müller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller: First Part,* 9th ed. (London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1895), 248.

organized people, property, and his own time.[104] From his days as a university student, Müller

developed the habit of devoting long hours to work and study, often twelve to fourteen hours a

day, which was only interrupted in times of illness when his body could no longer continue the

pace.[105] After securing his position at the helm of Bristol's Brethren, establishing the orphanage,

and promoting the gospel overseas through SKI, Müller's time was very limited. Nevertheless,

he recorded in minute detail the ongoing challenge of running an orphanage by faith and prayer,

while managing to thank each donor personally.[106] Müller, his family,[107] and co-laborers

worked tirelessly to ensure that the project was successful.[108]

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[104] A lack of time, apparently, made him direct, focused, and by his own admission, irritable. Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 116.

[105] It does appear that the strain, especially in his early years, was wearisome for Müller. He did experience bouts of physical and mental exhaustion that one may equate in modern terminology to a "nervous breakdown."

[106] Besides his ongoing publishing work related to his *Narrative*, annual reports, and letters to donors, Müller also continued to manage the paperwork concerning the orphans. He personally wrote the record entries for the first 505 orphans. "Admission Book #2, Children admitted into the New Orphan House, No 1 Ashley Down, Bristol, since its opening on June 18, 1849," Scriptural Knowledge Institution Papers, Muller House, 7 Cotham Park, Bristol, England.

[107] Müller's task of managing church, orphan home, and the Scriptural Knowledge Institution resulted in his relying on others, including his daughter, to help manage his correspondence. "Lydia Müller to Miss Green, 24 February 1841," George Müller and Family, Letters and Papers, Muller House, 7 Cotham Park, Bristol, England.

[108] In letters exchanged by James Wright, then living in Hackney, and Müller in 1858-1859 the demands of the institution on Müller's time and energy becomes apparent in the lateness and terseness of Müller's letters. Müller's correspondence indicates that he had a very specific idea about what he wanted accomplished and how he expected those demands to be met. Arthur T. Pierson, *James of Wright of Bristol: A Memorial of a Fragrant Life* (London: James Bisbet & Co., 1906), 52-59.

The Life of an Orphan

The everyday life of orphans within the homes appears to have been disciplined and comfortable, though not luxurious. In the original rented homes on Wilson Street there was a regular process of admitting children, caring for them, educating them, and trying to ensure that they had secured a position to start their adult lives. Admittance and dismissal records from the opening of the orphan homes indicated that the religious beliefs of the children were extremely important.[109] When a child was dismissed or died, comments about their being "a believer" in Christ, if they were thought to be so, were included.[110] In 1855 the anonymous author of *Faith in God as to Temporal Things: An Account of the Rise and Progress of the New Orphan House, Ashley Down, Bristol*, recorded that the three hundred children living within the walls of the first new orphan home were on a regular schedule that included being awakened at 6:00 a.m. to get ready for the day. At 7:00 a.m. the children spent thirty minutes in their schoolroom followed by thirty minutes of play either in the home or outside. At 8:00 a.m. the children were called to the

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[109] Müller wrestled over the issue of infant baptism and moved from noting that a child had been "christened" to the using the term "sprinkled." Müller later used the term "christened," but he qualified the term with "so called" in parenthesis following the word. Later on in the admission book he used the term "baptized" interspersed with "christened" but followed both terms with "so called" or "as it is called." Müller after his own acceptance of believer's baptism he found it difficult to accept infant baptism as conducted by the Church of England. "Admission Book #1 Wilson Street, April 11, 1836," Scriptural Knowledge Institution Papers, Muller House, 7 Cotham Park, Bristol, England. Church historian Tim Grass notes that at this time Müller and Craik were debating the believer's baptism requirement that they had instituted for participation at Bethesda Chapel. Ultimately, in 1837, Müller and Craik decided against requiring believer's baptism and embraced a broader view of Christian unity based on acceptance by Christ. Tim Grass, *Gathering to His Name: The Story of Open Brethren in Britain and Ireland*, foreword by David Bebbington (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), 44-45.

[110] "Dismissal Book for Early Orphans on Wilson Street," Scriptural Knowledge Institution Papers, Muller House, 7 Cotham Park, Bristol, England.

breakfast table by the ringing of a bell. The sexually-segregated breakfast consisted of "oatmeal porridge, with milk."[111] The author goes on the explain that,

> After a short interval of play, school opens for the boys at half-past nine, and for the girls at ten o'clock. The course of instruction includes READING, SPELLING, WRITING, ARITHMETIC, GRAMMAR, GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY, and for the girls SEWING, and the boys KNITTING. The system of education followed, very closely resembles that practised in the British Schools, and usually called the MONITORIAL. The Teachers are chiefly Trained Teachers.[112]

School time was followed by a half hour of play with toys prior to lunch at 1:00 p.m. The meal varied daily between mutton, beef, rice, and soup. Play time followed lunch until the children returned to their classrooms at 2:30 p.m. where they remained until 4:30 p.m.   Again a half hour of play was permitted prior to their evening meal that consisted of "bread and butter, or treacle, and milk and water."[113] The rest of the evening was spent doing a variety of tasks from religious instruction to gardening until bedtime at 9:00 p.m. In a letter to James Wright, his future son-in-law and eventual successor, Müller also indicated that "family prayer" was conducted at 8:30 in the morning and 5:30 in the afternoon, which consisted of ten to fifteen minutes of a devotional exercise led by one of the adult house leaders.[114] The schedule remained fixed throughout the week with the exception of Sundays when the children were marched through the streets of Bristol to Bethesda Chapel to attend church services.

The Orphan Homes became a massive enterprise of caring for over 2,000 children by the end of the nineteenth century. Although there were challenges, Müller's care of the children was

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[111]*Faith in God as to Temporal Things: An Account of the Rise and Progress of the New Orphan House, Ashley Down, Bristol* (London: Houlston & Stoneman, 1855), x.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Ibid., xi.

[114] Pierson, *James of Wright of Bristol*, 53.

quite remarkable for the time.[115] The girls were trained mainly for domestic service, while the

boys were apprenticed out to a trade.[116] They were provided with a substantial amount of

clothing and even a Bible before they left the orphanage.[117] The children were well educated for

their perceived social class and taught various domestic and gardening skills, along with

religious instruction. Although the schedule was rigorous by contemporary standards, the orphan

homes conducted under Müller's leadership were one of the most progressive social institutions

in Great Britain during the nineteenth century.[118] Despite his success at managing the orphan

homes, what brought Müller acclaim was how he funded his philanthropic work.

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[115] *The Times* reported an outbreak of typhoid fever at Ashley Down in 1875 due to "defective sanitary arrangements" and "a sad want of those preventive measures which are now so widely known, not only at our hospitals and in large public buildings, but in many private dwellings. . . . The medical officer, with the approbation of the Bristol sanitary authority, is visiting the Asylum every morning, to superintend the use of disinfectants." "Typhoid Fever," *The Times*, July 30, 1875, 10.

[116] Müller wrote that he often prayed longer to find suitable placements for the children than for the monetary needs of the orphanage. He remarked in 1848, "It is more difficult to be obtained than money." Müller, *Brief Narrative of Facts Relative* (1848), 65.

[117] An area of further research, especially important to those engaged in social history, would be a longitudinal study of the lives of the orphans who stayed in the homes. The Müller Foundation in Bristol possesses a massive archive of records related to each child, dating from the first girls in 1836, to be received into the homes. These important historical records could give insight into the ultimate future of orphans in nineteenth and twentieth century Britain.

[118] This dissertation does not study in detail the correlation between Francke's method and Müller's method of caring for orphan children. However, future research on this point needs to be conducted to more fully assess the impact of Pietism on childcare in Great Britain in the nineteenth century. For an article analyzing Francke's contribution see, Marcia J. Bunge, "Education and the Child in Eighteenth-Century German Pietism: Perspectives from the Work of A. H. Francke," in *The Child in Christian Thought*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 247-278.

"Mr. Muller Has Never Asked Anyone for a Penny"

Müller's rise to acclaim in Victorian England and among evangelicals is a curious

phenomenon given his apparent lack of preaching ability. His inability to sway crowds with the

emotional pleas and dramatic presentations was out of step with both the greatest politicians of

the period, such as William Gladstone, and other popular preachers.[119] The deficit in his

preaching was even apparent to Müller, but it was not his preaching that would establish his

reputation. Müller claimed, and the idea was widely believed, that he never asked anyone for a

penny.[120] Furthermore, it was widely assumed that there was no regular financial support

provided by subscriptions or other regular donations.[121] In the first report depicting the financial

transactions of the new institution Müller explained,

> . . . there are some Subscribers, and even some who give considerably, yet I would state,
> for the Lord's glory, that if they were twenty times as many, I would desire that my eyes
> may not be directed to them, but to the Lord alone; I would desire to take the payment of

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[119] Eugenio F. Biagini, *Gladstone* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 2000), 63.

[120] Müller claimed on January 10, 1897, "There is none, in this whole city [Bristol], who can say that I ever asked them for a penny; there is none, in the whole of England, who can say that I ever asked them for a penny; there is none under heaven, in the whole wide world, who can say that I ever asked them for a penny. To God, and to God alone, I went; and I did this because I knew ever since my conversion that one of the greatest necessities for the Church of God at large was an increase of faith. Therefore, I determined to dedicate my whole life to this one great lesson, for the Church of God to learn, and the world at large to learn: real, true, lasting dependence on God." Of course, the early hopes for an endowment, subscribers, and the use of collectors were all ignored as he developed the legend that all needs were met simply through answered prayer. George Müller, *Sermons and Addresses* (Bristol: W. F. Mack & Co., n.d.), 214.

[121] Early in SKI's development, under which the orphanage operated, regular subscribers and account collectors were used. Trade was also important for funding the work and included the selling of books, reports, goods donated for the benefit of the orphans. Summerton, "George Müller and the Financing of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution," 53-54.

every subscription as a donation out of His hands. And, on the other side, if there were no Subscribers at all, yet the Lord, who heareth prayer, is rich to give according to our need. A widow's mite 10*s* 4*d*, Nov. 14th, 4*s*, four ducks.[122]

Similar to other charities of the period, Müller included in this first report a "Donations and Subscriptions" list of donors by name, which included both himself and Craik as supporters.[123] Therefore, the claim that the orphanage, from the moment of operation, never openly solicited support was not accurate. As the orphan homes grew in size the reports developed from about ten pages in length to over one hundred pages. The reports no longer explicitly recognized subscribers or donors, but instead focused on how God continued to meet the needs of the orphans through ordinary people giving trifling sums.[124]

The widespread financial support of the orphanage by donors from around the world attracted as much attention as Müller's claim for the entire project relying on answered prayer.[125] After the early practice of soliciting subscriptions was abandoned, many supporters continued to act as subscribers in their regular giving.[126] In fact, many of the donors were, as *The Bristol*

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[122] George Müller, *Further Account of the Orphan House, for Female Orphans Above Seven Years of Age; and Opening of the Infant Orphan House, for Destitute Male and Female Orphans under Seven Years of Age* (Bristol: Fuller, 1836), 3.

[123] In the "Weekly Subscriptions" column were included Henry Craik who gave 2s, 6d to the new project and Müller who gave the sum of £10, 16s. Ibid., 5, 7.

[124] Müller argued against the reports and *Narratives* as solicitation devices. He asserted, "If they produce results, which Reports generally do not, I can only ascribe it to the Lord." Müller, *A Narrative, Fourth Part* (1886), 377.

[125] "Muller's Success," *The Christian Pioneer* 29 (London: Simpkin, Marshall, & Co., 1875): 82.

[126] Müller, *A Narrative, Fourth Part* (1886), 115.

Mercury labeled them, "The Munificent Poor!"[127] For example, one servant woman gave a guinea on an annual basis to Müller for the support the orphans. However, when an unexpected legacy was left to her from a relative she gave her entire life savings of £200 to Müller. The regular receipt of small sums from a few pence to a pound or a guinea a year was critical for Müller's success,[128] while larger gifts arrived from those who had financial means.[129]

A noteworthy example of a benefactor of financial means was Major-General S. G. Wheeler, former Commanding Officer of the 34th Regiment, Native Infantry, in Barrackpore, India, at the time of the Revolution of 1857 (referred to by British historians as the Sepoy Rebellion). Wheeler, a member of Church of England, was a devout evangelical.[130] In his mid-twenties, after a near-death illness and the loss of his entire savings due to a failed investment, Wheeler decided to commit himself wholeheartedly to the Christian faith. He embraced an ascetic life of piety that freed him to give away the bulk of his income for philanthropic and missionary purposes. *The Missionary Herald* reported, "we believe his warmest sympathies were felt for men like George Muller, of Bristol, and for institutions like his remarkable orphanage. Colonel Wheeler's largest and most liberal donations were given to that orphanage,

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[127] "The Munificent Poor!" *The Bristol Mercury*, June 23, 1855, 8.

[128] "Mr. Muller's Wonderful Achievements at Bristol," *Leeds Mercury*, September 15, 1860, 11.

[129] On occasion enormous sums of £3,000 and £4,000 were given by donors that Müller did not name and were divided according to the needs he dictated—the building fund, SKI, and the orphans. Müller, *A Narrative, Fourth Part* (1886), 371-372.

[130] In a letter dated April 15, 1857, Wheeler admitted preaching the Gospel to his native troops and encouraging them to accept Jesus as savior. J. Johnston Walsh, *A Memorial of the Futtehgurh Mission and Her Martyred Missionaries with Some Remarks on the Mutiny in India* (Philadelphia: Joseph M. Wilson, 1859), 43.

and missionary efforts sustained on similar principles."[131] Within India some evangelicals were

aware of Wheeler's financial generosity, while in the context of Müller's *Narrative* he was one

of the nameless donors from all parts of the world who supported the orphans. Wheeler was

deeply impressed by Müller, and after his retirement from the Bengal army he established an

orphanage in Chitoura to care for Indian children orphaned by the violence of 1857-1858.[132]

Another important donor who supported the orphan homes was a fellow Prussian émigré

to Bristol, Conrad William Finzel who had made his fortune refining sugar. Although the exact

details of his early relationship with Müller remain unclear, Finzel was regarded locally in

Bristol as one of Müller's primary contributors.[133] In 1861 George Pryce wrote in his tome *A

Popular History of Bristol* that the,

> "miracle" of the Orphan House on Ashley Hill, which has grown with the growth of the
> Refinery at Counterslip, and with which the public have so far associated it (and we
> suspect not incorrectly), that they always classed Conrad Finzel amongst the chief,
> though anonymous, supporters of that marvelous institution near our city, which is, if
> possible, rather more a wonder to the rest of England, than even to ourselves. The
> amount of Mr. Finzel's liberality to that Asylum, which now shelters, clothes, and
> educates 672 children deprived of father and mother, and is being rapidly prepared to
> accommodate 450 more, so that when all is ready there will be room for 1150 orphans in

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[131] "India: Major-General S. G. Wheeler," *The Missionary Herald* 57 (September 1865): 603.

[132] After Wheeler's death on May 8, 1865, the orphanage was moved to Agra and managed by Rev. J. Gregson, a Baptist missionary. Ibid., 602.

[133] Finzel was involved in the orphan work from the first year of its existence. According to the first report for the orphan homes, Conrad W. Finzel along with John Chapman and J. H. Hale verified the accuracy of the financial records for the institution. John Chapman was, most likely, the same Mr. Chapman, a member of the Church of England, who originally encouraged Craik to come preach in Bristol. Müller, *Further Account of the Orphan House,* 4. Tayler, *Passages From the Diary and Letters of Henry Craik*, 143-144. Finzel continued to validate the financial records of SKI and the orphanage, see Müller, *Brief Narrative of Facts Relative to the Orphan Houses* (1848), 79. Even Finzel's obituary noted that, "his ever open purse, has contributed to maintain in their wondrous efficiency those marvels of our neightbourhood, the Orphan Asylums at Ashley." "The Late Conrad W. Finzel, Esq.," *The Bristol Mercury*, October 29, 1859, 4.

the establishment—is, of course, conjectural; yet we have as good reason to believe, as any one under the circumstances can have, that of late years, his contribution, in one form or another, to this charity alone, has been little, if anything, short of £10,000 per annum.[134]

The significant giving by Finzel resulted in Müller's being able to acquire the necessary surplus of funds to build the orphan house.[135] Finzel apparently started giving one third of his annual income to charity after a fire destroyed his sugar refinery in 1846.[136] He viewed the fire and interruption to his business as an affliction from God to get him focused on doing his duty to humanity.[137] Finzel supposedly remarked in the aftermath of events, "I will give one-third of my gains for the future. I have given them, and God has gone on blessing me."[138] Finzel, however, did more than give significant sums to support the orphans; he also financially backed

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[134] George Pryce, *A Popular History of Bristol, Antiquarian, Topographical, and Descriptive, form the Earliest Period to the Present Time, With Biographical Notices of Eminent Natives and Residents, Impartially Written* (Bristol: W. Mack, 1861), 609.

[135] Pryce maintained that there were additional wealthy benefactors who gave almost as generously as Finzel. Pryce stated that one of these local benefactors was "a Bristol gentleman belonging to a leading family of Friends, and yet actively and largely connected with trade." Ibid.

[136] H. R. Fox Bourne, *English Merchants: Memoirs in Illustration of the Progress of British Commerce, Vol. II* (London: Richard Bentley, 1866), 21.

[137] Pryce remarked on this point, "Indeed, we believe, that his getting and the giving were so ordered, that the Orphan House became in his mental calculation a partner in the profits of the Sugarhouse; and it is possible it might be found, if the means of testing it were at hand, that the deceased, by a secret and understood rule with himself, had kept no more than he gave away, sharing his success, so to speak, with the divine Giver who conferred it." Pryce, *A Popular History*, 609-610.

[138] Ibid., 611.

Müller and Craik's pastoral ministry. In June of 1857 Finzel purchased Bethesda Chapel, where Müller and Craik served as pastors, and gave the property to the congregation.[139]

In addition to support offered through wealthy businessmen and more humble donors, Müller also brought his expansion plans before the public in Bristol. Over the course of a week, he held three meetings in late June of 1855 to discuss how God had provided the means to build the first purpose-built orphan home. Müller then went on to discuss a proposal to build two more large homes to house 700 more orphans. According to the *Newcastle Courant*, Müller believed that he should increase the size of the institution, because he was able to meet the needs of the 300 orphans under his care, support of missionary work, and maintain his publishing work.[140] Müller made the local religious community and the citizens of Bristol privy to his goals and the financial challenges he faced.

Another aspect of the fundraising component was that Müller was also extremely conscientious about faithfully recording and acknowledging all financial matters. Neil Summerton has suggested that this was due, in part, to his stealing money from friends and family as a youth that resulted in a compulsive desire to account for each penny received.[141] One of the things that struck nineteenth-century readers of the *Narrative* was Müller's wide range of donors from those who gave little to those who gave thousands of pounds.[142] He made sure that

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[139] John Latimer, *The Annals of Bristol in the Nineteenth Century* (Bristol: W. & F. Morgan, 1887), 223.

[140] "Results of Faith and Prayer," *Newcastle Courant*, June 29, 1855, 2.

[141] Summerton, "George Müller and the Financing of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution," 62.

[142] Müller wrote personal letters to donors to thank them for their support. For example, in letter dated July 7, 1852, Müller wrote from 21 Paul Street, Kingsdown, Bristol, "My dear

those individuals who had taken the time to give were, in fact, thanked for the donation that they made on behalf of the orphans, SKI, or himself.[143] Sometimes letters included additional advice or provided a detailed account about the sale of goods for the orphans.[144] Later Müller used his staff to track donations on printed receipts with an apologetic "P.S." at the bottom of the receipt that read: "I am obliged to resort to this mode of acknowledging the receipt of donations, on account of the multiplicity of my engagements. Each receipt, however, is signed with my own hand."[145] The obligation Müller felt to personally acknowledge each gift is also traced in the *Narrative* and the annual reports that scrupulously detail items that were given to assist the work. Besides letters and notices in his annual reports, he also, on occasion, acknowledged gifts through newspaper advertisements.[146] The vast qualities of material goods that were donated included everything from jewelry to clothing. The quality and condition of many of these goods must be questioned. How Müller dealt with the unserviceable items is unclear. Most of the

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Madam, I thank you for the Sovereign with which you have Kindly intrusted [sic] me for the benefit of the 300 Orphans under my care. May God richly recompense you for it! I am, My dear Madam, Yours gratefully, George Müller." George Muller, Letter to [?]. Kingsdown, Bristol, Engl. 1852 July 7. University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City, Iowa.

[143] This is a practice Müller maintained to the end of his life. George Müller to James C. Beasley, February 19, 1898, James Marshall and Marie-Louise Osborn Collection, Osborn Manuscript File 10617, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

[144] Letter from Geo. Muller to his Brother About a Gift of Silver Plate to the Bristol Orphanage, August 17, 1854, LAdd/4883, Special Collections, The University of Birmingham, England.

[145] "The receipt of £2, from Mr. Prosser, 29 August 1865," George Müller and Family, Letters and Papers, Muller House, 7 Cotham Park, Bristol, England.

[146] The most curious of these acknowledgements appeared on the front page of *The Times* that read, "Mr. Muller gratefully ACKNOWLEDGES the RECEIPT of a REGISTERED PARCEL from Thankoffering." "Mr. Muller [Advertisement]," *The Times*, July 3, 1874, 1.

donated items were sold in a thrift shop, but other items that were too worn to be sold and must have been recycled in some other way.[147]

Outside of Bristol support flowed in from all parts of the world. As news of Müller's method of supporting orphans by prayer and faith traveled throughout the global evangelical network, support in small and large donations arrived. A common perception of the work was developed and became thoroughly entrenched in the legend surrounding his success. *The Friend of Calcutta* highlighted the common perception in an article that stated, "Mr. Muller has never asked anyone for a penny, and he attributes the good work he has accomplished as well as the provision of the means for carrying it out entirely to the power of prayer."[148] There were, however, other methods of support that were not emphasized by Müller. Some, for example, took it upon themselves to solicit support on his behalf.[149] An excellent example of this fundraising tactic was conducted by George Brand, an elder in the Free Church of Scotland. Brand, by profession a solicitor, was one of the first men to promote Müller's orphan work in

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[147] The Bazaar of the Orphan House on Horfield Road in Bristol was the thrift shop established to sell donated items. *Fraser's Magazine* reported that "It is one of the most heterogeneous collections of articles, perhaps, ever brought together. Every conceivable kind of fancy work, of wearing apparel, and of trinkets is ranged in glass cases, whilst second-hand clothing, and utensils of all kinds, meet the eye in the different corners." Poor women who were members of Müller's congregation were also provided with materials Müller purchased so that they could make items to sell in the thrift shop. The poor women manufactured everything from shirts and dresses to baby clothing. "The New Orphan House at Ashley Down, Bristol," *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* (September 1852): 343, 345.

[148] "The Late Mr. George Muller," *The Friend of India* [Calcutta, India] 15 (Thursday, April 14, 1898): 22.

[149] Some placed collection boxes in different towns and cities for the orphans. Müller, *A Narrative, Fourth Part* (1886), 116.

Scotland and actively collected funds on Müller's behalf.[150] No official connection between

Brand and Müller appears to have existed. Brand, like other unknown independent fundraisers,

assisted Müller with providing a constant stream of income even in the most difficult of times.

However, what was most impressive to evangelicals was Müller's belief that God provided the

needed financial resources in response to Müller's prayers.[151]

The most common critique of Müller centered on the use of his annual reports and his

Narrative as a fundraising medium.[152] Although a copy of the annual report was sent to each

donor in order to ensure accountability, Müller claimed he did not ask anyone personally or by

letter for help.[153] The reports, Müller claimed, were intended to provide facts about the orphan

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[150] David Duncan, "George Bell Brand, Esq., Kirriemuir," *The Free Church of Scotland Monthly Record* (Monday, April 1, 1878): 94.

[151] Rev. W. K. Twiddie of Edinburgh, Scotland, pondered the significance of Müller's funding source when he wrote, "And in supporting these extensive agencies, how is Mr Müller upheld? Whence are the funds derived? A foreigner, and engaged in pursuits far different from those which engross our busy land, how is he provided with the means of doing so much? It may be said in reply, that literally, silver and gold he has none, but as he walks in faith, and trusts in God, he is not put to shame. In a way which ranks among the most marvelous, perhaps, in all the world's history, he is enabled to diffuse the knowledge of God's truth at home and abroad—to shed light upon the darkness, or comfort on the sorrows of the suffering sons of men." W. K. Tweedie, *Man and His Money: Its Use and Abuse* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1855), 194. Müller's method of fundraising through faith and prayer was one of his most important contributions to subsequent evangelical practice, see Larry Eskridge and Mark Noll, eds., *More Money, More Ministry: Money and Evangelicals in Recent North American History* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 105, 215; also see Randy C. Alcorn, *Money, Possessions, and Eternity*, rev. ed. (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2003), 256-257.

[152] Edwin A. Wakins, a Church of England curate at Benhall, indicated in a letter to Müller that he actually read extracts of the annual reports aloud to his parishioners at missionary prayer meetings "to encourage them to receive more faith & to abound more in prayer." Quoted in Anne Coultas Dunford, *A Life Unnoticed: Susannah Coultas and Her Family in Victorian Suffolk* (Suffolk, U.K.: ASK House, 2005), 52.

[153] In the United States the argument was made that the mass mailing of annual reports to donors served "just as effectively as if an agent were to carry round the subscription book."

operation, income, and expenditures. However, Müller did note that the, "Reports He [God], no

doubt, uses frequently as a means of supplying us with funds for the work; but the Reports are

NOT my confidence."[154] In 1866, the editor of *The Achill Missionary Herald and Western*

Witness published in Dublin, Ireland, questioned,

> We simply ask, is it trust that '*all has been done, and is being done, without the public having been asked for a single farthing?*' A most exciting report is published every year, and extensively circulated, in which the public is informed that the institution is dependent for its support on voluntary contributions, the extraordinary manner in which the contributions come in is also related, while the public are informed that Mr. Müller never has recourse to personal applications for aid to his benevolent work. Boxes for the reception of contributions are also hung up in the Institution where they are sure to meet the eyes of numerous visitors. These we conceive to be very effective means of appealing to public benevolence.[155]

The editor of the *Achill Missionary Herald* touched upon the very point that others pursued as

well. In 1864, *The Church of England Magazine* observed in a similar manner that the many

publications by Müller and other writers equated to "a virtual appeal to Christian hearts."[156] His

reports and books became unofficial advertisements thanks to newspaper and periodical editors

who announced their publication and reprinted noteworthy items from them.[157]

"The Independent is Slow to Believe Rev. George Müller's Statement," *The Congregationalist and Boston Recorder*, November 28, 1872, 4.

[154] Müller, *A Narrative, Fifth Part* (1874), 108.

[155] "Brief Narrative of Facts," *The Achill Missionary Herald and Western Witness* 352 (Tuesday, October 9, 1866): 387.

[156] "Notice of Books," *The Church of England Magazine* 57, no. 1681 (August 31, 1864): 143.

[157] "Mr. George Muller's Work at Bristol," *The Sunday Magazine* 8 (London: Isbister and Co., 1879): 68;"Miscellanea," *National Repository* 4 (Cincinnati: Hitchcock and Walden, 1878): 567; "Mr. George Müller's Last Report," *The Christian* (August 25, 1870): 5; "Mr. George Müller's Annual Report," *The Christian* (August 31, 1871): 10; "To All Whom It May Concern!," *The British Friend* 30, no. 11 (1863): 39.

For most of the nineteenth century Müller appeared indifferent to the economic dynamics that affected society at large.[158] Always focused on his practice of the life of faith, he asserted that from 1838 to 1850 the trials of faith were great that the work struggled to survive from day-to-day. However, the "Great Depression" that marked the last two decades of the nineteenth century and competition from other charities for limited funds had an impact on the funds flowing in to support the orphans and SKI.[159] In the 53rd Annual Report Müller wrote,

> Again and again I have found in intercourse with Christian friends, that it is supposed, because the Institution has now so long existed, and is so large, and so well known, that we have now no longer to rely only upon God; and that the great trials of faith, which I had from the year 1838 to 1850, exist no more: this is a great mistake. During no year our trials of faith and patience have been greater than from May 27th, 1891, to May 26th, 1892; yet the Institution exists, through God's wondrous condescension, and will in the same way, yet further exist.[160]

The financial challenges that appeared over this period shook Müller and he began the report thankful that SKI still existed, as he explained, "through the riches and Grace of God."[161] With funding problems putting a financial strain on Müller and James Wright, his son-in-law and co-director from 1872 forward, they began to reduce and eliminate financial support for those works

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[158] Müller, *A Narrative, Fifth Part* (1874), 76.

[159] 1873-1896 was a period that witnessed a significant slowdown in economic growth, falling prices, and growing unemployment that earned the period the label the "Great Depression." Anthony Howe, "Britain and the World Economy," in *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Britain*, ed. Chris Williams (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 25-30. Some historians argue that the Great Depression was a mere matter of perspective and that the period, overall, was one of economic development. Norman Stone, *Europe Transforms 1878-1919*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 6.

[160] George Müller, *Brief Narrative of the Facts Relative to the New Orphan Houses, (for 2,050 children) on Ashley Down, Bristol, and The Other Objects of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad: This Narrative contains the Record of the Period from May 26th, 1891, to May 26th, 1892, and constitutes the FIFTY-THIRD REPORT of the Proceedings of the Above Institution* (London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1892), 8.

[161] Ibid., 2.

that were not receiving direct funding from the public.[162] To their dismay, day schools learned

that they would no longer receive support from Müller.[163] The educational institutions

associated with SKI never attracted much financial support from the public and were funded by

Müller from donations given for his personal use. The financial challenges that defined the early

1890s still seem to have been present in 1897 when Müller notified an unidentified individual

who had appealed to him for help that, "gladly would I help you; but I have no means to do

so."[164] Apparently, even Müller was limited in the resources he could marshal for charitable

works beyond the miracle of the orphan homes, which never failed to capture the public

imagination.[165]

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[162] According to Neil Summerton, from the mid-1870s through 1910 the giving to SKI stagnated to around £3,500 annually. Summerton does not link this to the Great Depression or the proliferation of evangelical philanthropic efforts that competed for funding with Müller during this period through direct solicitation. Summerton, "George Müller and the Financing of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution," 63.

[163] For example, in August of 1892, Müller and James Wright sent out a letter to the 35 day-schools they supported that stated on October 31 all funding from SKI would end. In the case of two day-schools in Clayhidon, part of the Blackdown Hills Mission, the news was devastating as Müller's SKI was their primary source of support. Ronald H. White, *Strength of the Hills: The Story of the Blackdown Hills Mission* (Exeter, U.K.: The Paternoster Press, 1964), 130. Summerton argues that the reason for the collapse of the educational goal of SKI was that it did not attract donors like the orphans. However, when placed in the context of the Great Depression and the amount of evangelical philanthropic efforts in competition for limited pounds and pence, it is surprising that Müller kept that wing of SKI in operation as long as he did. Summerton, "George Müller and the Financing of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution," 70.

[164] George Müller to ?, November 29, 1897, George Müller and Family, Letters and Papers, Muller House, 7 Cotham Park, Bristol, England.

[165] Müller, like other evangelicals, did give to individuals who faced hardship and needed financial help in order to survive. For an example of Müller and Lord Congleton helping a man faced with bankruptcy see "A Christian Tradesman," *The Christian* (April 14, 1870): 18.

"The Bristol Miracle"

The effort Müller made to track the lives of his wards and the massive bureaucratic organization he built up was quite remarkable.[166] By the 1840s attention was being paid to the orphan homes where a man was supporting the venture entirely through prayer. Although Harold H. Rowdon posits that from the beginning, at the local level, the orphan homes were labeled the "Bristol Miracle," the term was also applied outside of Bristol.[167] The term miracle, in the history of Christianity, is based on the Latin word *miraculum* which is derived from the root word *mirus*. These terms indicate a recognition of something that, according to historian Michael Goodich, "confounds or even appears to contradict the normal rules governing nature or society."[168] Evangelicals used the term in the same manner as medieval Christians in an effort to describe something that violated the laws of nature and, in some cases, society.

A noteworthy example of how evangelicals in the mid-nineteenth century thought about miracles was presented by Rev. Charles Haddon Spurgeon at a fundraising event where Anthony Ashley Cooper, Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, presided. Spurgeon, in nineteenth-century Protestant fashion, blasted the miraculous claims of the Roman Catholic Church and then proceeded to offer an explanation of a miracle that matched the Catholic definition of *miraculum*. Spurgeon reportedly stated that a miracle was ". . . a wonder; something that man

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[166] A social history of the lives of the orphans has yet to be written. Müller kept all the official records, correspondence, and even published information about each of the orphans who lived in the homes. All of these records are currently housed in the Müller House, Cotham Park, Bristol, England.

[167] "The Bristol Miracle," *The English Presbyterian Messenger* 1, no. 19 (October 1846): 374. This same article was later published in *The Newcastle Courant* in 1860, see "The Bristol Miracle," *Newcastle Courant*, December 14, 1860, n.p.

[168] Michael E. Goodich, *Miracles and Wonders: The Development of the Concept of Miracle, 1150-1350* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Co., 2007), 8.

could not do of his own power." [169] However, Spurgeon then deviated from the definition he

provided by talking about philanthropic miracles. According to London's *Daily News*, "[t]he

miracles he [Spurgeon] had to speak of were those which were wrought by prayer and faith;

miracles were full of philanthropy, brimfull of peace and goodwill amongst men and glory to

God." [170] Spurgeon went on to discuss the most celebrated evangelical miracle workers of the

last two centuries in Germany and England. Spurgeon began with Francke's work in Halle and

then addressed how William Huntingdon, S.S. produced another influential edition of Francke's

writings, but followed in Francke's footsteps, as Spurgeon criticized him, in a selfish manner.

Spurgeon then listed Germans he believed had seen miracles of financial support in their

philanthropic efforts to help street waifs and conduct missionary work.[171] Near the end of his

lecture Spurgeon emphasized the work of Müller as standing in this tradition of miracle working

philanthropists. Spurgeon, in reference to Müller, argued,

> The only test of anything was to put it to the proof, and if you asked God in prayer and he
> answered that prayer, what great proof could they have that there was a God? These
> miracles he had called their attention to proved that God was not a mere empty
> abstraction about the stars, but a very God, able and willing to bless the services of man,
> and always ready to make good his promiss [*sic*] to man.[172]

Two things from Spurgeon's speech are important to note. First, Spurgeon asserted that a

miracle could be witnessed through philanthropic works that were part of the tradition

established by Francke and influenced by Pietism. Second, Spurgeon celebrated and legitimized

Müller's methods and work in Bristol as part of an elite vanguard of evangelicals in Great

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[169] "Mr. Spurgeon on Miracles," *The Daily News* [London], November 26, 1862, 2.

[170] Ibid.

[171] Spurgeon's list of miracle-working Germans included John Falk, Dr. Wicharn, Pastor
Gossner, and Pastor Harmes. Ibid.

[172] Ibid.

Britain. Spurgeon's claim that charitable works could be miraculous was also embraced by

evangelicals who rejoiced in the success of such efforts.[173]

Although evangelicals found Müller's success as evidence for the miraculous, the notion

of his work being deemed a miracle was very problematic for Müller. In 1863 he repudiated

such proclamations when he wrote,

> We do not pretend to miracles. We have no desire that the work, in which we are
> engaged, should be considered an extraordinary, or even a remarkable one. We are truly
> sorry that many persons, inconsiderately, look upon it as almost miraculous. The
> principles are as old as the Holy Scriptures. But they are forgotten by many; are not held
> in living faith by others; and by some they are not known at all; nay, they are denied to be
> Scriptural by not a few, and are considered wild and fanatical.[174]

Clearly Müller rejected the idea that his life of faith was miraculous. The aim for Müller was not

to present a model of the unobtainable that was "extraordinary" but rather a work that any

Christian who took their faith seriously could accomplish. Müller was not alone in claiming that

the orphan work was not miraculous. The widely-read periodical *The Spectator* wholeheartedly

agreed. Affirming that their readers would be familiar with the "Bristol Miracle," *The Spectator*

argued,

> It is not necessary to be of the church of Mr. Müller and Mr. Craik to recognize in them
> true heart-whole Christian ministers, who act in faith, nothing wavering; and, as such, we
> tender them the respect and thanks which are their due. But we claim the right of judging
> all their facts and statements, and of tracing in all of them the operation of the regular
> laws by which humanity is governed. A miracle, i.e., something not in accordance with
> the laws of nature, this uncommon work of man's goodness and intellect united certainly
> is not.[175]

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[173] "A Modern Miracle," *The Irish Presbyterian* (November 1, 1897): 171. Also see,
Pharcellus Church, *Seed-Truths: Bible Views of Mind, Morals, and Religion* (New York:
Sheldon & Co., 1871), 303.

[174] Müller, *A Narrative, Fifth Part* (1874), 298-299.

[175] "Publications Received," *The Spectator* 1700 (January 26, 1861): 90.

Despite claims to the contrary, Müller's method of supporting the orphanage was seen as extraordinary, even miraculous, by those who chose to see the work in that manner.[176]

The orphanage, as the "Bristol Miracle," became the center of his global mission that spread his name beyond Bristol to Britain and from Britain to the British Empire and the world. Müller's successful promotion of the orphanage, in fact, mirrors what Francke accomplished with his orphanage.[177] According to Kaspar von Greyerz, a historian at the University of Basel, "Francke built this orphanage [in Halle] into the center of a Pietist mission of global reach."[178] In a similar fashion Müller was able to develop his organization into a center of global outreach.[179] Rev. Arthur Mursell, a lifelong friend of Craik and early observer of the orphanage on Wilson Street, proclaimed in 1899 that the orphanage on Ashley Down was like Noah's ark on Mount Ararat, a widely recognized symbol of hope.[180] The ark that Craik and Müller built on

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[176] For examples see "Miracles of Faith; or, George Müller," *The Christian Ambassador* 1, no. 1 (London: Richard Davies, 1863): 1-15; James Fraser, *Parochial and Other Sermons*, ed. John W. Diggle (London: Macmillan & Co., 1887), 102; Church, *Seed-Truths*, 303; *A Hundred Years of Miracle: Being the Centenary Souvenir of the Ashley Down Orphanage Bristol, 1836-1936* (Bristol: n.p., 1936).

[177] Müller saw himself clearly in the lineage of Francke in terms of how his philanthropic work would result in blessing the current and succeeding generations. Müller, *A Narrative, Fourth Part* (1886), 219-220.

[178] Kaspar von Greyerz, *Religion and Culture in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1800*, trans. Thomas Dunlap (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 87.

[179] Müller provided an enormous amount of literature for distribution either free of charge or at discounted rates. This literature was distributed by laypersons, ministers, evangelists, and missionaries around the world. The result was that SKI's Bible and Tract Warehouse in Bristol kept over 1,600 different book titles and over 750 different tract titles on hand for customers. For the year 1891-1892 Müller claimed that 1,487,930 books and tracts moved through his Bristol warehouse. Müller, *Brief Narrative of the Facts Relative* (1892), 47.

[180] "George Muller of Bristol. Mursell's Lecture," *The Bristol Mercury*, November 14, 1899, 5.

Ashley Down, however, was not built atop earth and rock, but instead sat on top of a mountain of paper that took news of the orphanage to the far corners of the world and ensured its survival.

"Whose History Reads Like Romance"

George Müller's writings were paramount to his rise to global significance. Müller's autobiographical *Narrative* focuses on an individual who understands his own life in terms of moral failure, redemption by God, and acting in the material world for the glory of God.[181] The testimony of his initiation into the Christian life was not the main focus of his autobiographical text. Rather, his redemption story is the beginning of a much longer story of faith, prayer, and struggle to aim attention on God. The key element in Müller's own rendering of his life is that he assumed that belief in God was faltering. Consequently, his subsequent battle against unbelief in the world is one that assumes that facts could be produced to combat the loss of faith in the modern world

Craik, like Müller, gave heavy weight to the role of facts in his treatise on biblically-based ecclesiology. In his book *New Testament Church Order*, Craik argued that the twelve who were personally called by Jesus to be his disciples were not superior to their peers in any capacity. Instead Craik argued,

> They appear to have been men of ordinary mental power,– distinguished for honesty and good sense, and qualified to fill the position of witnesses to facts, rather than to invent theories, or to gather a crowd of followers after them. That which mainly distinguished them from the mass of their countrymen consisted in their having had their eyes opened

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[181] Philosopher Charles Taylor points out that in the construction of modern identity distinctions, similar to what Müller made, are not self constructed, but rather, "they involve discriminations of right or wrong, better or worse, higher or lower, which are not rendered valid by our own desires, inclinations, or choices, but rather stand independent of these and offer standards by which they can be judged." Consequently, the story that Müller is attempting to relate to readers through his *Narrative* is one that they could also identify with from their own experience as evangelical Christians. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 4.

to discover in Jesus of Nazareth the Christ of God, and in their having had grace to cling to Him at the risk of losing every thing [*sic*] for his sake.[182]

Craik continued, "Christianity is not founded on theory and speculation, but on substantial facts. To these facts it was the calling of the Apostles, to bear testimony before all men."[183] Craik understood factual reporting to be essential to the elevated status ultimately accorded to the twelve Apostles. The memory and record of a factual past is important to Craik's understanding of the leadership in the early church. In a similar manner, Müller believed that he was obligated to present the facts about his work. The *Narrative* and the annual reports support this notion and in his 1848 annual report he affirmed,

> My dear reader, if you are tired of going on with this account of the Lord's gracious interpositions for us week after week, or day after day, I beseech you to lay it aside for the present. Take it up at another time. This Narrative is not of an ordinary character. It does not contain anecdotes for amusement; it relates no embellished tales; it gives *facts* in which the hand of God is seen stretched out on our behalf, as the result of prayer and faith. Seek to admire God, dear reader, to allure your hearts more and more for Him, and which are brought before you in all simplicity to encourage you and to stir you up, if it may please God so to use His servant, to put your whole trust in Him.[184]

The goal articulated by Müller was to record the facts in order to compel readers to look to God for similar results. Facts held a special place in Müller and Craik's thinking and were a key to truth. Consequently, Müller's *Narrative*, whether in book form or the annual reports, tended to list financial gifts and amounts, problems and challenges, along with accounts of answered prayer.[185] In addition to presenting a factual account, the *Narrative* that Müller continued to reprint, edit, and expand over the course of his life also became an advice book that dealt with

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[182] Craik, *New Testament*, 12.

[183] Ibid., 14.

[184] Müller, *Brief Narrative of Facts Relative* (1848), 52.

[185] Müller, *A Narrative, Fourth Part* (1886), 374.

everything from theology to the best manner in which Christians should educate their children.[186]

The literary record of the *Narrative* and the annual reports were a chronicling of the selected

facts for the intended purpose of glorifying God.[187]

The use of autobiography raises many questions about Müller as the subject and how he

envisioned himself in the community and world in which he lived. French philosopher Georges

Gusdorf observed,

> The man who takes delight in thus drawing his own image believes himself worthy of a
> special interest. Each of us tends to think of himself as the center of a living space: I
> count, my existence is significant to the world, and my death will leave the world
> incomplete. In narrating my life, I give witness of myself even from beyond my death
> and so can preserve this precious capital that ought not disappear.[188]

As Gusdorf observed, the very act of bringing attention upon oneself is linked to having a high

sense of self-importance that needs to be remembered for posterity. Essential to the creation of

autobiography is the need to maintain control over the memory produced. Whereas, in the case

of biography the person has no control over the memory reproduced and is being remembered in

the form of a monument, for good or ill, for future generations to learn from.[189] In contrast to

biography, autobiography is self-justifying and is, ultimately, a defense of the life one has lived

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[186] Ibid., 382.

[187] For example, Müller wrote on February 2, 1848, "This morning on my usual walk before breakfast I felt myself led out of my usual track, into a direction in which I had not gone for some months. In stepping over a stile I said to myself: 'Perhaps God has a reason even in this.' After about five minutes I met a Christian gentleman who gave me two sovereigns for the Orphans, and then I knew the reason, why I had been led this way." Even walking down the street in a new direction, for Müller, was an opportunity for God to show himself faithful to his prayers. Müller, *Brief Narrative of Facts Relative* (1848), 64.

[188] Georges Gusdorf, "Conditions and Limits of Autobiography," in *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, ed. James Olney (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 29.

[189] Ibid., 31.

or continues to live, as well as an assertion of significance.[190] Therefore, autobiography is an act

of identity formation directed at proclaiming to the world the importance of one life over others.

Müller believed that his story of pious living—his memory—could be useful for his

fellow evangelicals and saw no problem in writing a public account of his life to influence the

behavior of others.[191] Müller, ultimately, desired to be remembered by Christians who needed,

from his perspective, a model to follow. [192] Müller believed that his fellow Christians lacked a

proper faith in God when faced with the difficulties of everyday life. Müller explained his

understanding of the problem when he wrote,

> that which weighed more with me than any thing was, that I have reason to belive [*sic*]
> from what I have seen among the children of God, that many of their trials arise, either

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[190] D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative: Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 5.

[191] The autobiographical account contained within Augustine of Hippo's *Confessions* was noteworthy as a new genre of literature because it revealed conflicted motives, the troubling failures, and the limits of a mere mortal to conquer his own life. Augustine's main biographer, Peter Brown, argues, "The writing of the *Confessions* was an act of therapy." Augustine's autobiography was written in the course of a very busy life. It dealt with weaknesses and problems that Augustine recognized in himself. To argue that Müller's *Narrative* mimics Augustine's *Confessions* would be incorrect. Müller's *Narrative* does stand in the tradition of Christian autobiography initiated by Augustine, but was a direct heir of August H. Francke's autobiography. Augustine, *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, trans. Rex Warner (New York: Mentor, 1963); Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, rev. ed. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 158.

[192] Philosopher Paul Ricoeur argued for such an understanding of interaction about memory when he wrote, "Does there not exist an intermediate level of reference between the poles of individual memory and collective memory, where concrete exchanges operate between the living memory of individual persons and the public memory of the communities to which we belong? This is the level of our close relations, to whom we have a right to attribute a memory of a distinct kind. These close relations, these people who count for us and for whom we count, are situated along a range of varying distances in the relation between self and others. Varying distance but also variation in the active and passive modes of the interplay of distantiation and closeness that makes proximity a dynamic relationship ceaselessly in motion: drawing near, feeling close. . . Close relations are others as fellow beings, privileged others." Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 131-132.

from want of confidence in the Lord as it regards temporal things, or from carrying on their business in an unscriptural way. On account, therefore, of the remarkable way in which the Lord has dealt with me as to temporal things, within the last ten years, I feel that I am a debtor to the church of Christ, and that I ought, for the benefit of my poorer brethren especially, to make known, as much as I can, the way in which I have been led.[193]

Not lacking for answers to the problems, Müller believed that by recounting his everyday dealings with God he could serve as a teaching tool for those who faced similar challenges.[194] He also noted that he believed many of the problems could be solved through a more biblical approach to life. Müller saw it as his duty to ensure that a written version of his life was published so that other Christians could receive encouragement and bolster their faith.[195] The *Narrative* was also intended to be a book that strengthened the faith of Christians in the present so that they could persist in their faith until the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Therefore, Müller's intention was not to create a literary monument that would mark his place in history, but rather provide a practical volume for those who could benefit from practicing a more vital piety in everyday life.

As time went on, his *Narrative* became the basis for influence and celebrity that he could have never imagined when he began writing the book. His goal was directed by his view of the present, a present that would soon end but one in which ordinary Christians needed help to fully realize God in their lives. In the fifth part of his *Narrative*, in a republished section of his twenty-second annual report of 1861, Müller wrote about how successful his *Narrative* was in accomplishing the goal he intended when he wrote,

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[193] George Müller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller, Minister of Christ, Written by Himself* (London: J. Nisbet, 1837), iii.

[194] Ibid.

[195] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 48-49.

When I began the Orphan work in 1835, (as may be seen at full length in my Narrative, Vol. I. p. 143—146, 7th edit., where I state the reasons which led me to it,) my chief object was the glory of God, by giving a practical demonstration as to what could be accomplished simply through the instrumentality of prayer and faith, in order thus to benefit the Church of Christ at large, and to lead a careless world to see the reality of the things of God, by showing them, in this work, that the Living God is still, as 4000 years ago, the Living God. This my aim has been abundantly honoured. Multitudes of sinners have been thus converted, multitudes of the children of God in all parts of the world have been benefited by this work, even as I had anticipated. But the larger the work has grown, the greater has been the blessing, bestowed in the very way in which I looked for blessing; for the attention of hundreds of thousands has been drawn to the work; and many tens of thousands have come to see it. All this leads me to desire further to labour on in this way, in order to bring yet greater glory to the name of the Lord.[196]

The impact sought via the medium of print, according to his reflection here, was accomplished in a greater manner than he could have hoped. By 1863 his work was widely known throughout Great Britain and the Empire as well as across the globe from South America to China. *The Treasury of Literature and The Ladies' Treasury* captured essence of his story for the era when they proclaimed that Müller was a man "whose history reads like romance."[197]

"Its Empire Immortal"

The *Narrative* was first published in August 1837 with a print run of 2,000 books.[198] By the end of October of 1840, a second edition had gone to press because the stock had run out.

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[196] Müller, *A Narrative, Fifth Part* (1874), 34-35.

[197] "Literature," *The Treasury of Literature and The Ladies' Treasury* (Monday, April 1, 1872): 222. Rev. Theodore L. Cuyler, in a separate article in *The Family Treasury of Sunday Reading*, stated, "God puts it into the hearts of liberal men to send him money, and Muller has already received and expended over two hundred and fifty thousand pounds. Faith does its duty, and God *makes the iron swim*." Theodore L. Cuyler, "Making the Iron Swin," *The Family Treasury and Sunday Reading* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1870): 316-318. Also see "Making the Iron Swim," *The Sabbath School Magazine* 23, no. 8 (Glasgow: John M'Callum, 1871): 177-178.

[198] Joshua James Nelson in his master's thesis on Müller indicates that from his research the publisher J. Nisbet published the *Narrative* eleven times before 1887. Although Nelson does not indicate his source for determining that there were eleven printings of the *Narrative*, the

Müller does indicate that revisions were made to the new edition beyond simply continuing the

Narrative beyond 1837. He notes in the preface,

> . . . that while in substance it is the same as the first, yet on account of my increased
> acquaintance with the English language many verbal alterations have been made; also
> several alterations have been made on account of the increased light which the Lord has
> been pleased to grant me since July 1837; a few paragraphs have been entirely left out,
> and a few new paragraphs have been added.[199]

As his proficiency with the English language increased, Müller consciously refined the *Narrative*

to match his intention for the text. Consequently, each additional expansion of the original text

resulted in further explanatory prefaces and revisions to clarify his aims. The text of the ever

growing chronicle reached the noteworthy length of six parts published in four volumes in

1886.[200] In 1895 a final, ninth edition of the first part of the *Narrative* was published just three

years before his death.[201] Müller himself desired to see the *Narrative* available to as many

people as possible and was directly involved in making a German and a French edition

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actual number may be much higher as cheap versions were also produced that used lower cost
materials in an effort to make the literature affordable for the working classes. Furthermore, as
in the case of the United States, independent editions of Müller's *Narrative* were published
without his knowledge, most notably *The Life of Trust* in 1860. Part of the issue, of course, is
that American publishing houses did not respect British author rights and reprinted books and
articles as they saw fit. Consequently, it is almost impossible to ascertain exactly how many
copies and edited selections of the *Narrative* were in circulation during the nineteenth century,
but the number was in the millions if Müller's books, reports, cheap penny tracts, and reprinted
sections in periodicals and newspapers are included. Joshua James Nelson, *George Müller: His
Orphan Work and Influence* (M.A. thesis, California State University, Stanislaus, 2000), 5.

[199] George Müller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller*, 2nd
ed. (London: J. Nisbet, 1840), v.

[200] George Müller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller, Sixth
Part* (London: J. Nisbet, 1886).

[201] George Müller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller, First
Part*, 9th ed. (London: J. Nisbet, 1895).

available.[202] In the preface to his 1848 French edition of the *Narrative,* which he translated into

French himself, Müller praised the broad circulation of the book when he explained,

> In August 1837, the book whose publication was two thousand copies, appeared for the
> first time. God condescended to make such an extent of his blessing to bring sinners to
> knowledge of him, but especially to strengthen the faith of his children, that the first
> edition being exhausted, I thought I ought to publish, in 1840, a second, which was drawn
> to four thousand copies: in 1841, the work was increased by a second part. This quite
> weak test that I had uncovered to serve the Lord having been showered and showered and
> obviously blessed, not only in England, Scotland and Ireland, but also in India, in various
> parts of America and in Australia, I believed myself particularly called, for the glory of
> God, and the praise of his beloved Son, to write in my own language, an overview of
> kindness of God toward me. It was in 1843 that I left England to go to Stuttgart, where I
> sojourned seven months, which is where I was alternatively employed to teach, to preach
> the word of life and published the book in German. The blessing of God also rested on
> the German book; the author of all grace used this publication in a great number of cases,
> as shown in the many letters which reached me from various parts of the world. I longed,
> consequently, for years to raise the faithfulness of the Lord in a testimony that could have
> repercussions in the countries which speak the French language as in England and
> Germany.[203]

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[202] George Müller, *Des Herrn Führungen im Lebensgange des Georg F. Müller Von ihm selbst geschrieben* (Stuttgart: In Commission bei U. Liesching u. Comp., 1844).

[203] Müller wrote in French, "En août 1837, ce livre, dont l'édition fut tirée a deux mille exemplaires, parut pour la première fois. Dieu daigna y mettre à un tel point sa bénédiction pour amener les pécheurs à sa connaissance, mais surtout pour fortifier la foi de ses enfants, que, la première édition se trouvant épuisée, je crus devoir en publier, en 1840, une seconde qui fut tirée à quatre mille exemplaires: en 1841, l'ouvrage fut augmenté d'une deuxième partie. Ce bien faible essai que j'avais mis au jour en vue de servir le Seigneur ayant été de plue en plue et visiblement béni, non seulement en Angleterre, en Écosse et en Irlande, mais aussi aux Indes, dans différentes parties de l'Amérique et en Australie, je me crus tout particulièrement appelé, pour la glorie de Dieu, et à la louange de son Fils bien-aimé, à écrire dans ma propre langue un apercu de bontés de Dieu envers moi. Ce fut en 1843 que je quittai l'Angleterre pour me rendre a Stuttgard, ou je séjourani sept mois, qui furent alternativement employés à instruire, à annoncer la parole de vie et àpublier le livre en langue allemade. La bénédiction de Dieu a également reposé sur l'ouvrage allemand; l'auteur de toute gràce a diagné utiliser cette publication dans un grand nombre de cas, ainsi que le démontrent de nombreuses attestations qui me sont parvenues de différentes parties du monde. Il me tardait, en conséquence, ce années deniéres, de pouvoir, dans les jours avancés où nous sommes parvenus, élever à la fidélité du Seigneur un témoignage qui pùt avoir du retentissement dans les pays qui parlent la langue française comme il en a en Angleterre et en Allemagne." Georges Müller, *Exposé de Quelques-Unes des Dispensations de Dieu Envers Georges Müller, Écrit par lui-mème. Traduit de L'Anglais sur La Troisième Édition* (Paris: Librairie Protestante, 1848), iii-iv.

Müller's publishing venture was predicated on the idea that he could make an impact on the life, thought, and behavior of Christians. Like other nineteenth-century evangelicals, Müller placed great weight on the power of publications. For example, the editor of *The Christian Witness and Church Members' Magazine,* a periodical published for British Congregationalists, pronounced triumphantly, "The printing press, allied to truth and religion, is omnipotent, and its empire immortal. It is God's chief instrument for enlightening, subduing, purifying, civilizing, and elevating mankind."[204] In like manner, Müller continued his publication efforts because he believed that they were making a difference. Müller received letters from readers who claimed their practice of the Christian faith was transformed by his *Narrative*.[205] Müller also recognized the powerful influence he wielded through his writings. He stated in the introduction to his wife's book, *A Brief Account of the Life and Labours of George Müller (of Bristol.)*, that,

> On my missionary tours in England, Scotland, Ireland, Switzerland, Germany, Holland, France, Italy, Spain, Bohemia, Hungary, Greece, Russia, and Poland, I was known to the thousands who had read about my life and labours in English, German, French, or Dutch, and who desired to hear me preach, because they had received blessing through my Narrative. But the blessing was not confined to these countries. It was found also in Egypt, Palestine, Asia Minor, and Turkey. Especially, however, when I was laboring in Canada, and preaching in seventeen of the United States, during three different American tours, I obtained hundreds of thousands of hearers because they knew me through "The Life of Trust," an abridgment of my larger work, that was everywhere to be found, even as far as California; through which I was continually greeted as an old friend, whom Christians desired to know personally. In this manner I have had *abundant proof* of the

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[204] J. C. "Preface," *The Christian Witness and Church Members' Magazine* 19 (London: John Snow, 1862): iv.

[205] The impact of the *Narrative* on readers was also recorded in various periodicals. "Baptisms—Thrapston," *The Baptist Reporter and Missionary Intelligencer* 28, no. 326 (February 1854): 49.

blessing my Narrative has been to the readers of it; and, besides all this, during the last 46 years I have received many hundreds of letters, in which the writers state, how great the benefit has been, which they have received through this record of the Lord's dealings with me.[206]

The geographic reach of the *Narrative* to various regions of the world prepared audiences for his highly praised preaching tours. Although Müller does not indicate that he had any prior knowledge of *The Life of Trust*, he did appreciate the fact that in the United States a version of his *Narrative* "was everywhere to be found."[207] Again his speaking tour in the United States was predicated on audiences already being familiar with his work through publications. In the case of the United States, the independent production of *The Life of Trust*, edited by H. L. Wayland and endorsed by Francis Wayland, made Müller's name known from coast-to-coast.[208]

In addition to the *Narrative*, Müller published annual reports in print runs that ranged between 2,000 and 25,000 copies.[209] The publication of the annual report kept Müller's name before the public, while serving as additional evidence that God continued to answer prayer.[210] The Scriptural Knowledge Institution also published inexpensive literature written by Müller.[211]

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[206] Susannah Grace Müller, *A Brief Account of the Life and Labours of George Müller (of Bristol.)*, 2nd ed. (London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1887), v-vi.

[207] Ibid.

[208] The importance of *The Life of Trust* in mid-nineteenth-century American religious history will be examined in chapter 6.

[209] Summerton, "George Müller and the Financing of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution," 72.

[210] Much of the information circulated about Müller was in the form of re-printed sections or summaries of his annual reports. For an example, see "Mr. George Muller's Work at Bristol," 68.

[211] Another area of research that deserves the full attention of a scholar are the publications produced by the Scriptural Knowledge Institution. This institution formed the basis

Scores of tracts were published in the tens of thousands and circulated around the world by missionaries, mailings, and Müller's travels and were available for a penny or even for free.[212] In terms of content, the tracts were designed to reach the broadest audience possible.[213] Sometimes they were merely a section of the *Narrative* or an annual report[214] reprinted in a periodical.[215] Other tracts were sermons,[216] parts of sermons, or basic guidelines to apply

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for all of Müller's literary work and extended his reach around the world. An example of the type of literature and cost can be found in the advertisements for publisher W. Mack that lists penny and half penny books and tracts along with various levels of quality for books described from cheap paper backs to costly gilt-edged hardbacks. Philos [pseudo.], *The City of Orphans: A Brief Sketch of the Institution on Ashley Down, Bristol, Consisting of Five Orphan Houses, Founded by George Müller, For the Support of 2,050 Orphans* (Bristol: W. Mack, n.d.), endpage.

[212] Often Müller sent hundreds and thousands of tracts to assist fellow Christians in their evangelistic efforts. "The Hop-Pickers in Kent," *The Christian* (July 28, 1870): 11; "Our Own Missionary in Aldgate District," *The Coral Missionary Magazine* (June 1, 1876): 100-101.

[213] Examples of tract titles are as follows: "Power of Prayer," "Pray on! Pray on!," "How to Live a Happy Life," "The Forgiving God," "God over All." Müller also sold "Cards to Hang Up" at three pence each entitled, "The Power of Faith," "Only Believe," "All Things," "Daily Questions." "The Bible and Tract Warehouse of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad [Advertisement]," George Müller and Family, Letters and Papers, Muller House, 7 Cotham Park, Bristol, England.

[214] Following the work of Müller was something that continued to prompt periodical editors to re-print sections of his annual reports, his *Narrative*, and his second wife's accounts of their travels. Susannah Grace Müller, "The Life and Labours of Mr. George Müller, of Bristol," *Footsteps of Truth* (April 1883): 155-159.

[215] George Müller, "To All Whom It May Concern," *The British Friend* 30, no. 2 (February 2, 1863): 39.

[216] George Müller, *The Lord's Prayer: A Sermon Preached by George Müller at Bethesda Chapel, Great George Street, Bristol, March 21st, 1897* (London: S. W. Partridge & Co., 1897); George Müller, *"Trust in the Lord": A Sermon Preached by George Müller at Bethesda Chapel, Great George Street, Bristol, on Sunday Evening, May 30th, 1897* (Bristol: W. F. Mack, 1897); George Müller, *The Twenty-Third Psalm: A Sermon Preached by George Müller at Bethesda Chapel, Great George Street, Bristol, June 20th, 1897 (Jubilee Sunday)* (Bristol: The Bible and Tract Depot, n.d.); George Müller, *Address to Young Converts Delivered at Mildmay Conference Hall* (Bristol: Bible and Tract Depot, n.d.).

Christian practices to everyday life.[217] Based on his breadth of experience in money

management, he also gave advice to his fellow Christians about how they should run their

business ventures[218] and how giving related to Christian practice.[219] Tracts also dealt with

theological issues such as baptism or theorized about the Second Coming of Christ.[220] Even a

small booklet was produced that allowed Christians to write down and track their prayers and the

date of the answer.[221] Müller was not alone in his efforts to make his writings available in tract

form. In the United States, England, Australia, and even China, Christian presses published and

sold his tracts.[222]

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[217] George Müller, *The Prayer Hearing God* (Bristol: Bible and Tract Depot, n.d.);
George Müller, *Five Reasons Why Prayer Must Be Answered* (Bristol: Bible and Tract Depot,
n.d.)

[218] George Müller, *Scriptural Advice to Christians Concerning Their Earthly Occupation*
(London: J. Nisbet & Co., n.d.).

[219] George Müller, *Cheerful Givers* (Bristol: Bible and Tract Depot, n.d.); George
Müller, *"Open Thy Mouth Wide, and I Will Fill It"* (Bristol: Bible and Tract Depot, n.d.).

[220] George Müller, *Mr. George Müller on His Baptism* (London: Baptist Tract Society,
n.d.); George Müller, *The Second Coming of Christ* (Bristol: The Bible and Tract Depot of the
Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home & Abroad, 1881).

[221] The goal of marking down answered prayers in the booklet was to increase love
towards God. George Müller, *Marking Answers to Prayer* (St. Leonards-on-Sea, U.K.: South
Coast Bible and Tract Association, n.d.), 2.

[222] In England, *The Christian* published Müller's tracts through Morgan and Scott. In
Australia, The Victorian Tract Distribution Society in Melbourne made his works available to
audiences, while in China the Society for the Diffusion of Knowledge made his life available to
Chinese readers. George Müller, *"Watchman, What of the Night?": An Address by Mr. George
Müller of Bristol, at the Clifton Conference* (London: Morgan and Scott, n.d.); George Müller,
Extracts From the Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller (of Bristol)
(Melbourne: The Victorian Tract Distribution Society, n.d.); "Society for the Diffusion of
Knowledge [Advertisement]," *The Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal* 36, 3 (March
1905): iii.

Due to the vast literary output, a public persona emerged outside of his control and contributed to his acclaim.[223] Stories about him circulated in the popular press of the day and were written without any influence from Müller as to the content.[224] Consequently, Müller became a product of the literary imagination of writers who transformed him into a heroic model of Christian piety.[225] *The Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* published a notice of W. Elfe Tayler's book *Ashley Down; or, Living Faith in a Living God. Memorials of the New Orphan Houses on Ashley Down, Bristol, under the Direction of George Müller*, which drew direct attention to Müller's need. The reviewer wrote, "A work so noble deserves universal

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[223] Evangelical periodicals were distributed internationally and across denominational bodies. For example, C. Russell Hurditch, editor of the *Footsteps of Truth*, published a number of articles, updates, and book notices on items related to Müller. The periodical had a circulation that reached throughout the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, and Europe. Notable readers included C. H. Spurgeon, Dr. Barnardo, George Pentecost, and even Sophia of Nassau, Queen of Norway and Sweden. "Opinions of Contemporary Journals," *Footsteps of Truth* 1 (December 1883): i-ii.

[224] Sometimes these short articles were actually a defense of Müller's beliefs without his direct input as to their content. For example, the editor of *The Illustrated Missionary News* published a retraction for titling Müller as "Rev." The short article explained, "His friends wish us to explain to our readers that this is a mistake, as he has not been ordained by men. Mr. Muller himself objects to be thus addressed. He has, however, been called of God for a special work." The goal here was not to level Müller with the ordinary layperson, but to elevate him in a particular, though anti-clerical, manner. "George Muller," *The Illustrated Missionary News* 153 (Monday, September 2, 1878): 99.

[225] *Faith in God as to Temporal Things: An Account of the Rise and Progress of the New Orphan Houses, Ashley Down, Bristol* (London: Houlston & Stoneman, 1855); Philos [psued.], *A Visit to the New Orphan House, Ashley Down, Bristol*, 2nd ed. (London: Houlston & Stoneman, and Wertheim & Macintosh, 1856); W. Elfe Tayler, *"Mighty Through God": Some Account of the Extraordinary Labours of Mr. George Müller (of Bristol), As Founder and Director of an Institution for Missionary Work at Home and Abroad, and Other Operations* (London: Wertheim, Macintosh, & Co., 1861); W. Elfe Tayler, *The Bristol Orphan Houses, Ashley Down: The History of the New Orphan Houses on Ashley Down, Bristol, Under the Direction of Mr. George Müller*, 3rd ed. (London: Morgan and Scott, 1871). For one of the most widely advertised and widely read studies of Müller's life see Mrs. E. R. Pitman, *George Müller and Andrew Reed, The World's Workers Series*, 2nd ed. (London: Cassell & Company, Ltd., n.d.)

sympathy and help."[226] Publications encouraged people to support Müller work.[227] However,

Müller could not legitimize his unusual method of living by faith only. Ministers, evangelists,

Christian workers, and authors endorsed him as a Christian engaged in a noble and, more

importantly, legitimate work.[228] Consequently, he was transformed into an archetype of

Christian piety thanks to the efforts of a variety of individuals who invested him with legitimacy.

Müller's name, as a result, became, as the Quaker magazine *The British Friend* noted in 1860, "a

household word."[229]

"Familiar in their Mouths as HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

As mentioned early in this chapter the "Bristol Miracle" became widely known in the

1840s and 1850s throughout the United Kingdom.[230] An important article that contributed to the

wider recognition of his story about supporting orphans by faith and prayer was published in

Household Words: A Weekly Journal. *Household Words*, subtitled **"Familiar in their Mouths as**

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[226] "Brief Notices of Books," *The Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* 42 (September 1864): 606.

[227] "Mr. George Müller's Last Report," 5-7.

[228] One early reviewer wrote, "the important lesson it [Faith in God as to Temporal Things] teaches in connection with a series of the most interesting facts and experiences cannot be too widely disseminated, nor too earnestly and frequently enforced. The name of George Müller has become well known among the religious communities of England, and his work ought to interest and stimulate every lover of the Saviour to whom it is made known." "Faith in God as to Temporal Things," *The Local Preachers' Magazine and Christian Family Record* (November 1856): 404. Also see, "Faith in God as to Temporal Things, No. 2," *The Local Preachers' Magazine and Christian Family Record* (December 1856): 441-449.

[229] "The Orphan Houses at Ashley-Down, Bristol.—The Bristol Miracle," *The British Friend* 10, no. 18 (October 1, 1860): 253.

[230] "George Müller and the Bristol Orphanage," *The Edinburgh Christian Magazine* 7 (December 1855): 263-267; "George Müller and the Bristol Orphanage continued," *The Edinburgh Christian Magazine* 7 (January 1856): 307-311.

HOUSEHOLD WORDS," was edited by Charles Dickens. In the November 7, 1857, issue

Dickens made the lead article "Brother Müller and His Orphan Work."[231] *Household Words* was

one of the most popular periodicals in England at the time and Dickens' method of editorial

oversight meant that each article was written, and re-written, to meet his demanding standards.

The article did not list an author and may have given the impression that Dickens wrote the story.

However, according to the *Household Words* office book, the article was composed by one of

Dickens' most trusted staff writers, Henry Morley.[232] Morley, a developing talent, later became

a professor of English language and literature at University College London.[233] Morley wrote an

article that took seriously Müller's life of faith primarily because Morley and Dickens were

impressed by his singular devotion to helping one of the most vulnerable groups in English

society, orphans. Morley's knowledge of Müller was based on reading *The Lord's Dealings with*

George Müller. Morley stated that Müller's book is "Among the curiosities of literature in our

day." [234] Morley envisioned Müller's book as a curiosity because Müller, from Morley's vantage

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[231] According to Nancy Garton, who wrote one of the more popular biographies of Müller, Charles Dickens heard accusations about neglect at the Ashley Down Orphan Houses and visited the institution to investigate. Dickens was impressed by the orphanage and told Müller he would write a story on the orphanage. The story was also maintained by Roger Steer in his biography of Müller. Dickens may have visited the orphanage, but he did not write the article on Müller's work that appeared in *Household Words*. This task he left to a trusted employee who understood German Pietism. Nancy Garton, *George Müller and His Orphans* (n.p.: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1963), 147; Roger Steer, *George Müller: Delighted in God* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1975), 205.

[232] Anne Lohrli, ed., *Household Words; A Weekly Journal 1850-1859 Conducted by Charles Dickens: Table of Contents, List of Contributors and Their Contributions* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 172.

[233] James Gairdner, "Morley, Henry," *National Dictionary of Biography: Volume 39*, ed. Sidney Lee (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1894), 78.

[234] "Brother Müller and His Orphan-Work," *Household Words: A Weekly Journal* 16, no. 398 (Saturday, November 7, 1857): 433.

point, viewed prayer as a simple financial transaction likened to a bank withdrawal. However, Morley countered his own critique of Müller with a positive view of the interaction with God because Müller did not aim to fulfill his own selfish desires, but used prayer as a means to meet the needs of the orphans under his care. Morley explained the significance of this notable difference when he wrote, "George Müller takes thought of the orphan, and has accomplished in his own way a substantial work that must secure for him the respect of all good men, whatever may be the form of their religious faith."[235] Noting the theological differences that may separate Müller from readers of *Household Words* he argued for an open-minded approach to Müller's use of prayer primarily because he was helping orphans. Morley, however, was not unaware of the possible controversy Müller's approach to the Christian life might provoke. Consequently, he acknowledged that Müller had an unusual optimism about how God operated in day-to-day life when he explained that, "he [Müller] believes, with a liveliness of faith perhaps unequalled in our time, that all things fitting for His children will be supplied by our Father in heaven in direct answer to trustful prayer."[236] Morley also highlighted that the orphans had been supported for twenty-five years by this unusual method, and he ended the article with the hope that God would continue to provide financial support for the institution. What inspired Morley to take Müller's approach to the Christian faith seriously and write an article that earnestly sought to bring the story to the attention of readers?

Morley, the only university-educated writer on the staff of *Household Words*, was deeply concerned about social issues in Great Britain. He wrote articles on topics that dealt with the poor, issues of empire, and even on slavery in North America. However, Morley did more than

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[235] Ibid.

[236] Ibid.

just advocate for social reform based on abuses he saw; he was also motivated by his Christian

commitments. Although educated primarily in England, he spent two years abroad studying at

the Moravian school in Neuwied am Rhine in the Palatinate from the age of ten to twelve and a

half, which by his own account made a definitive impact on his subsequent life.[237] Moving from

the violent "fagging" system of the English schools, Morley's experience with the Moravians

was transformative.[238] He would later write of the Moravians,

> They are brother Christians who do not seek to make proselytes to this or that form of Church government or doctrinal belief, but uniting themselves with a broad catholic sympathy to all Christians who put their hearts into the service of their Master, they act according to the spirit of Christ's own prayer that they all may be one, even as their Father is one. The bond of union is the Christian life, of which the chief marks are faith, patience, and love.[239]

These comments about the Moravians provide some insight into how Morley visualized

Christian communities that he believed offered the broader world something significant. Morley

may have found Müller appealing because he believed that Müller was operating in the same

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[237] Henry Shaen Solly, *The Life of Henry Morley, LL.D.* (London: Edward Arnold, 1898), 28-29.

[238] In Morley's mature opinion Moravian schools were effective in their transmission of the Christian faith and he believed they could transform the lives of children. Reflecting on his personal knowledge of the Moravians he wrote, "But a child's heart set among strangers who become as brothers and sisters by the quiet force of a human love that is bound inseparably to the love of God; who do not speak bitterly, or jangle, or boast themselves; whose yea and nay are always truth; whose motives are always kind; who are slow to think evil of anyone; and in whose thoughts and customs the prevailing feature is a childlike innocence—a child's heart set in a little world so fashioned, may well grow into a man's heart that will help a little towards bettering the fashion of the larger world." Morley continued in his assessment of the Moravians that, "I do not think that in the present day we depend only on the Moravians for such schools as these. But the Moravians alone, I think, have made this element in their teaching a first consideration—their reason, in fact, for being teachers—while I know no other Christian community as uniformly true to the larger catholic spirit that seeks to draw Christians of all forms of doctrine to fellowship in the one life that can unite them in a helpful brotherhood. They demonstrate religion in their daily ways; have it, and do not cant about it. Only they have not the false shame that substitutes in daily speech the lower for the higher aim." Ibid., 30.

[239] Quoted in Solly, *The Life of Henry Morley*, 29.

manner as the Moravians.[240] Although somewhat critical of Müller's personal theological views,

Morley's skepticism was curtailed into an endorsement of Müller as he examined the facts

surrounding the work in Bristol. Müller's work was seen as legitimate due to its longevity and

the goal of helping the most vulnerable in British society. Furthermore, Morley emphasized in

his article the German influences on Müller's approach to his life of faith, most notably Augustus

Herman Francke and the Moravians in Gnadau. Morley identified a common German religious

tradition that highlighted the work of those who had so deeply marked both Müller and him.

Morley's article was instrumental in giving legitimacy to Müller's enterprise in Bristol. In 1860,

The Newcastle Courant also noted that it had been "twenty-four years since this humble

stranger—Mr. Muller—whose name is a household word, came to Bristol."[241] Dicken's

Household Words provided Müller's work a new level of legitimacy. The widespread interest in

the work was also reinforced by the endless stream of publications by authors who intended to

draw attention to the work. As articles in periodicals increased Müller's public acclaim,

endorsements from respected pastors and laypeople further legitimized his methods and work.

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[240] Morley, a Nonconformist and Unitarian, identified strongly with Moravian
ecumenicalism. While serving as a school teacher, prior to the beginning of his literary career,
Morley recorded, "I teach nothing inconsistent with *any* Christian belief, except, indeed, the right
of private judgment; and, of course, it is inconsistent with each creed to speak with honour of its
neighbour—that I can't help." In addition to his broad understanding of the church, Morley also
took seriously his responsibility to highlight the impact of God on history for his students. He
explained that part of his goal as a teacher was "to lay the foundation of a true religious feeling,
to explain matters that puzzle children; I point out the hand of God in history, not obtrusively,
but habitually, so that the children consider it a thing of course to ascertain the use of any great
calamity." Morley's effort to point to the role of God in history for his students is also evident in
his analysis of the Müller's work in Bristol for readers of *Household Words*. Morley's
Nonconformist identification was rooted in his antipathy towards any official connection existing
between church and state. Solly, *The Life of Henry Morley*, 185.

[241] "The Bristol Miracle," *Newcastle Courant*, n. p.

206

"He habitually walks with God"

Establishing legitimacy within the context of Victorian Britain was a task that was difficult for someone who lacked the social and cultural connections that could verify their credentials and work. Readers of evangelical periodicals were encouraged by editors to read Müller's *Narrative* and visit the orphanage when they happened to be in Bristol.[242] Religious leaders from a wide variety of backgrounds acknowledged Müller's work. For example, Latter-day Saints, or Mormons as they are more commonly referred, endorsed Müller. In 1868, William B. Preston, a Latter-day Saint involved in the missionary efforts in England, wrote that he visited the Ashley Down Orphan Houses and was impressed by how they were run.[243] The curiosity about Müller among Latter-day Saints reappeared at the end of the nineteenth century when George Q. Cannon wrote a few months after Müller's death in 1898,

> It would scarcely be credible that in an age of unbelief like the present such an illustration of the power of faith through prayer could be found, were it not know [*sic*] to be true by the testimony of numbers of witnesses. It is comforting and instructive for Latter-day Saints to read of such instances as this, and it ought to strengthen the faith of everyone who believes that the Lord hears and answers prayer. To the Latter-day Saints who have been taught to have faith in the Lord such a case as that of Mr. Müller's ought to make them ashamed of their lack in this direction. The Latter-day Saints have received the Gospel of the Son of God, and with it many promises of the most precious character; but here is a man who had neither the Gospel in its fullness nor the Priesthood, whose faith was of so strong and unfaltering a character that he obtained answers to the prayers that he offered for help in the work he had undertaken for the benefit of God's children.
>
> The history of the Latter-day Saints is full of illustrations of the power of faith and the mighty works that can be accomplished by its exercise. Here we have an illustration of God's willingness to hear and answer the prayer of a man engaged in a work that must have been acceptable to the Almighty.[244]

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[242] "The New Orphan Houses, Ashley Down, Kingsdown, Bristol," *The Christian Cottagers' Magazine* 6 (London: Wertheim and Macintosh, 1850): 427.

[243] William B. Preston, "Correspondence," *The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star* 30 (Saturday, March 14, 1868): 173.

[244] George Q. Cannon, "Faith and Its Power," *The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star* 60 (Thursday, June 16, 1898): 375.

The inability to completely comprehend how an unbeliever in the tenets of Latter-Day Saint teaching could see such success baffled Cannon. He ultimately envisioned Müller's trust in faith and prayer as a condemnation on Latter-day Saints who knew the true Gospel but were unable to live out the life of faith. Furthermore, the object of Müller's work, destitute orphan children, provided an underlying rationale for why God seems to have responded to Müller's prayers. Even Latter-day Saints in Great Britain, whose theological difference from Müller was unbridgeable, acknowledged his life of devotion that was confirmed by trustworthy witnesses.

The witnesses who testified to Müller's work were usually like-minded evangelicals who gave legitimacy to his claims and celebrated his methods through their sermons, articles, and books. There were also those who were impressed by the work and offered apologetic letters and articles on Müller's behalf in newspapers throughout Great Britain.[245] However, the single most important and influential British evangelical with whom Müller had an intimate relationship with was the greatest preacher of the age, Rev. Charles Haddon Spurgeon.[246] Spurgeon's reputation as an orator was unmatched in the second half of the nineteenth century, and even Dwight L. Moody showed great deference to Spurgeon. Despite Surgeon's stature as

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[245] "A Charity That Does Not Beg," *The Times*, December 11, 1871, 4.

[246] Russell H. Conwell, *Life of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, The World's Great Preacher* (n.p.: Edgewood Publishing Co., 1892), 407. Conwell, it should be noted, at this point in his distinguished career was already known throughout the country for his prosperity sermon "Acres of Diamonds," and for his leadership of Grace Baptist Church and Temple College (today Temple University) in Philadelphia.

one of the leading lights of Nonconformity in Great Britain and his global renown among

evangelicals, the person who most impressed him was Müller.[247]

Historian of revivalism Lewis Drummond quoted Spurgeon as saying of his first meeting

with Müller in November of 1854, "I could not speak a word for the life of me."[248] Spurgeon's

awe of Müller was evident in their initial meeting.[249] However, they developed a close

friendship that would mark the lives of both men. Spurgeon also established an orphanage based

on Müller's example and even his method of reliance on God to meet the needs of the orphans

was inspired by Müller.[250] Spurgeon's respect for Müller was based on a shared sense of

mission, calling, and responsibility. Spurgeon's son, Thomas, affirmed that his father enjoyed

the friendship of Müller, John Bost, and J. Hudson Taylor[251] most because he saw these men as

"kindred spirits."[252] Spurgeon's admiration for Müller would be reflected throughout his life and

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[247] Spurgeon was the most famous preacher in the English-speaking world in the nineteenth century. His sermons and activities were widely published on both sides of the Atlantic and around the world. Spurgeon was noted primarily for his preaching abilities.

[248] Quoted in Lewis A. Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1992), 420.

[249] Apparently, Craik was also friends with Spurgeon according to an inscription found in a copy of *Faith in God as to Temporal Things* given in 1855 to Spurgeon by Craik. Quoted in Short, *The Story*, 15.

[250] "Mr. Spurgeon's Orphanage," *The Liverpool Mercury*, Tuesday, March 30, 1869, 3.

[251] John Bost, an evangelical pastor, also served as director of an orphanage in La Force, France. Bost was praised as the "Vincent de Paul of Protestantism." W. L. Lang, "John Bost, Pastor and Philanthropist," *The Quiver* 18 (London: Cassell & Company, Ltd., 1883): 474.

[252] Thomas Spurgeon, "Father's Furlough, and How I Shared It," in *C. H. Spurgeon's Autobiography: Complied from His Diary, Letters, and Records, by His Wife and His Private Secretary, Volume IV, 1878-1892* (London: Passmore and Alabsater, 1900), 4. Thomas also pointed out that Müller was able to calm his father's fears when he wrote, "We had a whole day with George Müller in Dr. Bennet's garden, and I am able to copy from my letter of the

ministry. As noted earlier in this chapter, sermons were preached by Spurgeon in which Müller

was depicted as a model of Christian piety.[253] Magazine articles written by Spurgeon endorsed

the Bristol philanthropist as one of the great Christians of the age.[254] In an article in *The Sword

and the Trowel*, Spurgeon stated, "Mr. Müller gives us more the idea of Enoch than any man we

have ever met: he habitually walks with God."[255] Spurgeon included Müller as someone in the

"first rank" of God's mighty saints, but he also noted that Christian heroes should not be

worshiped. Spurgeon's equation of Müller with Enoch disregarded his own warning against hero

worship. By asserting that Müller was nearest to Enoch, a man in the Old Testament book of

Genesis who supposedly did not experience death due to his holiness, Spurgeon gave Müller a

high compliment.[256] However, lest someone should really believe that Müller was distinguished

by some unusual power, Spurgeon clarified that it is all the more amazing because he has "no

flash of oratory, or brilliance of poetry, or breadth of thought, or originality of mind," instead

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following date this striking testimony as to the advantage of such fellowship:—"Dear father declares himself far better able to 'trust and not be afraid' through intercourse with Mr. Müller." Ibid., 13.

[253] Spurgeon publicly acknowledged Müller as a "dear friend." C. H. Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit: Sermons Preached and Revised by C. H. Spurgeon, During the Year 1879, Vol. 25* (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1880), 646. Also see, C. H. Spurgeon, *Sermons* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1883), 324.

[254] C. H. Spurgeon, "Individual Efforts and Successes," *The Baptist Magazine* 54 (April 1862): 232-238.

[255] C. H. Spurgeon, "Interviews With Three of the King's Captains," *The Sword and the Trowel* (May 1879): 229.

[256] Spurgeon placed Müller in the context of someone equal to those celebrated in the biblical text itself. Hebrews chapter 11 lists the triumphs of faith by the Old Testament heroes of the faith that began with Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets. According to Hebrews 11:5, "Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; and he was not found because God took him up; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was to God." Genesis 5:24 records, "Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him." NASB.

Spurgeon affirmed, "George Müller is enabled to be one of the most useful of living preachers by his simply testifying to facts by which he has for himself proved the love and truth of God."[257]

In addition to Spurgeon, Müller made a direct impact on a number of British evangelicals who were or became significant leaders in society. They were impressed by his piety and his unique approach to funding his philanthropic venture in Bristol. J. Hudson Taylor, Dr. Thomas Barnardo,[258] C. T. Studd[259] are among the notable British evangelicals who were influenced by Müller. Outside of Great Britain, his method of living by faith to support evangelical philanthropic works also attracted imitators.[260]

The Prayer-Gauge Debate and Spiritualism

Müller's leadership of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution, the orphan homes, and two churches contributed to his being regarded as a leading public authority on prayer and faith. His statements and actions were deemed newsworthy and were recorded in scores of short articles in periodicals and newspapers. His thoughts on politics,[261] his effort to send books to Chicago

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[257] Spurgeon, "Interviews With Three of the King's Captains," 230.

[258] Gillian Wagner, *Barnardo* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979), 28.

[259] Studd was impressed by Müller's philanthropic and missionary work. When Studd disposed of his inheritance be gave Müller £4,000 for missionary work and £1,000 for the orphans. Norman P. Grubb, *C. T. Studd: Cricketer and Pioneer* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1933), 66.

[260] In Germany, a Dr. Koppel founded a mission to Jews and the homeless based on Müller's method. "Jedidiah and Nathaniel," *The Scattered Nation; Past, Present, and Future* 4 (March 1, 1869): 77-79.

[261] Parrack mistakenly asserts, "Müller as an individual, made no attempt at all to become embroiled in politics even at the most parochial level." Parrack, "A Study of the Activities of Committed Nonconformists," 183. What Parrack did not examine to affirm his own claim was

after the "Great Fire,"[262] the marriage of his daughter, Lydia, were all part of a public persona.[263]

The Staffordshire Daily Sentinel reported on December 29, 1875 that "there are few who do not

know Mr. Muller and the principles on which he works."[264] By then Müller was a well-known

religious personality in Great Britain and around the world. [265] Müller recognized the impact of

his success and he acknowledged, "Multitudes of sinners have been thus converted, multitudes of

the children of God in all parts of the world have been benefited by this work, even as I had

anticipated."[266] What he did not anticipate was how those outside of evangelical circles would

receive his testimony of prayer and faith.

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the periodical literature where such comments appeared. Although Müller did not often address politics, when he did people took notice and his thoughts and opinions escaped the local press in Bristol to circulate more widely in British society. For example, William Gladstone's successful fight for the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland in May of 1869 attracted Müller's attention and criticism. Müller feared disestablishment would not lead to greater religious freedom, but to the resurgence of Roman Catholicism. "Mr. Müller on the Present Religious Crisis," *The Gospel Magazine* 43 (July 1869): 386-387.

[262] "Books for Chicago," *The Christian* (January 25, 1872): 8.

[263] "Marriage of Miss Müller, of Bristol," *The Christian* (November 23, 1871): 12.

[264] "Mr. Muller's Orphanage," *The Staffordshire Daily Sentinel*, December 29, 1875, 4.

[265] Müller dated his own knowledge of achieving broader recognition for his philanthropic works to 1839. When reflecting on the jealously for his widespread acclaim, which could have damaged his relationship with his friend and ministry co-leader, Henry Craik, Müller stated, "But when it pleased the Lord from the beginning of 1839, and thenceforth, to condescend to bestow such abundant honour upon me, as He did in connection with the Orphan Houses, and the other objects of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad, the temptation was the other way, especially when this work was more and more extended, and the blessing of God resting thereon became greater and greater. Then my beloved friend, had cause for envy. But how was it in reality? There were few, if any, who more truly rejoiced in all the honour which the Lord condescended to put on me, than my friend did." W. Elfe Tayler, *Passages from the Diary and Letters of Henry Craik, of Bristol*, intro. George Müller (London: J. F. Shaw & Co., 1866), xiv.

[266] Müller, *A Narrative, Fifth Part* (1874), 35.

Müller attracted attention from those who were exploring Spiritualism and mid-nineteenth century discussions about the efficacy of prayer that culminated in the Prayer-Gage Debate in the 1870s and 1880s. The Prayer-Gauge Debate began in 1871 following an appeal for prayer for the Prince of Wales, Albert Edward, who suffered from typhoid fever. Queen Victoria and most of Great Britain worried that the prince would succumb to the illness as his father had ten years earlier. The Church of England clergy, along with many Nonconformists, prayed for the healing of the prince and the prayers appeared to have been answered when he recovered. John Tyndall, a leading British scientist, doubted the efficacy of the call to prayer and challenged the idea that God acted supernaturally in the natural world. Tyndall and another scientist, Sir Henry Thompson, called for a scientific "test" to measure prayer's effectiveness that appeared in the July 1872 issue of the *Contemporary Review* and started the controversy.[267]

Alfred Russel Wallace, the naturalist responsible for the concept of the natural selection (survival of the fittest) in evolutionary theory,[268] engaged Müller as a solution to the Prayer-Gauge Debate in an article he wrote entitled, "Defence of Modern Spiritualism," that was published in *The Fortnightly Review* in May and June of 1874. Wallace argued that Spiritualism, a belief in the ability to manipulate non-material conscious beings, solved the problem of the debate.[269] Wallace complained that Müller's *Narrative* should have been examined from the

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[267] Robert Bruce Mullin, "Science, Miracles, and the Prayer-Gauge Debate," in *When Science and Christianity Meet*, ed. David C. Lindberg and Ronald L. Numbers (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 203-224.

[268] Alfred Russel Wallace (1823-1913) was a self-educated scientist who prompted Charles Darwin to publish his work *On the Origins of Species* in 1859. John Gribbin, *The Scientists: A History of Science Told Through the Lives of Its Great Inventors* (New York: Random House, 2002), 354-355.

[269] Spiritualism is defined, in nineteenth century terms, as the belief that communication with the souls of the dead and spiritual entities is possible via some sort of medium, such as a

start since the text offered an accounting of over four decades of answered prayer. Wallace

thought that any test conceived to gauge prayer could not match the written record provided by

Müller.[270] Wallace argued that Müller drew on a "mediumistic power" to cause others to answer

his prayers. Wallace explained this theory when he wrote,

> The perfect simplicity, faith, boundless charity, and goodness of George Müller, have
> enlisted in his cause beings of a like nature; and his mediumistic powers have enabled
> them to work for him by influencing others to send him money, food, clothes, &c., all
> arriving, as we should say, just in the nick of time.[271]

Wallace did state that it would be possible to dismiss Müller if his accounting of events was

"partial and discontinuous."[272] However, that was not the case for Müller and Wallace argued

that his daily reliance on prayer to meet the needs of the orphans warranted a serious

examination of the facts.[273] The Prayer-Gauge Debate was openly discussed in leading British

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trance or a prayer, that provoked action. Martin Fichman, *An Elusive Victorian: The Evolution of Alfred Russel Wallace* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 139.

[270] Henry Thompson, an eminent surgeon in London, argued for a hospital test where the sick were prayed over and answers to any prayers could be confirmed by doctors and scientists. For a detailed analysis of the issues see, Frank M. Turner, *Contesting Cultural Authority: Essays in Victorian Intellectual Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 151-170.

[271] Alfred Russel Wallace, "A Defence of Modern Spiritualism, Part II," *The Fortnightly Review* 90 (June 1874): 800.

[272] Ibid.

[273] An anonymous writer in the periodical *London Society*, also thought that Müller's work should be examined more closely. Wallace argued that Müller was drawing spiritual beings toward his work and that those beings influenced people to give money and goods to Müller. The *London Society* writer perceived Müller's explanation that God answered his prayers as simplistic, but agreed that Müller's explanation seemed more plausible than the use of spiritual mediums. Tongue-in-cheek the writer also noted, "Without detracting from the efficacy of prayer, we may express a hope that the pecuniary success which has attended Mr. Müller's wrestlings will not at once induce a large number of young men to marry with no more substantial marriage settlement than Mr. Müller could give, or it is to be feared that pauperism will largely increase. Indeed, we should regard Mr. Müller himself with more unfeigned respect

periodicals and newspapers for the next year and half. For nearly a decade after the debate ended

in the popular culture, concerned pastors and laypeople continued to address skeptics in tracts

and sermons.[274] Müller's story served as a rebuttal to skepticism and doubt. He was also used as

an example of the "prayer telephone"[275]—that allowed him to influence donors through a

telepatheic power.[276] Likewise, his chronicle of his answered prayer and the material monument

of the five large orphan houses on Ashley Down appeared to refute many of the criticisms about

the effectiveness of prayer.[277]

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if he had followed the example of the Apostle Paul, and had denied himself the luxury of a wife."
Free Lance [pseud.], "Social Subjects," *London Society* 26 (July 1874): 90.

[274] R. Henry Roberts, *Prayer and Contemporary Criticism: Five Sermons* (London:
Hodder and Stoughton, 1873).

[275] The journalist W. T. Stead argued, "Elijah with his ravens was not a circumstance to
Muller of Bristol and Barnardo. Muller is a more remarkable case, because he sticks to the
Telephone of Prayer, whereas Dr. Barnardo supplemented his Telephone by judicious
advertisement, for which he has quite a genius. But when hard pressed it is the Telephone he
[Barnardo] relies on." W. T. Stead, "Character Sketch: Dr. Barnardo: The Father of 'Nobody's
Children,'" *The Review of Reviews* 14 (July 15, 1896): 27.

[276] Spiritualists maintained an interest in Müller and other evangelical philanthropists
who claimed that God answered their prayers. One creative response to the claim for answered
prayer was that prayer had a "telepathic telephonic character" that allowed it the person who
prayed to influence those who might be susceptible to their prayers. "The Prayer Telephone,"
Borderland 4, no. 2 (April 1897): 171-173; "Decease of George Müller," *The Theosophist* 19,
no. 8 (May 1898): 510-511; F. F. Twemlow, "The Ashley Down Orphanages," *Otago Witness*
[New Zealand], December 1, 1898, 47; Frederick F. Twemlow, "The Ashley Down
Orphanages,—Prayer or Telepathy: Which is it?," *Otago Witness* [New Zealand], March 16,
1899, 55; W. T. Stead, "Beyond Our Ken," *The Los Angeles Times*, January 5, 1900, 5.

[277] Anna Louise Strong, "The Relation of the Subconscious to Prayer," *The American
Journal of Religious Psychology and Education* 2 (1907): 165; John Thomas, "The New Cult of
Mechanised Faith," *Evangelical Quarterly* 14, no. 4 (October 1942): 302-308.

Conclusion

Müller's recognition as a popular religious personality paralleled the rise of Great

Britain's Queen Victoria who ruled from 1837 until her death in 1901. As the length of her reign

increased Victoria became more respected and beloved by her subjects in Great Britain and even

found a flock of admirers in the United States. In a similar manner, Müller's popularity soared

as an exemplar of practical piety with each year that he continued to live by faith.[278] Even as he

aged he was presented as embodying the late-Victorian ideal of "vigorous manhood."[279] His

extraordinary long life confirmed his unique relationship with God and his holiness.[280] Every

annual report released by Müller affirmed dependence on prayer and his ability to provide for the

orphans.[281] There were no critical counter narratives that added complexity to his life story.

Rather, throughout the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s Müller's philanthropic work remained part of

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[278] Müller's life was evidence of the "full experience" of the Christian life that evangelicals hoped to see in their own lives. John B. Wood, "Christ's Teaching to the World in the New Testament," in *Proceedings of the Universal Peace Congress, Held in the Westminster Town Hall, London, From 14th to 19th July, 1890* (London: Office of the Congress, 1890), 80.

[279] "Local News," *The Bristol Mercury*, September 9, 1880, 5.

[280] In an interview Müller gave in 1892 the reporter exclaimed, "Mr. Müller uttered these sentences with a solemnity and earnestness which were simply awe-inspiring. To think that at the advanced age of 88 he should still retain active control of the great work he initiated more than half a century ago is simply miraculous. When a young man, by his own excesses, he appeared to have shattered his constitution, and was several times physically prostrate. That he has been preserved unto this day he regards as an unmistakble [*sic*] evidence of the good hand of God upon him." "Mr. Geo. Muller Interviewed," *The Bristol Mercury*, December 12, 1892, 8.

[281] Even critics of Müller's claims found it difficult to dismiss the mass of evidence related to his support of the orphans by faith. For an example see H. B. Freeman, "How They Turned the Corner," *The Quiver: Annual Volume, 1905* (London: Cassell and Company, 1905): 1256.

the public consciousness, and even extended beyond his own lifetime.[282] His life was celebrated

as simplistic tale of the triumph of "the power of faith and prayer."[283] His global journeys to

preach and teach were widely documented in newspapers and amplified his influence and status.

[284] Newspaper and magazine updates kept the public aware of the sums given to the orphanage

and other outreach efforts he conducted.[285] His success was seen as a cure for despondency.[286]

He was depicted in the form of a simple ascetic evangelical who also happened to be a great

business executive.[287] He was, by all accounts, the embodiment of Christian piety whose

presence and participation in a religious service was depicted as a history making moment.[288]

His story was available in railway bookstalls, in cheap tracts, in books, sermons, magazines, and

newspapers.[289]

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[282] In 1921, with great fanfare the Prince of Wales visited Ashley Down and the orphans.
Janet and Derek Fisher, *Bygone Bristol: Müller's Orphanage Ashley Down on Old Postcards*
(Bristol: Bygone Bristol, n.d.), 31.

[283] "George Muller and His Work," *The Baptist Missionary Magazine* 86, no. 9
(September 1896): 491; "The Obituary Record," *The American Monthly Review of Reviews* 17,
no. 4 (April 1898): 407.

[284] His sermons tended to emphasize his human frailty and sinfulness, while promoting
God's presence even in the most difficult of circumstances. For an example see, "Sermon by
Mr. Müller, Alma Road, Sunday Evening, 20 June 1887," George Müller and Family, Letters
and Papers, Muller House, 7 Cotham Park, Bristol, England.

[285] "News of the Churches," *The Leeds Mercury*, December 8, 1895, 7.

[286] "Editor's Workshop," *Night and Day: A Monthly Record of Christian Missions and
Practical Philanthropy* 6 (Saturday, June 16, 1877): 76.

[287] "George Muller," *The Christian World* 19, no. 1 (January 1868): 34.

[288] "Y.M.C.A. Annual Report," *The Bristol Mercury*, October 21, 1896, 2.

[289] Rev. Charles Bullock produced a six-penny pamphlet entitled *George Müller* that was
sold at railway bookstalls. Bullock's pamphlet was marketed as part of the "Midsummer

When Müller died on March 10, 1898, newspapers and periodicals around the world

reported the news that the benefactor of Bristol's orphans would be sorely missed.[290] *The*

Sketch, a British society periodical that focused on leading public personalities, included a

photograph of Müller's funeral.[291] The photograph shows thousands of people filling the street

as dozens of horse-drawn carriages proceeded in an orderly fashion along the main thoroughfare

in Bristol. The editor of *The Sketch* reported, "The funeral of Mr. George Müller, of Bristol, on

Monday week was so remarkable that I give a full-page picture of the procession. The streets to

St. Arno Cemetery were crowded, and ten thousand people assembled in the graveyard. Among

the mourning party were four elderly men who, over half-a-century ago, were under Mr.

Müller's care in his first unpretentious orphanage home."[292] *The Times* reported that the

National Council of Evangelical Free Churches, which happened to be meeting in Bristol when

Müller died, passed a "resolution of condolence" in support of family and friends.[293] *Sunday at*

Home, published by the Religious Tract Society, summarized his life with the simple epitaph, "A

Wonderful life, almost, yet not quite, unique, for even George Müller had one example that he

followed [which was Francke]. His was, indeed, a faith that moved mountains, and brought

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Volumes" that were to be read while on a train or boat or lounging at the beach or river. "Home
Words [Advertisement]," *Myra's Journal* (Friday, July 1, 1898): 46; J. Wier published a four-
penny book entitled, *The Bristol Orphan Homes and Their Founder; The Story of George Muller
and His Work*, that was available in the middle of the century at bookshops. "The Bristol
Orphan Homes and Their Founder [Advertisement]," *The Missionary News* 7 (June 15, 1866):
84.

[290] "Latest Cable News," *West Coast Times* [New Zealand], March 12, 1898, 2;
"Telegraphic," *Timaru Herald* [New Zealand], March 12, 1898, 2; "The Late Mr. George
Muller," *The Friend of India* [Calcutta] 77, no. 15 (April 14, 1898): 21.

[291] "The Funeral of the Late Mr. Müller, at Bristol," *The Sketch* (March 23, 1898): 365.

[292] "Small Talk," *The Sketch* (March 23, 1898): 364.

[293] "Evangelical Free Church Congress," *The Times*, March 12, 1898, 7.

about, to human ideas, the impossible."[294] Müller was the epitome of an evangelical saint whose story of faith and prayer was proven by a long life uniquely blessed by God materially, spiritually, and even physically. Newspapers around the world recognized that someone special had died.[295]

The attractiveness of the Ashley Down Orphan Homes as a monument of evangelical charity resulted in their becoming the beneficiary of enormous wealth. Untold numbers of admirers throughout Great Britain left sizeable "legacies" upon their death to Müller and the orphanage.[296] Funds continued to flow from ordinary Christians to support the massive buildings that crowned Ashley Down.   In 1903, five years after Müller's death, *The Missionary Review of the World* published an article entitled, "George Muller Yet Speaketh." The article asserted that "the spirit of this man [Müller] still survives and is active, since £1,120,000 ($5,600,000) in answer to prayer is the showing of the Muller Orphanage, Bristol, England, since its beginning, £41,702 being last year's contribution. Notwithstanding many prophecies that after the death of its founder the work would needs [*sic*] be carried on by new methods, it has continued for five

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[294] James Baker, "George Müller at Home," *The Sunday at Home, 1897-1898* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1898): 424.

[295] "The Late Mr. George Muller," 22.

[296] Bequests varied in amounts from £100 to £500 to even thousands of pounds and remained a form of giving to the Orphan Homes after Müller's death in March of 1898. "High Court of Justice," *The Weekly Reporter* 35 (October 29, 1887): 572-573; "Local Wills," *The Liverpool Mercury*, June 9, 1890, 6; "Wills and Bequests," *The Birmingham Daily Post*, March 31, 1893, 4; "Wills and Bequests," *The Manchester Guardian*, March 31, 1893, 7; "Mrs. Harriette Howard's Will," *The Manchester Guardian*, August 9, 1898, 9; "Bacup Man's Large Bequests," *The Manchester Guardian*, April 17, 1912, 16; "Bequests to Southport Charities," *The Manchester Guardian*, February 20, 1917, 10.

years under Mr. Muller's plan of nearly sixty years."[297] Müller's reputation persisted in the

popular consciousness and benefactors continued to endow the orphan homes with wealth.[298]

Evangelicals venerated his method of living by faith as evidence that God answers prayer

and encouraged others to follow in his footsteps.[299] British society, in general, praised his

philanthropic work[300] and reiterated the legend that through prayer alone his needs were

supplied.[301] Mary Rowles Jarvis captured the sentiment of the moment in poem she wrote to

honor Müller. The first stanza of the poem proclaimed,

> A Prince is fallen, and the nation s'ghs
>> With countless orphans, for their Greatheart gone;
>> Yet faith that won such measureless replies
> Abides immortal—though the hero dies,
>> His witness still lives on![302]

For Jarvis, for Christians, and for Great Britain a hero of the faith had died, but the orphanage,

the institutions, and the hero's memory remained entrenched in the lives of those who knew of

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[297] "George Muller Yet Speaketh," *The Missionary Review of the World* 16, no. 10 (October 1903): 789. Also see, "Müller's Faith Still Lives," *The Missionary Review of the World* 24, no. 9 (September 1901): 708-709.

[298] Some believed the legacies were evidence of God's faithfulness to Müller's prayers. The largest single legacy received by the Ashley Down Orphan Houses came two years after the founder's death and was touted by evangelicals as further evidence of God's faithfulness. "Faith and Works Exemplified," *The Missionary Review of the World* 24, no. 4 (April 1901): 298.

[299] "The Christian Church is Poorer for the Removal of George Müller," *China's Millions* (Friday, April 1, 1898): 54; "The Afternoon Meeting," *China's Millions* (Friday, July 1, 1898): 98.

[300] "George Muller, The Orphans' Friend," *At Home and Abroad: A Wesleyan Missionary Magazine for Young Helpers in the Work* 9 (Thursday, September 1, 1898): 173-176.

[301] Much of the time Müller was invoked for an apologetic purpose against those who doubted Christianity. "Local Atheism," *The Birmingham Owl* 970 (Friday, March 18, 1898): 5.

[302] Mary Rowles Jarvis, "In Memoriam. George Müller," *The Sunday at Home, 1897-1898* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1898): 426.

his legend. The chapter has argued that the public perception of Müller as a man who accomplished everything by prayer was due to the mass of publications that he and others produced to promote his story. These printed proclamations promoted the notion that prayer gave agency to his prodigious work and created his legend.[303] The resulting celebrity enabled ordinary Britons and devout evangelicals to informally canonize Müller as a hero of the faith.[304] This chapter has highlighted his pastoral labors, philanthropic work, and the publishing efforts that resulted in his legitimization and celebration. The next chapter will analyze those persons and texts that influenced Müller's thought and prompted him to embrace living by faith as a tool for "strengthening the faith of the children of God."[305]

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[303] Rev. R. Morris of Clifton observed, "By the outside world he is regarded as a wild enthusiast, whose good fortune has given him success, and whose success the world worships." R. Morris, *Faith, Prayer, and Work: As Illustrated in the Life, Character, and Labours of Mr. Müller, The Founder of the Orphan Houses, Ashley Down, Bristol* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, & Co., 1866), 18.

[304] Historian Aviad M. Kleinberg argues that popular canonization of a saint occurred when ordinary people identified someone as a saint. The key element in this identification process was sanctity. Aviad M. Kleinberg, *Prophets in Their Own Country: Living Saints and the Making of Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 35.

[305] Müller, *A Narrative, First Part.* 9th ed. (1895), 146.

CHAPTER 5

"STRENGTHEN THEM IN FAITH"

Introduction

Locating the antecedents for Müller's method of living by faith is essential for

understanding why evangelicals and others identified him as an embodiment of sanctity.

Historians of the Christian Brethren and of evangelicalism have emphasized the British

evangelical context and, in particular, Anthony Norris Groves and the early Christian Brethren

over Müller's roots in German Pietism. The evidence that Müller provided in the *Narrative*

indicates that a chief source of inspiration for his life of faith was August Hermann Francke.[1] In

addition to the conscious recognition of Francke, evidence also suggests that an eighteenth-

century British evangelical influenced Müller. Although previous historians and biographers

have not recognized the influence, William Huntington, S.S. (1763-1813) was another source for

Müller's thought.[2] This chapter will analyze how Groves, Huntington, and Francke each

contributed to Müller's practice of the life of faith. A close reading of the texts that gave

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[1] A. T. Pierson, his authorized biographer, also emphasized the importance of Francke. Arthur T. Pierson, *George Müller of Bristol and His Witness to a Prayer Hearing God*, intro. James Wright (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., n.d.), 137.

[2] Huntington added the letters "S.S." after his name to indicate to a status-conscious British culture his lowly origins as a "Sinner Saved." Richard Heath, *The English Peasant: Studies: Historical, Local, and Biographic* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1893), 351; David Bebbington, *Holiness in Nineteenth-Century England: The 1998 Didsbury Lectures* (Cumbria, U.K.: Paternoster Publishing, 2000), 32.

impetus to Müller's activities will firmly locate him on a continuum of Pietist-evangelical religious practice that began in the seventeenth century, was widely celebrated in the eighteenth century, and was venerated in the nineteenth century. This continuum of practice, regarding living by faith, has connected Anglo-American evangelicals to German Pietist practice since the dawn of the eighteenth century. It is within the context of this historic religious practice that Müller connected with evangelicals. In his effort to emulate Francke, Müller embraced Pietist practice that is at the heart of evangelical identity. Consequently, Müller was able to transcend a broad spectrum of theological, denominational, and cultural divisions and appeal to traits common among evangelicals. Müller experienced dramatic results: he became the object of conspicuous celebration around the world.

Christian Devotedness and Müller

Discovering the inspiration for the behavior of another human being in history is often the most difficult task that a historian faces, particularly when detailed information that identifies the source for a thought and action is not available. The debate about the origins for the life of faith continues among historians and religious studies scholars. One of the most well-known studies of the "faith principle" is *The Story of Faith Missions: From Hudson Taylor to Present Day Africa* written by Klaus Fiedler. Although Fiedler does not focus on everyday issues of the life of faith for personal practice, he does focus on the notion of "faith missions" as a legacy of J. Hudson Taylor, the founder of the China Inland Mission. Fiedler concerns himself with Taylor's decision to follow the "faith principle," which is the idea to "expect his support only 'as an answer to prayer in faith.'"[3] According to Fiedler, Taylor

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[3] Klaus Fiedler, *The Story of Faith Missions: From Hudson Taylor to Present Day Africa* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 1994), 24.

. . . followed the innovative "faith principle" of the non-church missions which, originating from the Brethren movement, came into existence at about the same time as the independent missions. The first non-church missionary was Anthony Norris Groves (1795-1853), who went with his party to Baghdad in 1829. Originally Groves, a self-employed dentist, wanted to work with the CMS [Church Missionary Society]; however, shortly before he was due to travel, he severed his connection to the CMS because he could not agree to being ordained by any denomination. Soon after leaving the CMS, he became convinced that no ordination at all was necessary. The Brethren did not see themselves as a church but as a movement, trying to achieve "the unity of all believers" from all denominations and beyond all denominations. Movements of this kind can be called non-denominational, which means that they do not see themselves as a denomination, although to the outsider they seem to behave quite like one.

The Brethren and, with it, the non-church missions are evangelical in piety, but they are not included among faith missions because they are not interdenominational. Because the Brethren do not ordain, ordination has no role in the non-church missions either. Non-church missions do not usually join mission associations, but they do not refuse to cooperate with other evangelical missions.[4]

Fiedler's interpretation credits Anthony Norris Groves and the Brethren as the source for "faith missions."[5] However, Fiedler, in a confusing manner, does not include the Brethren in "faith missions" because "they are not interdenominational," but he does state that they do "cooperate with other evangelical missions." Despite the perplexing analysis of the Christian Brethren, he does emphasize that Groves made a significant contribution to the origins of faith missions and subsequently influenced Taylor and Müller.[6] Although Fiedler does not explain in detail the connection between these individuals, he does show on a chart entitled, "Fanny and Grattan

[4] Ibid., 24-25

[5] Fiedler argues, "The first important faith mission missionary was Karl Gützlaff (1803-1851), a German Lutheran who, in 1828, left the Nederlandsch Zendelinggenootschap because his mission did not agree to his work among the Chinese in Indonesia. Gützlaff usually earned his support by working for a government." Gützlaff is linked by Fiedler to Taylor as a source of inspiration similar to Groves. Ibid., 24.

[6] According to Fiedler, "In their formative years, Hudson Taylor, Fanny Guinness, Grattan Guinness, and many others were strongly influenced by them [Open Brethren]. Hudson Taylor received the faith principle of support from Müller, who in turn had received it from Groves via [Henry] Craik. Most of the early financial support for the CIM [China Inland Mission] came from Brethren assemblies or through George Müller's 'Scriptural Knowledge Institution.'" Ibid., 171.

Guinness and the Faith Mission Movement in Africa—An Overview," a clear chain of influence that links Groves to Müller and both Groves and Müller to Taylor.[7] Fiedler's approach to Groves and to Müller denies any sort of precedent for their thought and practice in the history of evangelicalism. Fiedler is primarily concerned with tracing out the influence of Taylor's work in promoting faith missions, but he fails to analyze adequately the historical depth of the idea or even the roots for the "faith principle."

Although Fiedler does not articulate a source that explains his rationale for giving preference to Groves' influence on Müller over other possible sources, Fiedler's assumption falls in line with the approach that many scholars have chosen to depict the movement of the faith principle among the early Christian Brethren. One of the most influential accounts that described the source of Müller's life of faith was published in 1901. William Blair Neatby wrote *A History of the Plymouth Brethren* after he published a series of articles in the *British Weekly* entitled, "Darby and Darbyism."[8] Neatby's book expands on these articles to produce a more complete history of Christian Brethren. According to Neatby, Müller was deeply influenced by Groves' tract *Christian Devotedness*.[9] Neatby asserted that evidence of Groves' influence on Müller appeared in the *Narrative* when Müller remarked, "It is now more than fourteen years since we set out in this way, and *we do not in the least regret the step we then took*."[10] Neatby goes on to explain his understanding of Müller's statement and argued,

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[7] Ibid., 36.

[8] William Blair Neatby, *A History of the Plymouth Brethren* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1901), v.

[9] Ibid., 54-55.

[10] Neatby added the italics to Müller's statement. Quoted in William Blair Neatby, *A History of the Plymouth Brethren* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1901), 55.

225

Before Müller had come to Teignmouth, Groves' tract on "Christian Devotedness" had given a real impulse to his mind; and his wife, [Mary,] whom he married on October 7, 1830, was Groves' sister. Evidently therefore Groves' influence counted for a good deal in the development of Müller's Brethrenism.[11]

The problem with Neatby's interpretation of Müller's statement is that there is no clear evidence that he was referring to Groves. Fourteen years earlier Müller had met Henry Craik, his closest friend and partner in ministry until 1866 when Craik died. Craik and Müller developed their ministry together and with considerable opposition at times, as chapter 4 noted. Therefore, the trace evidence of Groves' influence is undermined by the presence of Craik's relationship with Müller.[12] Müller's statement could also be referencing his wife, Mary, but the *Narrative* on this point does not clarify to whom Müller referred with any sort of certainty.

Neatby's interpretation of the influences that shaped Müller's practice were transformed even further in other studies. Roger Steer, a biographer, pushed the interpretation of Müller's *Narrative* to argue that the presence of the word "devotedness" suggested a connection between Müller and Groves.[13] This argument is certainly more plausible than the vague statement posited by Neatby. The root for Steer's argument is Müller's statement in his *Narrative* that, ". . . it pleased the Lord to lead me to see a higher standard of devotedness than I had seen before. He [God] led me, in a measure, to see what is my true glory in this world, even to be despised,

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[11] Ibid.

[12] The place of Groves in Müller's thinking is problematic. When offered the opportunity to go overseas as missionaries with Groves, Müller and Craik declined the offer and stayed in Bristol to co-lead of their growing religious enterprises. Although too much should not be read into this decision, Craik did hold a unique place in Müller's mind. George Müller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller, Minister of Christ, Written by Himself* (London: J. Nisbet, 1837), 101-102.

[13] Roger Steer, *George Müller: Delighted in God* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1975), 37.

and to be poor, and mean with Christ."[14] Focusing on the phrase "higher standard of

devotedness" Steer argues, "His comments on this in his journal suggest that he had carefully

studied and been impressed by Groves' tract *Christian Devotedness*."[15] Steer does not state the

source for this interpretation of Müller's *Narrative*, but the use of the word "devotedness" does

seem to imply some connection, if it can be shown that Müller regularly employed such words

and phrases to give clues to sources for his thought.[16]

To support such a connection between the word "devotedness" and Groves' tract, one

may examine how another evangelical used Groves' idea in written references. Alexander Duff,

the highly regarded Scottish missionary to India, did consciously employ the word

"devotedness" as a direct reference to his having read *Christian Devotedness*. In his journal

Groves recorded on April 16, 1834, "I had a nice note yesterday from dear Dr. Duff, who seems

a man of fine spirit; he speaks of his first glow of devotedness, as having arisen from my little

tract on 'Christian Devotedness.'"[17] In addition to the reference to the tract, Duff employed the

term "devotedness," as a marker of respect for his friend in a letter he wrote to Groves' widow.

Duff stated, "I could not help regarding him [Groves] as one of the most loving and loveable of

all Christian men; while the singular fervency of his spirit made it quite contagious, diffusing all

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[14] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 49.

[15] Steer, *George Müller*, 37.

[16] Another plausible explanation is that Müller heard the word used in the context of his relationship with his wife, Mary, or with Groves. If this were the case, then it seems possible that through everyday interactions with either his wife or his brother-in-law, the word simply became part of Müller's vocabulary.

[17] Harriet Baynes Groves, *Memoir of the Late Anthony Norris Groves, Containing Extracts from His Letters and Journals*, 2nd ed. (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1857), 295.

around the savour of unearthly sanctity and self-consuming devotedness."[18] Although this does

not prove a similar connection for Müller, evidence indicates that Groves's tract was influential

among evangelicals who had read it.[19] Steer, however, does not offer a critical analysis for the

use of the word "devotedness" in Müller's vocabulary. To complicate matters even further, in

reference to the vacation period from the London Society's seminary, Steer states that Müller

reflected on the respite in the following manner: "All in all he described the change which he

experienced during his stay in Devon as being 'like a second conversion.'"[20] Steer's strong

linking of Müller's use of the word "devotedness" with Groves' tract *Christian Devotedness* and

the idea of a "second conversion" have influenced subsequent research and writing on this point,

but often with others overstating Steer's basic assumption.[21]

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[18] Ibid., iv. The mutual respect and admiration between Duff and Groves allowed each to influence the other. According to one of Duff's biographers, Groves modified his view of education and missionary work after his interaction with Duff's work in Calcutta, India. George Smith, *The Life of Alexander Duff, D.D., LL.D.: Vol. 1* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1884), 267-268.

[19] The influence of Groves' tract, *Christian Devotedness*, was measurable among evangelicals. Historian David Hempton notes that Francis W. Newman, brother of John Henry Newman the leader of the Oxford Movement, read Groves' tract which became the "stimulus" for a "grand heroic mission on behalf of the apostolic church he [Francis] felt called to serve." Hempton explains, "Arising partly from his personal encounters with [John] [Nelson] Darby and from his reading of Groves, Newman had become convinced that the future expansion of Christendom depended not on the kind of Christian apologetics he learned at Oxford, nor on the tired old established churches of European Christendom, but rather on a newly minted heroic church 'animated by primitive faith, love and disinterestedness.'" David Hempton, *Evangelical Disenchantment: Nine Portraits of Faith and Doubt* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 45-46. For additional examples of the influence of the tract on university-age men in Scotland see, Timothy C. F. Stunt, *From Awakening to Secession: Radical Evangelicals in Switzerland and Britain 1815-35* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000), 126-127.

[20] Steer, *George Müller*, 37.

[21] Ken J. Newton, using Steer's biography as his source, states "But the most profound influence Groves was to exercise through that publication was over George Muller who in 1830 married the former's younger sister, Mary. The Mullers would literally follow much of what that

Another of Groves' biographers, Robert Bernard Dann, in his book, *Father of Faith Missions: The Life and Times of Anthony Norris Groves* affirms the influence of Groves though a creative misreading of Müller's *Narrative*. Dann claims, "About this time [when Müller was visiting Devonshire in August 1829] a small booklet with the unusual title of *Christian Devotedness* came into Müller's hands, and what he read moved him deeply. In fact it changed the course of his life. He experienced something, he said, 'like a second conversion.'"[22] Dann cites page 48 of volume I of Müller's *Narratives* (reprinted by Dust & Ashes Publications), which does not make any mention of Groves' tract but does make reference to a refining of Müller's understanding of Scripture, the imminent return of Christ, and a new focus on personal holiness, which Müller labels "devotedness." Again, this could be a coded reference, but Dann does not deal with the word in a sophisticated manner or hint at other possible sources for the use of the term. To complicate matters even further, the reference to a "second conversion" has no explicit relationship to Groves or his tract, *Christian Devotedness*. For clarification, Müller stated in the *Narrative* the following about a "second conversion" when he wrote, "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 I returned to London much better in body in the beginning of September; and, as to my soul, the change was so great that it

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tract advocated and George Muller acknowledged his great debt to Groves who became a mentor and a deep friend (Steer: 1975: 28f)." Ken J. Newton, *Anthony Norris Groves: (1795-1853) A Neglected Missiologist* (Brisbane, Australia: Christian Brethren Research Fellowship, 1985), 2. For an additional example see, William Lawrence Svelmoe, *A New Vision for Missions: William Cameron Townsend, the Wycliffe Bible Translators, and the Culture of Early Evangelical Faith Missions, 1896-1945* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2008), 65.

[22] Robert Bernard Dann, *Father of Faith Missions: The Life and Times of Anthony Norris Groves* (Milton Keynes, U.K.: Authentic Media, 2004), 86.

was like a second conversion."[23] Nowhere does Müller mention Groves or link his "second

conversion" with reading *Christian Devotedness*. Rather, the time for physical rest and spiritual

reflection helped Müller recover from both physical and mental duress.[24]

G. H. Lang articulates a more cautious account of the influence of Groves and *Christian*

Devotedness on Müller. Lang begins his book entitled, *Anthony Norris Groves: Saint and*

Pioneer, by referencing Groves' impact on Müller's approach to Christian living. To Lang's

credit he does not blindly accept the story that has developed in the literature regarding Groves'

influence on Müller through the tract. Lang, however, points to the confusion regarding this

story, although with hopeful bias, when he states,

> Mr. Neatby affirms of George Müller's earliest days in England, that 'Groves' early
> pamphlet on Christian Devotedness fell into his hands, and influenced him powerfully'
> and 'gave a real impulse to his mind' (*History* 54, 55). It may well have been so, though
> Mr. Müller does not mention this in the early part of his *Narrative* upon the period in
> question.[25]

In Lang's view, Francke, the Halle Pietists, and Tholuck were not as important as Groves was for

influencing Müller's practice of the life of faith. For Lang, the fact that in a little over a year

Müller married Groves' sister, Mary, and decided "to go about the work of the Lord under His

immediate direction and with an immediate faith in Him as to earthly needs" was the ultimate

evidence that Groves' example reigned supreme in Müller's mind.[26] Groves, as Müller

recounted in his *Narrative*, served as "a great encouragement" for his life of faith, and inspired

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[23] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 49.

[24] Müller claimed that after this period of refreshment, he returned to the seminary in
London and began to lead an early morning prayer meeting, which appears to have been
conducted in a manner similar to the Pietist meetings that he had been part of in Halle. Ibid.

[25] G. H. Lang, *Anthony Norris Groves: Saint and Pioneer* (London: Thynne & Co., Ltd.,
1939), 77-78.

[26] Ibid., 19.

his eventual break from the London Society.[27] However, Lang elaborates Müller's own praise of

his brother-in-law to make the following argument,

> It therefore seems clear that the river of George Müller's faith took its rise from the spring of A. N. Groves' faith; and if the latter had done nothing more than inspire and give direction to the faith of George Müller this alone would have been a memorable service to the cause and church of God. But he did, or rather God did through him, very much more. For He made him [Groves] a rare saint and a brave and inspiring pioneer in matters spiritual, whose teaching and example have affected, directly and indirectly, the whole church of God for a hundred years, and the spread of the gospel over vast areas of the earth. In simple fact he was one of the most influential men of the nineteenth century.[28]

Lang's emphasis on Groves' influence on Müller overstates the relationship. According to Lang,

Groves served as the source for Müller's practice. However, there are other reasons that Lang

must put so much emphasis on the relationship between Groves and Müller. For Groves' story

to reflect any long-term significance in nineteenth-century history it must connect with Müller's

story. Even well-read evangelicals who followed the lives of popular figures such as Dwight L.

Moody, Charles H. Spurgeon, and George Müller would have, most likely, never heard the name

Anthony Norris Groves when Lang published his book in 1939.[29] Therefore, for Groves to hold

any significance to these readers he would need to be placed in context with the life of someone

with whom readers would be familiar.[30] Furthermore, Lang also concedes that Müller was

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[27] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 52.

[28] Lang, *Anthony Norris Groves*, 19.

[29] A similar connection was made in the edited memoir of Groves when the editor interjects "Mr. Müller, of Bristol, in his Narrative, p. 44, speaks of the example of Mr. Groves, as making a great 'impression' on him, and 'delighting him much;' and when he himself decided to look to the Lord alone, for the supply of his wants, he says, after alluding to the promises of God, as the 'stay' of his soul, 'in addition to this, the example of Brother Groves was a great encouragement to me.' p. 52." Mrs. Groves, *Memoir*, 37.

[30] Ken J. Newton also asserts that "Groves has a claim to fame if only because he was a spiritual mentor of George Muller of Bristol, England." Newton, *Anthony Norris Groves*, 1.

ultimately the more successful and celebrated of the two men in relationship to the life of faith.[31]

Müller's recognition as the champion of the life of faith was to be linked to the source of the practice, Anthony Norris Groves.

Anthony Norris Groves

Anthony Norris Groves, Müller's eventual brother-in-law, was noted for his consistent practice of the Christian faith. While running a successful dental practice in Exeter, he and his wife, Mary, made a concerted effort to see individuals accept Christ as Savior and also wrestled with the idea of serving as missionaries overseas. After deciding to seek an appointment with the Church Missionary Society, he began a course of study for the Bachelor of Divinity at Trinity College, Dublin, in order to prepare himself for ordination in the Church of England. During the course of his studies, Groves slowly modified his theological positions from "being so high a churchman," as he explained in his memoir, "that I never went to a dissenting place of worship, nor intimately knew a dissenter, except Bessy [Paget] and Charlotte [Paget]" to separating from the Church of England.[32] Groves had befriended evangelicals who were reconsidering the

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[31] Edward K. Groves noted that when his father was dying in 1853, "Though nursed by his three sisters with the utmost tenderness, there was a threefold agony in that dying-bed, which only the unbroken peace of a good conscience toward God enabled him to bear. First, his physical suffering from cancer in the stomach, which retained nothing solid or liquid, made him really starve to death. Secondly, after giving up a profession [dentistry] in which his exceptional abilities enabled him to earn fifteen-hundred-a-year as quite a young man, to carry the gospel to Mahommedans, and spending over ten thousand pounds in seeking to make his mission to India self-supporting, he had not only failed in the attempt but left his two elder sons with a debt of four thousand pounds for which they had become jointly responsible with himself, his wife and three younger children unprovided for! The third, and perhaps the keenest sorrow of all was the apparent outcome of his attempt to restore pristine simplicity of fellowship to the believers of his day. A scene of discord sad enough to make angels weep!" E. K. Groves, *George Müller and His Successors* (Bristol: n.p., 1906), 17-18.

[32] Mrs. Groves, *Memoir*, 38.

authority of the Anglican Church in determining Christian practice.[33] The individuals involved

were part of the Established Church and had become frustrated with how the state church did not

appear to apply biblical ideas to inform theology and practice. Many of these individuals

identified themselves with Plymouth Brethren as they seceded from the Church of England and

the Church of Ireland. Groves was an influential member of these Dissenters as they developed

into the early Christian Brethren. Groves embraced an evangelical piety centered on the

convening of a small group to pray, to worship, to read the Bible, and to share communion

together.[34] These practices, outside the purview of the Established Church, moved Groves

toward formal separation from the Church of England. Separation occurred when Groves, a

pacifist, determined that he was unable to agree to the Thirty-nine Articles of Faith that required

him to support wars conducted by the state. He subsequently gave up his pursuit of ordination,

as well as his studies at Trinity College.[35] Groves' close association with the early Brethren in

Dublin points to his contribution to their ideas and practices.[36]

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[33] The most complete recent account of this English and Irish Evangelical revolt from the Church of England is found in Grayson Carter, *Anglican Evangelicals: Protestant Secessions from the Via Media, c. 1800-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 195-248.

[34] Groves is even credited for being the first to implement the Brethren idea of having weekly communion without the presence of an ordained minister. James Patrick Callahan, "Primitivist Piety: The Ecclesiology of the Early Plymouth Brethren" (Ph.D. diss., Marquette University, 1994), 15.

[35] Mrs. Groves, *Memoir*, 40-41.

[36] Groves accepted diversity among Christians based on a single profession of faith. After a prayer meeting in Dublin, one of the group asked, "'Are there no principles in the word of God, which would unite all believers in worship, whatever might be their views or attainments in the divine life?' Mr. Groves replied, 'Yes, there are: we are evidently called to know nothing among our fellow-Christians, but this one fact—Do they belong to Christ? Has Christ received them? then may we receive them, to the glory of God.'" This inclusive, ecumenical approach to fellow Christians seems to match what Müller had already put into practice while a university student. Ibid., 40.

Several historians of the Brethren Movement argue that Groves was as the primary

contributor to Müller's thought.[37] For example, religious historian James Patrick Callahan

claims that Groves inspired Müller to reject the need for ordination and affiliation with a

missionary society. Callahan argues, "It was the news of Grove's successful independent

missionary venture that supplied the positive example of Müller's own independent ventures in

evangelistic work within England."[38] Callahan does not fairly summarize the tension Müller

experienced in his break from the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews.

Müller was quite clear in his *Narrative* that he feared being unable to meet his own "temporal

wants" if he broke away from the Society, especially as a "foreigner" who "spoke so little

English." Therefore, when news returned that Groves had travelled successfully Russia and was

able to survive in St. Petersburg simply by faith, Müller saw Groves as "a great encouragement"

and one who, as he explains, "strengthened my faith."[39] Groves did not inspire a split from the

Society but instead provided a personal testimony that living by faith could still work for

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[37] Groves' influence on early Brethren practices does not go uncontested among Brethren writers who identified themselves separately and in opposition to the various splits that took place in the history of the movement. Open Brethren writers identified with A. N. Groves, George Müller, Henry Craik, and Robert Chapman, while Exclusive Brethren aligned themselves with John Nelson Darby. Each group sees the contributions of Groves to Brethren practice and thought much differently. For example, Andrew Miller, a nineteenth-century chronicler of the Brethren Movement and a member of the Exclusive Brethren, asserted, "It is quite possible that some of the early Brethren may have benefited by the remarks of Mr. Groves, and that he may have profited by his intercourse with them, especially as to the Establishment and ordination; but they had been meeting for worship and communion before Mr. Groves knew them, and we are fully assured that he never had any real sympathy with the ground they had taken." Andrew Miller, *"The Brethren:" (Commonly So-Called.) A Brief Sketch of their Origin, Progress and Testimony* (London: G. Morrish, n.d.), 25. For a detailed survey of the different biases of various writers in the Brethren Movement see Peter L. Embley, "The Origins and Early Development of the Plymouth Brethren" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 1967).

[38] Callahan, "Primitivist Piety," 25.

[39] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 53.

individuals outside of his own cultural and linguistic milieu. In fact, as has been previously

argued, this embrace of a radical trust in God, similar to the great Halle Pietists, initially attracted

Müller to Groves and his family.[40]

The assumption of family influence, in part, lies behind the preference Neatby, Lang, and

Callahan have shown to Groves.[41] Groves was a key person in the development of the early

Christian Brethren and influenced scores of evangelicals in Great Britain through his writings

and piety. Müller married into Groves' family and became a trusted confidant.[42] Groves even

passed away in Müller's home in Bristol in 1853. Therefore, their close relationship was firmly

established be their personal interactions, as well as their shared commitment to the spread of the

Gospel.[43] The exchange of ideas between the two men should be taken seriously because family

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[40] The main similarity between Groves and Müller, regarding their separation from the missionary societies, was that they emphasized the role of the Holy Spirit over human authority.

[41] Ken J. Newton also places family influence between Groves and Müller above any other factor. Newton claims that "Back in England Groves met his brother-in-law, George Muller, and encouraged the latter to accompany him to Germany so that they could find some missionary recruits. Thus began Muller's visits to Europe which would one day expand to missionary journey's [sic] around the world." Newton, *Anthony Norris Groves*, 6. Müller had both family and friends back in Germany and did travel there on other occasions. Furthermore, Newton does not acknowledge that Müller had come to England with the expressed intent of becoming a missionary and that Müller's orientation toward missionary service may have been the inspiration for his global traveling. Finally, Müller states explicitly in his *Narrative* that Groves wanted him to accompany him to Germany "on account of my [Müller's] acquaintance with the language." Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 121.

[42] The evidence also points to a close relationship between the two men. In his will, Groves made Müller one of his executors and one of the three guardians of his children. "Last Will and Testament of Mr. Anthony Norris Groves," PROB 11/2186, Image Ref. 87, Public Record Office, The National Archives.

[43] Edward Groves, son of A. N. Groves, argued, "George Müller's education was in some respects finished at the dying bed of his brother-in-law, and he was confirmed in concluding that God has always the money to carry on his work, and if supplies fail it is not his will to **borrow**, even from those who urge the acceptance of a loan, but to **Pray without ceasing** [bold in original text] till deliverance comes." Groves' financial failure weighed heavily on family

was a key aspect of identity among the Christian Brethren. Assemblies were essentially large families that often brought together multiple generations of kinfolk and circles of associations. These family circles provided reference points for the development of individual piety and serious engagement with the faith. For many Christian Brethren, the linking of an individual to a particular family surname provided that person with a calling card in terms of their social importance, their trustworthiness, and their form of Brethren practice.[44] Given the emphasis on family among the Christian Brethren, Neatby's claim about the role of Groves' influence on Müller is logical.

Accounts that overemphasized the impact of Groves on Müller in regard to the living by faith failed to adequately examine the evidence. Müller affirms he was inspired by the devotion of Groves,

> Soon after my arrival in England, I heard one of the brethren in the seminary speak about a Mr. Groves, a dentist of 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.[45]

There is also the obvious personal link made to Groves[46] through Henry Craik that resulted in

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members who survived him. Edward's assertion appears to be a collective lesson that he too learned. Edward wrote, ". . . but I resolved, boy as I was, that I would keep out of debt as long as I lived." Groves, *George Müller*, 19.

[44] Ibid., 63, 115. Also see Edward K. Groves, *Conversations on "Bethesda" Family Matters* (London: W. B. Horner, 1885).

[45] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 44.

[46] Groves died in Müller's home when he returned from missionary work in India. See Roy Coad, "Groves, Anthony Norris," in *Dictionary of Evangelical Biography, 1730-1860: Volume 1*, ed. Donald M. Lewis (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), 486.

Müller's becoming intimate with the Groves family and marrying Anthony's sister, Mary.[47]

Besides being brothers-in-law, the men shared a close bond on a number of theological and practical points, such as having an interest in the conversion of the Jews and missionary work. What united both men in terms of their religious practice was the desire to apply theological ideas to their everyday circumstances with the expectation of unusual results. All of this evidence is undeniable, but does not fully represent the variety of influences at work in the development of Müller's thought on the subject. The biographers and scholars who give primary emphasis to Groves fail to assess the continuing impact of German Pietism that gave the initial shape to Müller's perception of the Christian faith. Müller, despite the influence of his brother-in-law, appears to have consciously identified with his roots in Halle Pietism as a source for his thought on living by faith. It seems that what impressed Müller most about Groves was his putting into practice a form of piety that echoed Francke's.

Francke and Prussian Pietism

As discussed previously in chapter 3, Müller can best be understood when examined as a product of both German society and Pietism. The first twenty years of his life, which are foundational to his *Narrative*, explain how Müller perceived himself, his identity, and his testimony of faith. Therefore, Lang's attenuation of the influence of Halle, Tholuck, and even the memory of Francke's example ignores Müller's foundational religious experiences that directed the overall course of his subsequent life. The best evidence for ascertaining how Müller conceptualized his own story of living by faith is displayed in his explanation of his activities to

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[47] Mary Groves married Müller on October 7, 1830. Müller records in his *Narrative*, "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." Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 68.

his former professor at the University of Halle, Friedrich A. G. Tholuck. In letters to Tholuck, Müller explained that his model for his life of faith and for establishing the orphan home was Francke. In 1836 Müller stated, "And in the same way in which that blessed man of God, A. H. Frank looked to the Lord for supplies as it regards the Schools and the Orphan House, so have I been enabled since March 5, 1834 to establish schools for poor children," and in 1838 he wrote, "Like Franke I commence in dependence upon God, with a small beginning, & two years the Lord has already provided."[48] These letters affirm that he deeply respected Francke and consciously recognized the indebtedness he felt toward the Halle Pietist. Müller knew Tholuck's inspiration for his understanding of the Christian life was rooted in Francke's example. Consequently, there appears to be an underlying desire to connect with a reference Tholuck admired. Furthermore, Müller was also able to show his former professor that he took his early spiritual experiences in Halle to heart and reapplied those initial lessons in the Christian faith. Müller's letters do more than just inform Tholuck of his work since leaving Halle. Müller expressed a serious engagement with Halle Pietism and sought approval from a spiritual mentor whom he deeply respected and wanted to please. When Müller made his decision to reject his father's financial support during his final years at the university it was under Tholuck's guidance and support that Müller embraced his first experiment with living by faith as inspired by Francke's example.[49]

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[48] George Müller to Professor Tholuck, 26 December 1836, Friedrich August Gottreu Tholuck Papers, Signatur B III 1638, Archiv der Franckeschen Stiftungen zu Halle, Germany; Letter from Georg Müller to Professor Tholuck, 1 May 1838, Friedrich August Gottreu Tholuck Papers, Signatur B III 1782, Archiv der Franckeschen Stiftungen zu Halle, Germany.

[49] In an interview with James Baker, Müller, about ninety years old at the time, gave Francke complete credit for his ideas about working with orphans and supporting them by prayer. James Baker, *Literary and Biographical Studies* (London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1908), 181-187.

Müller became familiar with Francke's story while living in the "free lodgings, provided for poor students of divinity in the Orphan-House, but in dependence upon God, by that devoted and eminent servant of Christ, A. H. Frank, Professor of Divinity at Halle, who died 1727."[50] Evidence of the powerful influence of Francke's actions on Müller's mental world is also found in the *Narrative* in an entry dated February 9, 1833. Müller noted,

> I read a part of Frank's life. The Lord graciously help [*sic*] me to follow him, as far as he followed Christ. The greater part of the Lord's people whom we know in Bristol are poor, and if the Lord were to give us grace to live more as this dear man of God did, we might draw much more than we have as yet done out of our Heavenly Father's bank, for our poor brethren and sisters.[51]

Francke served as an inspiration to Müller primarily because he saw in his testimony of God's faithfulness a way to connect people to the blessings of God's riches. Müller's statement, "help me to follow him, as far as he followed Christ" echoes John Wesley's sentiment from almost a century before, in 1738, when he wrote, "O may I follow him [Francke], as he did Christ!"[52] Müller, similar to evangelicals before him, was moved to emulate Francke in an effort to follow Christ. Müller also indicated that he believed in the efficacy of God's grace to provide sustenance for the benefit of poor Christians. Here Müller reads Francke's life as a model of Christian charity aimed at helping poor Christians, but not the poor in general.

Although Müller does not indicate until 1833 that he read an account of Francke's life, he was already intimately familiar with the large orphan home through his experience as a

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[50] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 23.

[51] Ibid., 102.

[52] John Wesley, *The Works of the Reverend John Wesley, A.M.: Vol. 3* (New York: T. Mason and G. Lane, 1840), 81.

university student, which was reinforced by a visit to Germany in 1835.[53] Müller returned to

Halle from March 30 to April 2, and he recorded that he was able to reconnect with the group of

Pietists who had been so instrumental in his life of faith. Müller's desire to see old friends

reveals much about how he remembered his life in Halle. He wrote,

> I first went to the house of the brother, where the Lord met with me, and afterwards I
> called on my esteemed brother and tutor, professor Dr. Tholuck, counselor of the
> Consistory, who received me, after seven years separation, with his former kindness and
> brotherly love, and who made me lodge with him, giving thereby a testimony that
> differences of views, concerning certain parts of God's truth, ought not to separate the
> children of God; for I had written to him my mind from Bristol two years ago."[54]

Müller visited Johann Wagner's home and met his old professor at the University of Halle, while

acknowledging that he differed from his former professor on an undisclosed theological point.

Although the 1833 letter to Tholuck does not appear to have survived, and speculation on its

contents would not be profitable, it does appear that Müller feared that he might have somehow

damaged his relationship with his former professor through this correspondence. Consequently,

this reference revealed an acute desire to be found acceptable, as a fellow Christian, in the eyes

of his former teacher. After reacquainting himself with his former professor, he returned on

April 1 to visit the orphanage constructed by Francke and wrote in his *Narrative*,

> I went to the large orphan-house, built in dependence on the Lord, by A. H. Frank, to see
> one of the classical teachers, a young minister, who is the son of my father's neighbour,
> and whom I had not seen in about 15 years. I found in him, to the joy of my heart, a
> brother in the Lord. This evening I spent in the same room , where it pleased the Lord to
> being a work of grace in my heart, with several of the same brethren and sisters

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[53] Müller was initially traveling with Anthony Norris Groves on this trip, but they parted
ways in Basel so that Groves could go to Geneva and Müller could go to Germany to see friends
and family. Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 125.

[54] Ibid., 127.

with whom I used to meet seven years ago, relating to them about the Lord's faithfulness, gentleness, kindness, and forbearance toward me, since I had seen them last. Truly how good has the Lord been to me since![55]

Through the process of reordering the development of his spiritual and intellectual journey, Müller returned to those places and people who mattered so much in his mental world as an immigrant living and working as a pastor in Britain. He went home to Halle and reconnected with the landmarks of his faith and found that those places and people still supported his appetite for radical Christian living.

In November 1835, Müller recorded that for a second time he encountered a book on Francke's life. He wrote, "November 20. This evening I took tea at a sister's house, where I found Frank's life. I have frequently, for this long time, thought of labouring in a similar way, though it might be on a much smaller scale; not to imitate Frank, but in reliance upon the Lord. May God make it plain!"[56] The emphasis here is on the role of Francke's autobiography moving Müller to action.[57] However, the radical nature of the action required, in his mind, some sort of

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[55] Ibid., 128.

[56] Ibid., 142.

[57] J. C. Tildesley, in an article published in 1863, attempted to tell the story of how Müller arrived at the idea of supporting the orphans by faith. Tildesley, whose recounting of events is suspect on a number of points, asserted that Müller first encountered a book telling the story of Francke's life while visiting Craik's home in 1835. This account contradicts Müller's *Narrative* and seems unlikely. However, Tildesley's article included a curious quotation that is most-likely apocryphal storytelling but, if not, adds one more piece of support to Francke's long influence on Müller. Tildesley asserted that Müller told Craik after seeing Francke's biography, "'O, Brother Craik,' he said, I do *so* long to follow the pattern set by that holy Franke. He is long since gone to his rest, but he spoke to my soul in 1826, and he is speaking now, and his example has stirred me up to care for poor children in general, and poor orphans in particular. O! to think that at this very time there are only 39 Orphan Establishments in England and Wales, accommodating but 3700 orphans, which there are no less than 6,000 orphans in the prisons of England alone. Does not this fact call aloud for an extension of orphan institutions? Aye, and by God's help, *I* will do what *I* can to keep poor orphans from prison!'" J. C. Tildesley, "The Story

affirmation from God that this was an acceptable pursuit. Francke's celebrated venture was foundational to the internal conflict that kept Müller wrestling with the idea of applying the life of faith to the establishment of an orphanage in Bristol. Eventually, he did establish the orphanage with the expectation that "the faith of his [God's] children may be strengthened."[58] He also aimed to see that the orphans would be taken care of spiritually and materially. However, to appreciate fully these motives, Francke's influence must be more thoroughly explored so that the priorities that Müller expressed can be properly placed in a continuum of thought that he embraced.

The Footsteps of Divine Providence

Müller's testimony about reading Francke's life is important for its role in evangelical thought in the Anglo-American world. The volume he most likely read was a version of *Pietas Hallensis: Or a Publick Demonstration of the Foot-Steps of a Divine Being yet in the World: in an Historical Narration of the Orphan House, And Other Charitable Institutions, at Glaucha near Hall in Saxony* written by Augustus Hermann Francke. *Pietas Hallensis* would have been the most widely available English version in circulation of Francke's life, although the Religious Tract Society in London produced in 1833 a short tract entitled, *Life of the Rev. A. H. Francke*, which may have come into his possession. Francke's life was first published at the beginning of the eighteenth century and continued to be reissued through the early nineteenth century. English versions were published in 1705, 1706, 1710, and 1716, pointed not only to a British-German connection but also to a clear transatlantic relationship between German Pietists and

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of George Muller," *The Willenhall Magazine: A Monthly Treasury of Local and General Information* 1 (March 1863): 94.

[58] Ibid., 142-143.

British evangelicals in North America.[59] The number of editions published ebbed as the eighteenth century progressed but the work remained available and in print. Müller does not indicate which edition or version of Francke's life he read. Close textual analysis, however, could ascertain which volume he read.

The Müller House library in Bristol, England, has a 1705 edition of *Pietas Hallensis* on the shelves. The library has accumulated a collection of books that is a mixture of some that may have been in Müller's original library as well as a number of volumes that have been donated to the foundation over the past century.[60] Consequently, it is impossible to determine, with any certainty, whether Müller read that particular book or another version of Francke's life. The evidence in Müller's *Narrative* suggests that this early eighteenth-century volume was not the exact book Müller read. Although Müller's first language was German, he makes no mention of reading the book in German or seeing a German edition (or for that matter needing a German copy). Rather, in his *Narrative* Müller implies that the volume was easily obtainable and, second, that he had encountered a copy in the home of fellow Christian in Bristol. This appears to indicate that he had come into contact with an English-language volume rather than one written in German.

Pietas Hallensis is the single most important work written by Francke that was available in English. After the initial publication of the book in 1705, several leading ministers in Great Britain and in the British colonies came to celebrate the work for being "both agreeable and

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[59] Augustus Hermann Francke, *Pietas Hallensis: Or an Abstract of the Foot-Steps of a Divine Providence, Attending The Management and Improvement of the Orphan-House at Glaucha near Hall; and of other Charitable Foundations relating to it* (London: J. Downing, 1716), xiii.

[60] Julian Marsh, the former Executive Director of the Müller Foundation, informed the author of this situation in a conversation in 2007.

edifying to an unbyaſs'd Eye," useful for identifying the "Marks of Providence."[61] John Wesley, George Whitefield, and scores of early evangelicals along with leading public officials read the volume and were deeply moved by the content.[62] The volume was widely available in various editions and was endorsed by leading figures in the English evangelical tradition as a monumental work of profound personal and spiritual enrichment. Some evangelicals were even inspired to follow Francke's example of living by faith.[63] Therefore, the argument can be made, with reasonable certainty, that Müller obtained an English version of *Pietas Hallensis* and read it with the same profitability as evangelicals in Great Britain and even North America had been doing for over a century.

The next question that must be posed is, since there were other editions of Francke's life available, what edition did Müller come across in Bristol? Were there any editions that might have influenced his thought through a preface or introduction? The most recent volume of Francke's *Pietas Hallensis* that was published in English prior to Müller's arrival in England appeared in 1787 and was reprinted in 1813. The book was entitled, *The Footsteps of Divine*

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[61] Francke, *Pietas*, xi-xii.

[62] Francke, *Pietas*, xi-xii.

[63] John Wesley wrote in his journal in July 1738, "Having a desire to see Halle, (two German miles off,) we set out after breakfast, and came thither at two in the afternoon. The king of Prussia's tall men, who kept the gates, sent us backward and forward, from one gate to another, for near two hours. I then thought of sending in a note to Professor Francke, the son of that August Herman Francke whose name is indeed as precious ointment. O may I follow him, as he did Christ! And 'by manifestation of the truth commend myself to every man's conscience in the sight of God!' He was not in town. However, we were at length admitted into the Orphan house; that amazing proof, that 'all things are' still 'possible to him that believeth.'" Wesley, *The Works of the Reverend John Wesley*, 81. For an analysis of the importance of Francke's *Pietas Hallensis* on English speaking audiences see Geoffrey Nuttall, "Continental Pietism and the Evangelical Movement in Britain," in *Pietismus and Reveil. Referate der internationalen Tagung: Der Pietismus in den Niederlanden und seine internationalen Beziehungen, Zeist 18—22 Juni 1974*, ed. J. van den Berg and J. P. van Dooren (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 207-236.

Providence; or, the Bountiful Hand of Heaven Defraying the Expenses of Faith: Wonderfully

Diſplayed in Erecting and Managing the Hospital at Glaucha without Hall, in the Prussian

Dominions, for the Education of Students in Divinity; and for the Reception, Cloathing, Feeding,

and Educating of Poor Children, and the volume was edited by and included a preface by

William Huntington, S. S.   Huntington (1745-1813) was a controversial high-Calvinist

Dissenting minister who was famous for his lowly social origins and vocation as a "Coal-

heaver."[64] Huntington was noted for his account of "living by faith" that attracted widespread

attention in the eighteenth century entitled, *God the poor man's Guardian, and the Bank of*

Faith, or a display of the Providences of God which have at sundry periods of time attended the

author. Published first in 1784, subsequent printings appeared in 1784, 1786, 1789, 1793, 1796,

and even in a volume of collected works in 1811. Huntington foreshadowed Müller's appeal to

ordinary people looking to understand God's providential hand moving in response to prayer.

Huntington envisioned faith as simple trust in God that chooses to see God in the ordinary

circumstances of everyday life. Huntington argued in *The Bank of Faith* that,

> Carnal reason always traces every thing [*sic*] from God to second causes, and there leaves
> them floating upon uncertainties; but faith traces them up to their first causes, and fixes
> them there; by which means God's hand is known, and himself glorified. I believe this
> battle between the plumed warriors was proclaimed by the Lord: for, if a sparrow falls
> not to the ground without God's leave, as the scriptures declare, I can hardly think a
> partridge does.[65]

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[64] For a creedal-like statement of Huntington's Dissenting beliefs, see William
Huntington, *The Coal-heaver's Confession; Intended as a Supplement to "The Rule and the
Riddle"* (London: T. Chapman, 1788).

[65] William Huntington, *God the Guardian of the Poor, and the Bank of Faith; or, A
Display of the Providences of God Which Have at Sundry Times Attended the Author*, in *The
Works of the Reverend William Huntington, S.S., Minister of the Gospel at Providence Chapel,
Gray's Inn Land, Completed to the Close of the Year MDCCCVI, Vol. III* (London: W.
Huntington, 1811), 41. Also see J. H. Y. Briggs, "Huntington, William," in *Dictionary of
Evangelical Biography*, 586-587.

Huntington also recognized the necessity of detailing his interactions with God for his own

benefit and stated with regret,

> And, if you will allow me to make an honest confession, my conscience has often lashed
> me for not keeping a diary, or rather minuting [*sic*] down the many conspicuous
> providences of God, which have appeared to me in times of trouble. But, like ungrateful
> Israel, I went the only way to forget his works, and to be unmindful of the Rock of my
> salvation; and now I have nothing to trust to on this occasion but my own treacherous
> memory, unless the Lord be pleased to send the Comforter to me; and, if he come, he will
> bring all things to my remembrance, whatsoever God hath said unto me in a way of
> providence.[66]

The desire to recount the daily interactions between God and himself guided the content of *The

Bank of Faith*. No evidence has been discovered that explicitly indicates that Müller ever read

The Bank of Faith. However, Müller certainly remedied in his *Narrative* the fault that

Huntington noted in his own writings about being unable to account for all of God's

"conspicuous providences" in detail for the benefit of readers.

The simple question of whether or not Müller read the volume of Francke's life

introduced by Huntington can be addressed with some certainty, although not conclusively.

Müller cites no specific volume of "Frank's life" that he recorded reading on February 9, 1833,

or November 20, 1835. Müller does include several statements in his *Narrative* that might hint

at some familiarity with Huntington's view of the life of faith. Müller proclaimed, "we might

draw much more than we have as yet done out of our Heavenly Father's bank."[67] The idea that

God kept a bank out of which humans could draw might indicate familiarity with Huntington's

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[66] Huntington S.S., *God the Guardian of the Poor*, 3.

[67] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 102.

popularization of the concept of a "Bank of Faith" and his edition of *Pietas Hallensis*.[68] Similar

to the influence of Groves, traced by Steer and others through the word "devotedness," this

circumstantial evidence points toward Huntington's edition of Francke's life, but can only be

clarified when the Huntington volume is examined in detail.

In 1787, the London publisher W. Justins published *The Footsteps of Divine Providence*

with two different introductions.   The two volumes have identical front-pages and, except for

the introductions, are mirror volumes. The two books employ the same text written by Francke,

but the introductions are intended for two different audiences. Both introductions are credited to

Huntington, although Huntington only signed his name to one of the volumes. The shorter,

signed introduction explains in detail the importance that Huntington bestowed on this volume

by Francke. To explain why he publicly promoted the volume under his name Huntington

announced,

> The far greater part of GOD's family, being neceſſitated to appear on the latter ſide of the queſtion, has induced me to deſire the univerſal ſpread of this wonderful diſplay of Providence. Beſides, I thought that my *Bank of Faith* would make a good yoke-fellow to it; and I ſee no juſt cauſe or impediment why they ſhould not be lawfully joined together.
> But as I have much on my hands, I deſired the Printer of this to undertake the publiſhing of ſuch a bleſſed Narrative on his own footing; with a promiſe, that I would recommend, and endeavor to circulate the work as much as poſſible. I have alſo diſtilled it from a few dregs, which I thought could be well ſpared, as they rather obſcure its radiance, than caſt a luſtre on it.[69]

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[68] A. H. Francke, *The Footsteps of Divine Providence; or, The Bountiful Hand of Heaven Defraying the Expense of Faith*, preface by William Huntington, S.S. (London: E. Huntington, 1813).

[69] Augustus Hermannus Francke, *The Footsteps of Divine Providence; or, the Bountiful Hand of Heaven Defraying the Expenses of Faith: Wonderfully Diſplayed in Erecting and Managing the Hospital at Glaucha without Hall, in the Prussian Dominions, for the Education of Students in Divinity; ad for the Reception, Cloathing, Feeding, and Educating of Poor Children*, intro. William Huntington, S.S. (London: W. Justins, 1787), iii-iv.

The volume with the signed introduction was specifically written to Huntington's supporters and admirers who might have been compelled to read the volume because of his endorsement. The introduction clearly references his most widely-known book, *The Bank of Faith*, and openly states that he promised to promote *The Footsteps of Divine Providence* as much as possible among those whom he held some influence.

The unsigned introduction to the second, otherwise identical edition of Francke's life includes aspects worth comparing to Müller's reflections on the book found in his *Narrative*. The first, and most obvious connection, is the use of the idea of the bank of God. In the unsigned Huntington edition of *The Footsteps of Divine Providence* the "Introduction" specifically refers to Huntington's concept of the bank of God. Huntington stated,

> GOD the incarnate REDEEMER was his [Francke's] inexhauſtible bank of riches: in Him he found immenſe ſtores of goodneſs and grace, mercy and love; and he had a bold intrepid claim to all the bank ſtock of GOD for himſelf, as his own real eternal portion and poſſeſſion: and, for the great and laſting happineſs of all Germany, he had a *claiming faith* for the continual carrying on of that great deſign of the Orphan-houſe, which has now ſubſiſted near ninety-two years.[70]

This clear statement of Francke's ability to draw from God's bank as he needed in order to meet the needs of the orphanage and Germany drew Müller's attention to the issue of poverty and wealth.[71] The use of the idea of "our Heavenly Father's bank" is particular to Huntington and seems to have been imparted to Müller on this reading. Since Huntington's introduction does not explicitly refer to a "bank of faith," but rather the simple concept of a "bank of riches," Müller appears to have seen the possibility for helping the poor in Bristol. This reapplication of

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[70] Augustus Hermannus Francke, *The Footsteps of Divine Providence; or, the Bountiful Hand of Heaven Defraying the Expenses of Faith: Wonderfully Diſplayed in Erecting and Managing the Hospital at Glaucha without Hall, in the Prussian Dominions, for the Education of Students in Divinity; ad for the Reception, Cloathing, Feeding, and Educating of Poor Children* (London: W. Justins, 1787), xx.

[71] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 102.

Huntington's idea is logical given the challenges Müller and Craik faced as pastors living and serving in Bristol.[72]

Another piece of evidence that points to Müller having read the unsigned Huntington edition of Francke's life involves a key phrase, actually one of the many biblical references to God's nature, that Müller adopted and passed on to other evangelicals. In his "Introduction" Huntington includes the phrase: "JEHOVAH-JIREH—*the Lord will provide*."[73] Huntington placed the phrase immediately after the section entitled, "II. CRITICAL TIMES *of* DISTRESS; *or the Appearance of* GOD the REDEEMER *in the Pinches of Providence*."[74] Following this phrase Huntington lists, in chronological fashion, twenty-four examples from scripture where God provided at a key moment. Although Müller did not make reference to the phrase in the first printing of his *Narrative* in 1837, in a later edition of the *Narrative* he explained its significance. Müller included in his *Narrative*, dated November 8, 1840, the following story,

> There was also 1s. put into the box at Bethesda, with the words, 'Jehovah Jireh.' These words have often been refreshing to my soul for many years past, and I wrote them with a valuable diamond ring, set with ten brilliants, which was given for the Orphans about twenty months since, upon a pane of glass in my room, which circumstance, in

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[72] As late as 1847, members of Müller's congregation were familiar with Müller referring to funds coming "by prayer and faith from a never-failing Bank." Charles Alfred Hooper, *The "Müllerites," and the Orphan Asylum, Versus Charity, i.e. Love. Letters, Recently Sent to the Pastor, Mr. George Müller, and to the Deacons of the "Gathering," Meeting at Bethesda and Salem Chapels, Bristol: Together With a Statement of Facts, and Remarks, Shewing the Unscriptural and Uncharitable Character of their Determination Not to Allow the Tradesmen and Mechanics, who are Members of Their Church, to be Employed in the Structure of the Orphan Asylum, on Ashley Down* (Bristol: Robert Joy, 1847), 13.

[73] Francke, *The Footsteps*, x.

[74] Ibid.

remembrance of the remarkable way in which that valuable ring came, has often cheered my heart, *when in deep poverty my eyes have been cast upon* 'JEHOVAH JIREH' (*i.e.* the Lord will provide) whilst sitting in my room.[75]

According to Müller, "for many years past" the phrase was an encouragement to him. Although he does not indicate exactly when the phrase became a mantra of God's faithfulness, the 1840 reference clearly points to an earlier introduction and adoption of the idea. Müller clearly links the use of the term to "critical times of distress" when he needed God to act in the "pinches of providence."[76]

In addition to obvious connections between Müller's *Narrative* and the unsigned introduction to the Huntington volume of Francke's life, there are a several additional ideas that would have drawn Müller's attention. First, Huntington places an emphasis on reason and revelation through Scripture by citing biblical verse after verse in lists that affirmed a scriptural idea of "ANSWERS *to* PRAYER, *a convincing* EVIDENCE *of ſpecial* PROVIDENCE."[77] The proof-text lists of Bible verses and stories affirmed that "GOD the REDEEMER *has acted above, beyond, or contrary to his* Laws *of* Nature *the* Preſervation *and* Salvation *of his People*," and would have affirmed Müller's own emphasis on biblical literature for determining theology and practice.[78]

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[75] George Müller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller, First Part,* 6th ed. (London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1860), 361.

[76] Francke, *The Footsteps*, x.

[77] Ibid., viii.

[78] Ibid. Müller, based on his *Narrative*, indicated that his ideas regarding baptism, divine election, and eschatology were all modified and shaped according to his reading of the biblical texts. This emphasis on scripture reasoning over received tradition was common practice for Müller, Groves, and other early Christian Brethren.

To give further emphasis to these examples, Francke was presented in the introduction as

a recent fulfillment of biblical life and thought.[79] Huntington argued that,

> He [Francke] had a full confidence in God's fincerity and faithfulnefs, with refpect to the
> fulfillment of all the promifes: he had a full perfuafion that God would be true to his foul,
> and to his own promifes.
>   He had a fixed and ftrong rational perfuafion powerfully working in his foul,
> which carried him above all frightful difcouragements, and terrifying outward
> appearances of things.[80]

According to Huntington, Francke was engaged not only in a biblical project of living by faith,

but a rational one as well. Francke's reasonable dependence on God in the face of

discouragement and in surmountable circumstances resulted in a tangible benefit for others.

Huntington asserts, "And we may juftly conclude that many hundreds of thousands, if not

millions, have been comforted from his experience, which GOD gave him to be the inftrument of

fuch immenfe good to the Church, and the world!"[81] According to Huntington, Francke's trust

in God did not simply benefit Francke, but more importantly was a testimony for Christians and

the world that God still acts in everyday life.

In addition to presenting a framework through which to see Francke's practice as

scripturally consistent to biblical theology, the unsigned-Huntington introduction also focuses on

evangelization through the radical example of following the lead of the Halle Pietist. Huntington

states in a lengthy footnote,

> O, my dear reader! do you not ardently pray to our good GOD and SAVIOUR, to make you
> refemble this great and holy man? Do you not fee, and long to imitate him in his faith,
> and bold claims upon his beft and eternal friend? Do you not fee his noble and fixed
> dependence on the uprightnefs, fincerity, veracity and faithnefs of CHRIST, pledged in his
> promifes, fealed by his blood, and confirmed by his tremendous oath, and the eternal

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[79] Ibid., xix.

[80] Ibid., xix-xx.

[81] Ibid., xx.

depofit of the HOLY SPIRIT in his heart? This gave him a full, unfhaken confidence, and intrepid expectation, that he never fhould be confounded or afhamed: that nothing fhould difappoint his hopes, or damp his joys: that all dark Providences fhould work for his good; all apparent loffes fhould increafe his riches; and all feeming croffes fhould make his comforts grow, and his pleafures in CHRIST abound. Is not his experience defirable? I am fure it is. . . . Do you wifh to see the kingdom of Great Britain flourifh, not only in arts and commerce, in pafturage and hufbandry, but in fcience and learning, in virtue and good manners: but much higher than all thefe, in the fear of God: in a veneration for his ever-active prefence and boundlefs perfections . . .

        Do you wifh to fee the Gofpel rife above its prefent banks and bounds, and fwell like a mighty food, and fpread all round the world from pole to pole?

        Do you wifh to fee the poor, blind, miferable Jews, made to know JESUS, the true GOD, and eternal life?[82]

Huntington calls readers to engage in a life of living by faith, like Francke, so that they may transform Great Britain by their own example. Furthermore, the world and even adherents of Judaism would be evangelized by such a faithful example of the life of faith. This ending footnote would have directly connected with the missionary mindset of Müller. The appeal to live a radical life of faith would have also appealed to his desire to convert Jews to Christianity.[83] After reading such an introduction, Müller may have felt an even greater impulse to take the radical step of faith in hope that he too would become an instrument to see people come to Christ or to be encouraged in their Christian faith, if they already identified as Christians. Based on the literary evidence and the impetus that reading about Francke's life gave to Müller it is more than plausible, even likely, that he read the unsigned Huntington version. Therefore, this volume

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[82]Ibid., xx-xxi.

[83] Müller noted that he loved the Jews and longed to do anything he could to convert them, but he also felt a need to present the gospel to "nominal christians." George Müller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller, Minister of Christ, Written by Himself*, 2nd ed. (London: J. Nisbet, 1840), 52.

introduced Müller to the ideas of one of the most controversial testimonies of the life of faith in

the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, that of William Huntington, S.S.[84]

Huntington's Legacy

This chapter makes the original assertion that Huntington influenced Müller's

understanding of the life of faith. The issue is problematic because Müller does not indicate any

explicit familiarity with Huntington or his ideas.   The reason for this oversight on Müller's part

may be related to the fact that he was unaware that Huntington, who authored the *Bank of Faith*

and popularized the "bank" terminology in reference to answered prayer, was, in fact, the editor

who stirred him to action. The unsigned introduction seems to remedy this issue rather simply.

If anything, the unsigned introduction by Huntington may have been more convincing to Müller

because it was not based on the social or spiritual status of the author, but instead employed

biblical texts as the primary method for convincing the reader of Francke's legitimacy.

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[84] In 1871, a book was published that tried to place Huntington into historical context and assess his significance. In reference to Huntington's long tract, *The Bank of Faith*, the claim was made that this work, "has perhaps been more known and read than any of his works, Part I. describes with tender feeling, his extreme poverty and humble dependence on his Heavenly Father. Many of the Lord's people have known and said that they had as much reason to record similar and even *more* remarkable interpositions on His Hand; but it was a novel production in that day, and his celebrity and gift of graphic expression caused it to attract great attention both from professors and profane. Godly persons hailed it with gratitude and pleasure; the world, to whom a life of faith is a hidden mystery, ridiculed it, and agreed with Southey, who called it 'blasphemous effrontery' to narrate such particulars of providential dealings, even to the fit of his nether garments: but such know not God nor his ways. Pious and respectable persons joined in the chorus of contempt and hatred of such an 'Enthusiast! Knave! Hypocrite!' and many who daily read that the God of Heaven 'feeds ravens, and clothes lilies,' could not endure the account of His feeding William Huntington and his family, and clothing a tattered Coalheaver, who was spending his strength and life in His service, and *without any recompense* from men, travelling on foot to preach the Gospel to his dying fellow-sinners." Ebenezer Hooper, ed., *The Celebrated Coalheaver; or Reminiscences of the Rev. William Huntington, S.S. Consisting of Numerous Original Anecdotes, Letters, & Interesting Facts, Chiefly of His Latter Years & Death, Collected from Most Authentic Sources, and Never Before Published; with Criticisms on His Character, Writings and Ministry, by Eminent Authors* (London: Gadsby, 1871), 54-55.

Second, if Müller were aware that Huntington had authored the introduction, a notion for which no concrete evidence exists, then Müller may have followed his common practice of omitting names. As has been noted, Müller often did not include the details of his relationships and the names of donors in his *Narrative*. Müller consciously wrote for public consumption and, therefore, like all autobiographical writers shaped his content according to his audience. If he did know that Huntington authored the unsigned introduction, then he may have avoided any reference to Huntington because of his controversial legacy as a radical Dissenter.[85] Or, Müller may have been attempting to connect with the religious sensibilities and expectations of his readers. Therefore, those ideas and persons whom he chose to disclose to his readers were those such as Francke with whom he wanted to identify himself. Huntington, however, was a lightning rod of controversy in his own lifetime and remained a controversial figure throughout the nineteenth century. Furthermore, it is possible that evangelical readers in the first half of the nineteenth century, especially those familiar with Huntington's works, may have made the tie between Müller's reference to "our Heavenly Father's bank" and Huntington. The statement was also veiled enough that Müller did not risk openly identifying himself with Huntington's radicalism.

The plausibility of a connection between Huntington and Müller is foreshadowed in the historiography. In 1832, Henry Craik and Müller moved to Bristol to lead Gideon Chapel. This was the same congregation established under Huntington's supervision in 1810. Huntington preached at the chapel a number of times, but did not remain as the pastor.[86] This formal

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[85] David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), 78.

[86] M. Caston, *Independency in Bristol: With Brief Memorials of its Churches and Pastors* (London: Ward and Co., 1860), 155-157.

connection between Huntington and Gideon Chapel may have allowed his books and even his ideas to remain in circulation among the congregants. Brethren historian Harold H. Rowdon mentioned Huntington in his study, but did not make any direct link to Müller. Rowdon also did not confirm that Huntington founded the same Gideon Chapel where Craik and Müller later served as pastors.[87] Rather, he explained that Huntington was,

> . . . a man of poor and humble origin, who became one of the foremost preachers of his day and established a string of chapels in London and surrounding counties before his death on 1 July 1813. He was a passing phenomenon, but his career does show the vitality of dissent at the time of the evangelical awakening, and its ability to produce new manifestations of spiritual power.[88]

Rowdon did not present any firmer evidence that would have offered a more compelling connection. However, in an 1857 article entitled, "Brother Müller and His Orphan Work," that appeared in Dickens' *Household Words* (and was examined in chapter 4) the author, Henry Morley, posited,

> The tone of this very singular book [Müller's *Narrative*] is like that of the author of the Bank of Faith, who when he wanted a new pair of trousers, prayed for them over-night, and found them by his bedside in the morning. But Huntington prayed generally for

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[87] In footnote 83 of chapter 5 Rowdon states, "A Gideon Chapel was opened in Bristol in March 1810 by that eccentric preacher, William Huntington." Rowdon referenced "T. Wright, *Life of William Huntington*, p. 171." Rowdon remains silent on the plausible connection among Huntington, Craik, and Müller that was present in the history of Gideon Chapel, Bristol. Harold H. Rowdon, *The Origins of the Brethren, 1825-1850* (London: Pickering and Inglis, 1967), 7, 119. F. Roy Coad and Grayson Carter only confirmed that the chapel was established by Huntington, but do not draw out any other similarities along the lines of the life of faith. Carter, however, in footnote 140 on page 132 of his book did remark that their arrival at Gideon prior to Bethesda was curious. F. Roy Coad, *History of the Brethren Movement: Its Origins, Its Worldwide Development and Its Significance for the Present Day* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1968), 41; Carter, *Anglican Evangelicals*, 132.

[88] Rowdon, *The Origins of the Brethren*, 7.

himself, George Müller takes thought of the orphan, and has accomplished in his own way a substantial work that must secure for him the respect of all good men, whatever may be the form of their religious faith.[89]

Morley recognized a similarity between the two volumes that would have been noticed by readers who were familiar with Huntington, but unaware of Müller. However, a distinction was clearly made between Müller and Huntington based on the intended recipients of their prayers— Müller prayed in order to benefit orphans and Huntington prayed to have his selfish desires satisfied.[90]

The obvious similarities between Müller, Huntington, and even Francke would be noticed by Rev. Adolph Saphir, the esteemed Church of Scotland clergyman who had converted to Christianity from Judaism as a boy in Budapest.[91] Saphir in his book, *The Hidden Life: Thoughts on Communion With God*, stated, "We are not to be over-anxious about anything; but by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, make our requests known unto God. And how frequent and abundant are God's answers to our petitions for guidance and help in our life, even in its minute detail!"[92] At the bottom of a footnote accompanying this statement, Saphir wrote, "The

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[89] "Brother Müller and His Orphan-Work," *Household Words: A Weekly Journal* 16, no. 398 (November 7, 1857): 398.

[90] In a less direct fashion, in 1889, William McDonald, editor of the periodical *The Christian Witness and Advocate of Bible Holiness*, released an updated version of Huntington's Bank of Faith with the subtitle, "A Life of Trust." By this point, Müller's *The Life of Trust*, first published in 1860, was widely read and the subtitle was an attempt to reintroduce Huntington to American readers. William Huntington, *The Bank of Faith; Or, A Life of Trust*, ed. and rev. by W. McDonald (Boston: McDonald, Gill & Co., 1889).

[91] After the baptism of his family into the Christian faith, Saphir was smuggled out of Austria to Scotland where his father sent him to train for the Christian ministry in Edinburgh. Gavin Carlyle, *"Mighty in the Scriptures": A Memoir of Adolph Saphir, D.D.* (London: John F. Shaw and Co., 1893), 17-18, 27-28, 48-49.

experiences of Francke, W. Huntington (*Bank of Faith*), and George Müller, are more instructive

and encouraging."[93] Saphir's observation is astute in the linking together of the three main

practitioners of the life of faith. Not only does his statement connect Halle Pietism to eighteenth-

century British evangelicalism, but it also includes Müller as an important contributor to the

lineage of those who live by faith.[94]

Francke's Life of Faith

Müller familiarized himself with the life, methods, and concerns of August Francke by

reading an account of the renowned Halle professor and philanthropist. What he encountered in

the book was a history of Pietism in practice as explained in an autobiographical record of

Francke. The work is both an apologetic against critics and a bold statement about trusting God

to meet the needs at hand.[95] Throughout the various editions published in the eighteenth and

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[92] Adolph Saphir, *The Hidden Life: Thoughts on Communion with God* (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1877), 149.
[93] Ibid.

[94] Charles H. Spurgeon also made a similar connection between German Pietists and British evangelicals, including Francke, Huntington, and Müller. "Mr. Spurgeon on Miracles," *The Daily News* [London], November 26, 1862, 2.

[95] In the first edition of the book in English, Francke included in the introduction a detailed account about issues raised by his radical methods, his ministries, and his motivation for producing a book on the matter. Francke stated, "Many groundlefs Reports and falfe Surmifes, nay manifeft Untruths and Slanders about this Undertaking have hitherto been raifed, where by the whole affair has been not a little obftructed; this I think is a sufficient warrant for any one, to expofe to the view of all Men the Truth in its native fimplicity; efpecially by fuch an Hiftoricial Account, in order both to vindicate his own Innocence, and to ward off the open Affaults of malignant Tongues. Thefe confiderations then have moved me to fet down a free and impartial Account of the Affair, which no body ought to look on as a *private* Concern, it being undoubtedly a Work defign'd and fet up for *Publick* ufe and benefit. No man of any difcretion, or of a candid difpofition, will find reafon to queftion the truth of what has been deliver'd in fo plain a Narrative; it being grounded partly on the Inquiry of our Govenours and their fatherly care over their Subjects, and partly on the Evidence of the thing it felf: Which would give me juft caufe to fear that I fhould be convinced of the contrary, if I had made the leaft attempt to violate Truth.

early nineteenth centuries, Francke refers to his story as a "Narrative," which is a term Müller

adopted to frame his own story. Francke's life also dealt with a number of issues that Müller

paid close attention to as he developed the rationale for his own life of faith. These connections

between Müller and Francke also support the thesis that Müller read the unsigned Huntington

edition of Francke's life, because of the similarity between the ideas and language.

First, Francke clarifies that one of his major goals in writing his narrative of events

related to the orphan home, hospital, and other institutions he established was to encourage

others in the Christian faith. Francke noted the following:

> I hope, in the mean time, our great and good Creator, owning thefe fmall beginnings,
> however contemptible they may appear to the world, will not fail powerfully to carry
> them on: and that He will confound more and more the reftlefs fpirit of infidelity, with its
> whole retinue of lyes and flanders. Wherefore, whoever will obftinately perfift in his
> unbelief, he may run this hazard at his own expence, till he find by experience that the
> LORD will, in fpite of all oppofition, do what pleasfeth him: and by the loud fame of his
> wonderful work, awaken many thousand fouls out of their lethargic fleep of unbelief,
> ftrengthen them in faith, fupport them under trials and probations, excite them to praife
> his Name, and transform them into his likenefs, by infufing into them the Spirit of love, of
> power, and of a found mind, through fuch tend and endearing marks of his goodnefs as
> we have enjoyed.[96]

Not to mention at this time, that a Man of Probity and Temper can never Prefume to caft any
afperfion of falfhood upon the Account here given, the Undertaking here dsfcrubed being
altogether void of vifible Supplies, and of all certainty of human Supports; and depending
entirely upon the Blefling of God, fo that if he fhould withold the fame, nothing lefs would enfue
than a fudden Declenfion and final Overthrow of what hath been fo happily begun; fince the
ufing ill means to effect our Defign, would caufe the difpleafure of God againft it, and deprive us
of the influence of the divine Benediction which we have hitherto enjoyed." The story begins
simply with his beginning an orphanage, as Francke explains, "without any settled Provision, and
without any Regard to Humane Supports, I relied entirely upon him, and so did not scruple to
make Daily Addition to the Number of our Children." Augustus Hermannus Francke, *Pietas
Hallensis: Or a Publick Demonstration of the Foot-steps of a Divine Being yet in the World: In
an Historical Narration of the Orphan House, And Other Charitable Institutions, at Glaucha
near Hall in Saxony* (London: J. Downing, 1705), 3-4, 19.

[96] Francke, *The Footsteps*, 116.

Francke desired, through his orphan work, to "strengthen" ordinary believers "in faith." When Müller articulated his rationale for the founding of the orphan home he offered three primary purposes. Müller explained, "That God may be glorified, should he be pleased to furnish me with the means, in its being seen that it is not a vain thing to trust in him, and that the faith of his children may be strengthened."[97] The third purpose focused on the welfare of the children kept in the homes. However, the first reason for the establishment of the orphan home—"that God may be glorified"—mirrored exactly what Francke hoped to accomplish through his efforts in Halle.

The framework that Francke used to explain God's provision was simple and served as the outline for the stories and events he related in the book.[98] Throughout his account Francke described moments of great need, followed by prayer, the belief that God would receive recognition for an answer to the prayer, and concluded by an answer to the prayer in a surprising or simple way. Several similar stories appear in the text and serve as evidence that God has acted in a particular manner to meet the need that Francke articulated in prayer. For example, Francke claimed that those individuals whose pantry and cellar were stocked with food could not understand the trials he endured. Francke then noted, "Faith works beſt when reaſon is out of the buſineſs."[99] Müller followed Francke on this point when he stated, "I have every reason to

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[97] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 142-143.

[98] Müller took Francke's admonition quite seriously that someone should be slow to pursue living by faith simply to imitate a successful example. Ibid., 142. Also see, Francke, *The Footsteps*, 136.

[99] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 74.

believe, that had I begun to lay up, the Lord would have stopped the supplies, and thus, the ability of doing so was only apparent."[100]

Francke's written account of his work was, in fact, a counter-claim to critics who believed that charitable institutions he began in and around Halle were funded by the Prussian government. The reality Francke intended to convey was that he was managing and funding the various charitable institutions simply by, as Francke explained, "dependence upon God."[101] For Francke, depending on God meant relying on God to answer his prayers as he carried on what he regarded as his providential work. Criticism of Francke's work was one major reason that the founder of the Halle orphan homes chose to detail in writing how he had conceived and funded this new charitable institution.[102] Yet, the introduction also points to another reason that Francke recorded a narrative of the events: he hoped to convince others that God was still working in the world. Francke assumed that anyone of basic reasoning skills could read about the charitable work he was overseeing, learn about the details of how God provided, and come to the rational conclusion that his work was evidence of God acting in human history. The ultimate goal for Francke, as he explained, was "nothing elſe but the ſalvation of ſouls, and their converſion to life everlaſting."[103]

Francke indicated that the funds for the poor, the hospital, and the orphan homes trickled in over time but the needs were always met. Therefore, Francke's narrative of his dealings with God attempted to show, like Müller's would later, that there really was a God who heard

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[100] Ibid., 80.
[101] Francke, *The Footsteps*, 112.

[102] Francke noted that his narrative was written to satisfy a government commission that was examining the various charitable institutions he oversaw. Ibid., 111.

[103] Ibid., 94.

prayer and answered in his perfect time.[104] Müller's *Narrative* read almost like a continuation of

Francke's account. For example, on October 30, 1841, Müller recorded, "As this is Saturday, the

money which came in yesterday was not quite enough for to-day. But this morning's post

brought, in answer to prayer, from Clapham 10s., and anonymously from Plymouth 10s."[105] The

basic idea of accounting for needs presented to God followed by an "answer to prayer" in a

simple or a dramatic fashion emphasized God's provision and continued work in the world.

Müller appears to have modeled his *Narrative*, if not explicitly, then certainly in structure and

the selection of content on Francke's *The Footsteps of Divine Providence*. The narrative

structure and accounting methodologies of the two autobiographical accounts suggest that Müller

was familiar with Francke's book, his goals, and his method of accounting for the blessings he

received.[106] If anything, Müller's text is a far more detailed, minutia-filled account that attempts

to overwhelm the reader with an endless supply of evidence to prove that God hears prayer.

Halle's Hero of the Faith

The influence of Francke's work in Halle left a profound mark on Müller's life. When he

and his second wife, Susannah, visited Halle in late March of 1877, she noted in her account of

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[104] Similar to provision stories in medieval hagiography, Francke included a story of immediate and unusual provision when a "waggon" "laden with corn" arrived to supply food for the hospital. Ibid., 132. Similar types of stories were later provided by Müller in his *Narrative*.

[105] George Müller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller, Written by Himself. Third Part*, 7th ed. (London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1895), 418.

[106] James Baker made a similar claim in 1898 when he wrote, "To read the life of Francke is like reading chapters from the life of George Müller, except, that Francke was studious and industrious in his youth, whilst Müller was gay and a veritable young spendthrift." James Baker, "George Müller at Home," in *The Sunday at Home, 1897-1898* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1898), 425.

the journey that Müller spoke on Hebrews 11: 4 in the "great Hall of Francke's Orphan Institution."[107] The scripture passage Müller selected read, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh."[108] The implication of Müller's choice of text was quite clear: even though Francke had been dead for exactly one hundred and fifty years his legacy was still impacting the world, in this case by the very man preaching to the crowd that afternoon. Susannah Müller went onto record that the next day Müller "gave an address on prayer at the same Hall, upon which occasion he made particular reference to the life and labours of Francke, because the example set by that devoted servant of Christ founding an Orphan Institution, in dependence upon God alone for help, was a great encouragement to him when he began his Orphan Work in Bristol."[109] Continuity with the Christian past for Müller centered on the person of Francke and the legacy of the Orphan House in Halle that established a firm and clear link between his generation and the fount of early evangelicalism.[110]

The impact of Halle Pietism on the Continent is dramatic as historian Dale W. Brown explained when he wrote, "Halle," due to the leadership and activism of Francke, "is often heralded as the point of origin for inner missions (ministry to social needs), foreign missions, Jewish missions, dissemination of the Bible and other literature, and for the spread of Pietism by young men who followed German soldiers and settlements to eastern and southeastern Europe,

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[107] Susannah Grace Müller, *The Preaching Tours and Missionary Labours of George Müller (of Bristol)*, 2nd ed. (London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1889), 21.

[108] Holy Bible (KJV).

[109] Müller, *The Preaching Tours*, 21.

[110] G. M. Ditchfield, *The Evangelical Revival* (London: UCL Press, 1998), 11-23.

North America (especially Pennsylvania and Georgia), and many other parts of the world."[111]

What is intriguing about Brown's statement is that he is writing about Halle in the late

seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries after Francke arrived in the city in 1691. Francke's

influence on Pietism in Halle was not, however, limited to his own lifetime as Müller's choice of

Hebrews 11:4 highlighted. Francke though "he being dead yet speaketh" to men like Müller who

established similar religious and philanthropic enterprises in the nineteenth century. While in

Bristol, he too began a series of institutions very similar to Francke's that included supporting

schools, an orphanage, overseas missionaries, and publication efforts to produce inexpensive

Bibles, religious tracts, and Christian literature.

Francke's accomplishment was more than simply an encouragement for Müller. Francke

served as a model worth emulating in detail.[112] The reference Müller makes to Francke's

significance in his own life is essential for understanding how the memory of a Christian in a

past age functioned to inspire the present generation. For Müller, Francke was as important to

the present generation as he was to his own. Müller's admiration for the past hero of the faith

foreshadowed his own significance for generations of Christians to come.[113] Although he would

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[111] Brown, *Understanding Pietism*, 27.

[112] A. T. Pierson highlighted this connection between the two men when he stated, "Half unconsciously George Müller's whole life-work at Bristol found both its suggestion and pattern in Francke's orphanage at Halle. The very building where this young student lodged was to him an object lesson—a visible, veritable, tangible proof that the Living God hears prayer, and can, in answer to prayer alone, build a house for orphan children. That lesson was never lost, and George Müller fell into the apostolic succession of such holy labour! He often records how much his own faith-work was indebted to that example of simple trust in prayer exhibited by Francke. Seven years later he read his life, and was thereby still more prompted to follow him as he followed Christ." Pierson, *George Müller*, 46.

have most likely shunned the notion that he hoped to be remembered by future generations because of his work in Bristol, the implications of his thoughts and reflections on Francke's significance in his own life certainly indicate that he was aware of the potential for his own story to outlive the current generation of Christians who celebrated his life. Therefore, Halle, as Müller's intellectual and spiritual birthplace, was the proper place in which to celebrate the historic connection between himself and the broader story of Christianity in the modern world. He was a spiritual successor of Francke who had become more well-known and celebrated around the world than the very person who inspired his life of faith. Müller was an example of Halle Pietism that was more than a memory—he was a living truth.

Müller's connection with Groves certainly influenced in his ideas about the life of faith, but some scholars have overstated the importance of Grove.[114] Historian David Bebbington argued, "Part of Müller's inspiration derived from the example of August Francke, but part was drawn from the atmosphere of radical devotion to God that Müller discovered in the circles around Groves that were developing into the Brethren movement."[115] Although Bebbington's

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[113] James Wright, Müller's successor and son-in-law, also preached a similar type of sermon after Müller died entitled, *"He Being Dead Yet Speakth": A Sermon in Memory of the Late George Müller*.

[114] Harold H. Rowdon argued that Hudson Taylor was the father of the concept, Müller the grandfather, and A. N. Groves the great-grandfather of the concept. Rowdon claims, "A. G. Groves' *Christian Devotedness* (1825), a fervent tract advocating strict obedience to the letter of the Sermon on the Mount and the (supposed) practice of the apostles, constituted a fountain from which Müller (who married a sister of Groves) drank deeply. Both were Brethren who applied the concept to full time ministry at home as well as to missionary work abroad." Rowdon considered Müller's experience with Halle Pietism and Francke's influence part of the "pre-history" of the modern concept espoused by the Brethren. Rowdon credited the Brethren with a concept that they did not invent. He also downplayed the historical continnum that linked Francke, Huntington, and Müller. Harold H. Rowdon, "The Concept of 'Living By Faith'," in *Mission and Meaning: Essays Present to Peter Cotterell*, ed. Antony Billington, Tony Lane, and Max Turner (Carlisle, U.K.: Paternoster Press, 1995), 340, 344. Lang, *Anthony Norris Groves*, 17-18.

point appears to capture the complexity of Müller's social milieu when he first arrived in Great Britain, the statement underestimates the ongoing influence of Müller's experience with the very epicenter of the life of faith in Halle. [116]

Francke's influence on the city was centered in the living legacy of the enormous Orphan House in Halle and the remnant of Pietism that persisted in the town and university. Müller, as previously stated, was a direct beneficiary of the orphanage when he was admitted to free lodgings in Halle as a divinity student. Müller also imitated Francke after his conversion experience when he made the decision not to accept money from his father to meet his living expenses while studying at the university.[117] Müller records instances in his *Narrative*, prior to moving to England and encountering Groves and the fledgling Brethren Movement, where financial and material needs were met. Müller experimented with living by faith while a university student and later applied this experience to his work in Bristol. Clearly, his action sprung from the city of his spiritual awakening, the mentoring of Tholuck, and the example of Francke.[118]

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[115] David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 94.

[116] Bebbington has mistakenly seen Romanticism as the key to unlock evangelicals in Britain from the 1820s onward. The association between Samuel T. Coleridge and Edward Irving is not in question. Rather, Bebbington asserts that Romanticism was a reaction to the Enlightenment and emphasized feeling, intuition, nature, and the importance of history. The problem with Bebbington's argument is that he claims that, "Reason, not emotion, had been the lodestar of the Evangelicals." Ibid., 81. Bebbington's dualism between intellect and emotion is too strict. Evangelicals inherited the vibrancy of Pietism that emphasized feeling, intuition, and emotionalism. The emotional aspect of evangelicalism, that was fully evident in evangelical revivals, reflected the influence of Pietism and other factors not simply Romanticism. Dale W. Brown, *Understanding Pietism*, rev. ed. (Nappanee, IN: Evangel Publishing House, 1996), 75-77.

[117] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 15.

266

Tholuck and Halle

Professor Tholuck's affinity for Francke has already been established in this chapter, but is crucial for understanding Müller's desire to embrace the life of faith. Tholuck, whom Müller saw as the key to the direction of his life, also shaped the ideas, theological bent, and practices of the young man. Müller made certain that Tholuck knew the impact he had made on Müller's life when writing to Tholuck in 1836. Müller wrote to Tholuck,

> Be not weary in well doing. Take encouragement from my case. For without boasting I can say it, that God has led me forward since the year 1826, when first you began to take me by the hand. And therefore though you should meet with brethren, who seem to make but little progress, yet bear with them, and encourage them; for they may give you joy afterwards, and be your crown in glory. I shall have reason to praise God for ever, that you were instrumental in bringing me to England. If in any way I can serve you, do not hesitate to let me know; for I am greatly in debt to you, and can never do sufficient for you.[119]

Müller, seeing his own story as one of success, wanted to assure his former professor that the investment he made in the lives of students was worth the effort and would yield great dividends for the Kingdom of God. His acknowledgement, besides serving as encouragement, was also a declaration of alliance to his former professor and mentor who worked so hard to shape the lives of university students in Halle.

Although the Plymouth Brethren were essential for defining the initial network of evangelicals within which he would operate in Great Britain, Müller's ideas and practices about

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[118] Letter from George Müller to Professor Tholuck, 1 May 1838, Friedrich August Gottreu Tholuck Papers, Signatur B III 1782, Archiv der Franckeschen Stiftungen zu Halle, Germany.
[119] George Müller to Professor Tholuck, 26 December 1836, Friedrich August Gottreu Tholuck Papers, Signatur B III 1638, Archiv der Franckeschen Stiftungen zu Halle, Germany.

the "life of faith" were firmly rooted in his Halle experience.[120] The institutions founded by

Francke over a century before served as a physical witness to what could be accomplished

through someone who was willing to embrace tremendous risk as an opportunity to show faith

and trust in God. Francke's legacy was not simply represented in an institutional monument but

was reinforced through the living testimony of Tholuck who was also inspired by Francke.

However, when Müller arrived in Great Britain and learned of Groves' approach to the life of

faith, he again was drawn toward someone who fit naturally with his early Christian experiences

with Pietist ideas and practices in Halle. Like Francke, Wagner, Tholuck, and the Moravians he

encountered in Prussia, Müller saw in Groves, Craik, and others with whom he associated in

Great Britain a piety focused on living out the biblical text in a diligent manner. Müller,

consequently, identified himself with those who developed into the Plymouth Brethren, because

they reminded him so much of the Pietists he loved and respected in Prussia.

Conclusion

When William L. Gage published a new translation of August H. Francke's book *Faith's*

Work Perfected; or, Francke's Orphan House at Halle in 1867, he included in the introduction

the following statement about the connection between Francke and Müller:

> An interesting fact connected with Francke, is that by the law of spiritual genealogy, he
> was probably the religious father of George Müller. It is interesting to think that in Halle,
> Müller must have known much of the career of Francke. He carried his recollections to
> England, and in due time he too, in much the same way as the German of 1700, began *his*

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[120] Stephan Holthaus, German church historian and Professor of Ethics at the Freie
Theologische Hochschule Gießen, has indicated in personal conversations with the author that he
too holds to the primacy of Halle's influence on Müller's development regarding the life of faith.
For a complete account of Professor Holthaus' interpretation see Holthaus, "Ein Leben für Gott:
Zum 200. Geburtstag von Georg Müller," 1-10. Also see, Stephan Holthaus, "Kein Bristol ohne
Halle: Georg Müller frühe Jahre in Deutschland (1805-1829)," to be published in the *Jahrbuch
für evangelikale Theologie*.

Orphan House. Thus do good men span the centuries; thus being dead, they yet speak; though they rest from their labours, their works do follow them. It seems a little thing to the readers of George Müller's life, that in his early manhood he made that sojourn in Halle during his wanderings; but it was the means, doubtless, of giving the great Bristol Asylum to the world.[121]

As the statement shows, Gage lacked the evidence he needed to claim absolutely that Müller was the direct product of Francke, but he was able to posit from Müller's early life in Prussia and his subsequent work in Bristol a traceable connection between the past and the present. This chapter has argued what Gage could only infer: Francke and Halle Pietists were foundational for Müller's thought and actions over a century later.

The University of Halle, Prussian Pietism, and the legacy of August H. Francke were essential for the making of George Müller whose name would forever be associated with Bristol, England. These influences were also essential for forming Müller's attitude toward prayer, personal holiness, activism aimed at glorifying God, and embracing Christian unity. What is most remarkable is that these early influences would shape Müller into a person who could reach across denominational and social boundaries that separated Protestants and allow him to become a model of faithful living that make him a hero of the faith. Although historians of the Brethren Movement have emphasized Müller's actions as the result of his connection with Anthony Norris Groves, they have done so at the expense of Halle's influence on Müller. What makes Müller so important for the Brethren was his ability to lead, support, and fund Brethren missionary activities. However, Müller's commitment to the ideals and goals of Prussian Pietism make sense of his latter affiliation with the Brethren. The emphasis on individual spirituality combined with congregational unity and a commonsensical reading of the biblical text reliant on

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[121] A. H. Francke, *Faith's Work Perfected; or, Francke's Orphan House at Halle*, trans. and ed. Wm. L. Gage (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph, 1867), 16.

the work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian's life made the Brethren feel similar to the Pietists in Halle. For Müller the revolt of the early Brethren from the Church of England mirrored the Pietist stand against the dead orthodoxy of the Lutheran state church in Prussia. He found kindred souls in Great Britain because he, too, believed that the power of Christianity could only be lived out fully when the scriptures reigned supreme and ordinary Christians joined together in a life committed to biblical ideals.[122] This attachment to a Pietist form of the Christian faith connected Müller to evangelicals around the world. As the next chapter will show, the first country outside of Great Britain and continental Europe to legitimize and celebrate Müller would be the United States where evangelicalism played a vital role in the day-to-day life of ordinary people.

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[122] Müller, *A Narrative* (1837), 139.

CHAPTER 6

ESTABLISHING TRANSATLANTIC LEGITIMACY

Introduction

George Müller may not have appeared likely to become a hero of the faith for American

Protestants. He did not preach fiery sermons, his thick German accent robbed his voice of the

qualities that could inspire audiences with great emotion,[1] and his affiliation with the Plymouth

Brethren should have marginalized him from the broader stream of evangelicalism due to

sectarianism.[2] Although Müller lacked the preaching qualities of the greatest English-speaking

preachers of the last half of the nineteenth century, such as Charles Spurgeon and Dwight L.

Moody, Müller's name would come to hold as much significance due to his method of living by

faith to support orphans.[3] Müller's name and story did, in fact, become part of the living

tradition of transatlantic Protestantism that would eventually become known around the world

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[1] In contrast to the common observation that Müller had a thick German accent, *The Boston Daily Globe* reported, "his manner of speaking is decidedly Scottish. He talks very rapidly, hardly pausing at the end of a sentence, and probably very few of his hearers distinctly heard him yesterday morning." "Trusting God," *Boston Daily Globe*, October 22, 1877, 8.

[2] Winthrop, "Letter from New York," *The Congregationalist* [Boston], September 19, 1877, 1; "Personal," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 11, 1877, 13.

[3] "A Visiting Clergyman: The Arrival of Rev. Dr. Muller in New York—His First Sermon," *The Daily Constitution* [Atlanta], September 16, 1877, 2.

through the reach of newspaper articles, books, tracts, and people who told his story with great admiration.

The transatlantic connection between American and British evangelicals was vitally important for the rise of Müller as a hero of the faith. Prior to the first evangelical revival, commonly referred to as the "Great Awakening," of the eighteenth century, the connection between British and North American Protestants had been established and remained an important source of personal and theological exchange.[4] These early networks proved essential to development of evangelicalism as both a transatlantic and international movement.[5] The evangelical network that developed was the result of a number of convergent factors and events that included diverse contact points from the ordinary correspondence of individual ministers and laypersons to publicized preaching events. Ministers and laypersons extended their personal correspondence into a reliable system that promoted evangelicalism through word of mouth, written correspondence, and print.[6] News of revivals was of particular importance to evangelicals and led to the development of sophisticated communication networks.

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[4] Alan Bearman, "The Atlas of Independency: The Ideas of John Owen (1616-1683) in the North Atlantic Christian World" (Ph.D. diss., Kansas State University, 2005), 274-276. Also see Virginia D. Anderson, *New England's Generation: The Great Migration and the Formation of Society and Culture in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Ernst Benz, "Ecumenical Relations Between Boston Puritanism and German Pietism: Cotton Mather and August Hermann Francke," *The Harvard Theological Review 54*, no. 3 (July 1961): 159-193; Alan Simpson, *Puritanism in Old and New England* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1955).

[5] Thomas S. Kidd, *The Protestant Interest: New England After Puritanism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 15; J. S. O'Malley, *Early German-American Evangelicalism: Pietist Sources on Discipleship and Sanctification* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 1995), 2.

[6] Scholars continue to wrestle with the significance of these networks and the impact of their interactions on both sides of the Atlantic. For important examples of works focused on this element of evangelical development see, Richard Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism: Popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America, 1790-1865* (1978, repr., Milton Keynes, U.K.:

Once in place, these networks proved useful to evangelicals in other ways. For example, they could be used to gain access to new devotional literature that spurred pious action. They also formed a base to support missionary and social work outside of a local area. Also, on a practical level, evangelical networks provided access to hospitality for travelers and opportunities for ministers to preach outside of their local churches.[7] Ministers also used transatlantic contacts for the discussion of theological questions. By the middle of the eighteenth century evangelicals built a "community of saints," as one scholar has labeled their efforts, which cut across the geographic boundaries and denominational divisions.[8]

The development of this system of contacts expanded over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to include a wide swath of evangelicals from various denominations and theological viewpoints. American evangelicals and their British counterparts created stronger interdenominational ties that highlighted their common evangelical inheritance from the eighteenth century. They found common ground in their opposition to social ills like alcohol abuse and poverty, while associating closely to promote the growth of Christianity through

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Paternoster, 2006); Harry S. Stout, *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991); George A. Rawlyk and Mark A. Noll, eds., *Amazing Grace: Evangelicalism in Australia, Britain, Canada, and the United States* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1993); Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield, and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003); John Wolffe, *The Expansion of Evangelicalism: The Age of Wilberforce, More, Chalmers and Finney* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007); David Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005).

[7]James W. Alexander, *Forty Years' Familiar Letters of James W. Alexander, D.D., Constituting, with the Notes, A Memoir of His Life: Vol. 1*, ed. John Hall (New York: Charles Scribner & Co., 1870), 49, 240.

[8] Susan O'Brien, "A Transatlantic Community of Saints: The Great Awakening and the First Evangelical Network, 1735-1755," *The American Historical Review* 91 (October 1986): 813.

evangelism and missions. Like their predecessors in the eighteenth century, transatlantic evangelicals in the nineteenth century followed news of revivals and the careers of men like Spurgeon, Müller, Moody, and others, usually without making reference to denominational affiliation. This ecumenical quality of Anglo-American evangelicals highlighted their common commitment to evangelism, revivalism, personal piety, social activism, and missionary work.

Based on the developed transatlantic relationship between Anglo-American evangelicals in the nineteenth century, this chapter will analyze the rise of Müller as a leading evangelical personality in North America. For Müller to become a hero of the faith to thousands of evangelicals around the world, his name and story would need to become part of the living memory of evangelicals first in the British Isles and then, in keeping with the historic transatlantic relationship among evangelicals, in North America. Chapter 4 established Müller's rise to prominence in the British Isles as a pastor, philanthropist, and leader among the Brethren. This chapter will examine how Müller was able to become a recognized personality in North America in the middle of the nineteenth century long before he ever travelled across the Atlantic Ocean and reinforced with his personal testimony the celebration of his work and life in the popular religious imagination. This chapter will analyze the publications and personalities who enabled Müller to become a legitimate, celebrated, and informally canonized evangelical hero in the United States. Respected individuals laid the foundation for the reception of Müller's literary works by critics and admirers, which was later built upon by his personal interaction with crowds of churchgoers, college students, and those who were simply curious to see him in person as he travelled across the nation in the late-1870s and 1880s. The chapter will conclude by analyzing pastors and laypersons who were challenged by his method of living by faith and attempted to emulate their hero in their everyday lives.

Recognized by Charles Dickens

The exact course for the development of Müller's rise to significance in North America

based on his work with Bristol's orphan population can be traced in the periodical literature of

the mid-nineteenth century. Even though he published his *Narrative* and annual reports, prior to

the late 1850s there is no significant evidence to indicate that Müller or his story was known in

America.[9] This lack of information about Müller was remedied in 1857. As mentioned in

chapter 4, Henry Morley wrote an article on "Brother Müller and His Orphan Work" that was

published in the November 7, 1857, edition of *Household Words: A Weekly Journal*. The article

carried the clout of the periodical's editor, one of the most popular authors in the English-

speaking world, Charles Dickens. Consequently, when *Household Words* traveled across the

ocean it was republished within six weeks of its original publication date in England. Although

Dickens did not write the article, he recognized the importance of the content by making it the

lead article in that edition. The article was reprinted in its entirety in the December 19, 1857,

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[9] There were, of course, those who were familiar with his story thanks to the transatlantic relationships among evangelicals that resulted in his *Narrative* being mailed to America and read. However, this influence did not bring him to the attention of the wider populace and his influence was limited. *The Oberlin Evangelist* published an article on Müller in 1855 that celebrated him as offering a useful example of a life transformed by Christianity. L. A. L., "The Power of Faith, as Exemplified in the Life and Labors of George Muller," *The Oberlin Evangelist* 12, no. 7 (March 28, 1855): 51-52. American Baptists also identified Müller because of his stance on believer's baptism. Müller, though reared in the Lutheran church in Germany and baptized as a child, was confronted in Sidmouth, England, in 1830 by those who challenged his view of infant baptism as being out of line with Scripture. Müller studied the Bible and prayed about the matter. He came to the conclusion that believer's baptism was the scriptural model and was re-baptized. American Baptists took this section from the 1855 edition of his *Narrative* and published it in tract form to support their position on the sacrament. *George Müller on Baptism: How His View Became Changed* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1856).

issue of *The Living Age*, an American general interest weekly periodical. The appearance of

Müller's story, presented in Morley's questioning but serious manner, placed Müller before the

American public as someone worthy of further investigation. The significance of Morley's

article should not be underestimated. The article is clearly at the vanguard of the period when

Müller entered the consciousness of the American reading public. In addition to the article in

The Living Age, Müller's literary introduction also happened to coincide with a landmark revival

in American history, the Revival of 1857-1858.

The Revival of 1857-1858

Müller first received broad acclaim from American evangelicals in the antebellum period

while the nation was wrestling with a number of social issues like temperance, labor, class,

sexual equality, revivalism, and, most divisively, slavery.[10] Nevertheless, the event that

immediately preceded Müller's widespread introduction to the American public was the Panic of

1857. This financial crisis precipitated what historian William Warren Sweet calls, "one of the

most unusual revivals in the history of religious awakenings in America."[11] Sweet's claim for

uniqueness was based on the fact that, in his words, "It was from start to finish a lay

movement."[12] The Revival of 1857-1858, also referred to as the Businessmen's Revival of

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[10] Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); Kathryn Long, *The Revival of 1857-58: Interpreting an American Religious Awakening* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Robert H. Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[11] William Warren Sweet, *The Story of Religion in America* (1930; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1973), 310.

[12] Ibid.

1857-1858,[13] or the "Great Revival" by contemporaries,[14] was a landmark event that defined American evangelicalism for the remainder of the nineteenth century by its emphasis on lay leadership and prayer.[15]

The revival was, in many respects, the byproduct of an economic crisis created by speculation in railroads and land development. The economic crash involved a number of factors ranging from the impact of the Crimean War (1853-1856) on the devaluation of American stocks and bonds to, ultimately, a run on banks by investors who feared losing their capital.[16] The massive withdrawal of funds in specie by investors forced banks to call in their loans. The consequences were catastrophic for businessmen who could not repay their loans on short notice and were driven out of business. The Panic of 1857 shook the confidence of American businessmen and inspired a moment of reflection on the nature of greed, capitalism,

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[13] Mark A. Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 222.

[14] James W. Alexander, *The Revival and Its Lessons: A Collection of Fugitive Papers, Having Reference to the Great Awaking, 1858* (New York: American Tract Society, 1858).

[15] Ibid., 10. Also see Long, *The Revival of 1857-58*, 127. Historian Sydney E. Ahlstrom connected the power of the revival 1857-1858 to the reinvigoration of Christian education through Sunday Schools, through men like D. L. Moody, that ". . . attracted dedicated lay leaders of great ability, helping to set the tone and temper of American Protestantism and providing an effective means of reaching the unchurched and unaffiliated—adults as well as children. Although they necessarily mirrored the country's values, the Sunday schools did produce a pious and knowledgeable laity on a scale unequaled anywhere in Christendom." Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People: Vol. 2* (Garden City, NJ: Image Books, 1975), 199.

[16] The Panic of 1857 was international and multifaceted in nature. Blame was placed on any who seemed to profit from the failure of others. J. S. Gibbons blamed the religious periodical, *The Independent*, for causing the panic to expand rapidly outside of New York to rest of the country. However, the causes of the Panic of 1857 were far more complicated than Gibbon appreciated. J. S. Gibbon, *The Banks of New-York, Their Dealers, The Clearing House, and the Panic of 1857* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1858), 373.

and moral responsibility.[17] The revival resulted in businessmen seeking a cure for the financial

crisis through prayer. Historian Sean Wilentz notes that the Panic of 1857 resulted in "an

outpouring of revivalist religion more fervent than any seen since the 1830s."[18] The revival was

a short-lived phenomenon and paralleled the quick fall and recovery of the economy.[19]

However, for many Americans their practice of the Christian faith was permanently transformed

by the revival.[20]

The revival possessed a number of essential qualities that are important to note. In

addition to the half million or so people who came to profess faith in Jesus as savior for the first

time,[21] the revival promoted an interdenominational quality that encouraged Christians to seek

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[17] Princeton historian James M. McPherson noted that "One of the most striking
consequences of the depression was a religious revival that brought people of all occupations
together in prayer meetings at which they contemplated God's punishment for the sins of greed
and high living that had caused the crash." James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The
Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 191.

[18] Sean Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln* (New York: W.
W. Norton, 2005), 723.

[19] McPherson noted in his study that "Perhaps the Lord took pity." McPherson, *Battle
Cry*, 191.

[20] Baylor historian Barry Hankins argues that the Revival of 1857-1858 marked the end
of the Second Great Awakening. Although this interpretation does make sense given that it is
the last great revival of the antebellum period, I would argue based, on the evidence, that in the
post-Civil War period the mid-century revival was still seen as vitally important to evangelical
piety and was what the revivalism of the late-nineteenth century sought to recapture. Barry
Hankins, *American Evangelicals: A Contemporary History of a Mainstream Religious Movement*
(Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2008), 15.

[21] Historians have estimated the number of new professions of faith ranged between one
million and half a million people. The esteemed historian William Warren Sweet observed, "The
Young Men's Christian Association, just getting started in the United States, played a large part
in the movement. Though the revival produced no outstanding revival preachers, it was
responsible for raising up an extraordinarily able group of lay leaders who were to play a
prominent part in the religious life of cities, some of whom gained national prominence. Among
them were Dwight L. Moody of Chicago and John Wanamaker of Philadelphia, both of whom, in

unity above denominational divisions.[22] Many would interpret the interdenominational aspect of

the revival as a sign that God was doing a genuine work of renewal in American society.[23] The

revival also encouraged a vibrant lay piety that focused on personal holiness, prayer meetings,

and social activism aimed at the destitute, poor, and vulnerable. Charles G. Finney, the

renowned preacher of the Second Great Awakening, reflected on the events of 1857-1858 and

wrote, "This revival had some very peculiarly interesting features. It was carried on to a large

extent through lay influence, so much so as almost to throw the ministers into the shade."[24]

Many of the prayer-meetings were established and conducted by lay Christians. Because the

financial collapse plunged many wage workers into destitute poverty, laypeople were encouraged

to help those who faced hard times. The blossoming of social activism, especially among

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1858, started Sunday schools of their own in their respective cities, which grew into large and
flourishing institutions. Other lay leaders produced by the revival were to have the principal part
in forming the numerous voluntary religious and philanthropic agencies which served the armed
forces during the Civil War, such as the United States Christian Commission and the United
States Sanitary Commission. It has been estimated that at least 100,000 professed conversion
within 4 months after the Fulton Street prayer meeting began, and that the final total ingathering
of new members into the churches throughout the country as the direct result of the revival was
more than 1,000,000." Sweet, *The Story*, 311. University of Edinburgh ecclesiastical historian
Stewart J. Brown and Wheaton College historian Kathryn Long estimate that there were around a
half million new professions of faith as a result of the revival. Stewart J. Brown, *Providence and
Empire: Religion, Politics and Society in the United Kingdom 1815-1914* (London: Pearson
Longman, 2008), 215. Also see, Long, *The Revival of 1857-58*, 150.

[22] Rev. James W. Alexander, one of the key ministers associated with the revival,
embraced a "catholicity of spirit and by a breadth of esteem for all fellow Christians." Iain H.
Murray, *Revival and Revivalism: The Making and Marring of American Evangelicalism, 1750-
1858* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1994), 335.

[23] Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 71.

[24] Charles G. Finney, *The Memoirs of Rev. Charles G. Finney* (New York: Fleming H.
Revell Company, 1876), 442.

businessmen, altered the view of the laity in Christian work.[25] Many individuals assessed their

Christian commitments and reoriented their lives around an active personal piety that stressed

prayer and social activism.

The revival was distinguished by noon-hour prayer meetings that were similar in nature

to the Pietist prayer meetings in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries where laypeople in

Europe directed their own spiritual experience.[26] The first of these meetings began about a

month after the start of the financial panic. The Old North Dutch Church, in New York City,

saw the advent of the prayer meetings on September 23, 1857.[27] This church became a

legendary center of lay activism under the title of the Fulton Street Prayer Meeting.[28] Hundreds

of people joined together daily in prayer in hope of transforming society, the economy, and

themselves. The prayer-meeting revival that began on Fulton Street spread to other churches and

cities over the following weeks and months. The Fulton Street Prayer Meeting continued to

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[25] Mark Saunders Schantz, "Piety in Providence: The Class Dimensions of Religious Experience in Providence, Rhode Island, 1790-1860" (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1991), 414-419.

[26] Rev. James W. Alexander, pastor of the Nineteenth-Street Presbyterian Church on Fifth Avenue in New York City, asserted in his account of events that, "The simple pious thought of JEREMIAH LANPHIER, and a few like-minded servants of God, was to gather a handful of business men, at the hour of noon, to confer, to read the Word, to sing, and to cry unto God for the outpouring of his Holy Spirit." Alexander, *The Revival and Its Lessons*, 6. James Alexander was the eldest son of Archibald Alexander who served as Princeton Seminary's first professor. James was intimately involved in the Revival, similar to Francis Wayland in Rhode Island, and Jeremiah Lanphier had been a member of James' church for a number of years prior to his official connection with the North Dutch Church in July of 1858. Talbot W. Chambers, *The Noon Prayer Meeting of the North Dutch Church, Fulton Street, New York: Its Origin, Character and Progress, with Some of its Results* (New York: Board of Publication of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, 1858), 34.

[27] Thomas A. Askew and Richard V. Pierard, *The American Church Experience: A Concise History* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 83.

[28] The Old Dutch Church was located on the corner of William and Fulton Streets in New York City.

function for decades after the larger revival waned in the summer of 1858 as the economy recovered.[29] The revival thrived in urban areas but also took root in rural areas. The revival relied on connections through personal relationships, voluntary associations, and new evangelical institutions like the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), which developed into a significant social and religious institution as a result of the revival.[30]

Müller's story was widely celebrated in the wake of the revival as lay people began to take a more active role in leading ministries and philanthropic work. Müller's appeal was based on the perception that he, too, was a simple layperson doing God's work. The editors of *The Christian Examiner* highlighted that they were among the first to take notice of Müller's orphan work in 1859 when they reviewed the British edition of his *Narrative*.[31] The July 1859 article explicitly highlighted the fact that Müller's conversion occurred in the home of a businessman.[32]

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[29] Long, *The Revival of 1857-58*, 62. Also see Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy*, 723.

[30] Ibid., 61.

[31] "Review of Current Literature," *The Christian Examiner* 9, no. 1 New Series (July 1861): 141. Early notice of Müller's work for the editors of *The Christian Examiner* was July 1859, whereas the connection to Charles Dickens and the article in *The Living Age* predated their claim by almost two years. In the 1859 article the reviewer asserted, "His narrative has no other grace than that highest grace which the Spirit bestows; it has no eloquence but that of deep conviction; there is very little meditation in its artless pages, and yet few books prompt more. . . . Yet no biography is better fitted to draw forth charitable effort than this; none, we believe, will contribute more to philanthropize Christendom, comfort suffering humanity, and build up that kingdom of good-will for which we all pray." "The Lord's Dealings with George Müller," *The Christian Examiner* 57, no. 214 (July 1859): 137. Other periodicals also made similar observations about their role in first presenting Müller and his life of faith to the American public. "Our Book Table," *The Advocate and Family Guardian* 27, no. 7 (April 1, 1861): 111.

[32] *The Christian Examiner* reported on the 1856 edition of Müller's *Narrative* published in London. The unsigned article reported that "This narrative of a persistent course of philanthropic action is one of the most remarkable autobiographies ever written." The article went on to proclaim that "thousands of hearts have been quickened to benevolence by his simple story;— the idea of God as actually living, present, and quickening, has done much to dispel that

Furthermore, the article noted that his conversion occurred in the context of "a prayer-meeting as all of us are familiar with."[33] The explicit connection between Müller and the revival would be further reinforced by the first American edition of Müller's autobiography, *The Life of Trust*, which was published in the United States in 1860. Although the available primary sources do not resolve all of the issues regarding Müller's importance in antebellum America, an edited volume of his *Narrative* appeared in 1860 that helped to create the reputation of "the famous Orphan Asylum at Bristol, Eng."[34]

The Life of Trust

Although Müller's name and his approach to "living by faith" may have eventually become widely familiar to readers simply through the re-publication of articles from British periodicals, such as *Household Words*, by American publishers, in Müller's case his rise to acclaim was due to a highly-esteemed Baptist family that took it upon themselves to celebrate his

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phantom abstraction which has chilled so many hearts to stone." "The Lord's Dealings With George Müller," 128, 136.

[33] Ibid., 129.

[34] There is evidence that the Ashley Down Orphan Homes did attract the attention of some in the United States. However, the scope of that knowledge is debatable. One advertisement by Gould and Lincoln for *The Life of Trust* stated that "This work has a peculiar charm for every child of God, as an unadorned story of the experience of a Christian man who believed in the mighty power of prayer, and lived by daily faith in God's providence and grace. It contains the entire history of the famous Orphan Asylum at Bristol, Eng." This advertisement assumes some prior knowledge of the Orphan Homes or, in fact, it could be creating a market idea by proclaiming the work with the orphans as "famous." "Gould and Lincoln [Advertisement]," *The Presbyterian Historical Almanac and Annual Remembrancer of the Church for 1861* (Philadelphia: Joseph M. Wilson, 1861): n.p.

story and make it available to American readers.[35] Müller's autobiographical *Narrative*, though

readable, was bulky even by nineteenth-century standards and lacked a firm editorial hand that

kept the expanding volumes from appearing repetitive and cumbersome to read. In the British-

published *Narrative*, Müller seemed consumed, at times, with the minutia of everyday life and

the effort to document every donation made to his organization. Consequently, Müller's

Narrative is filled with the details of the thousands of sums given in pounds, shillings, and pence

and trifling gifts described to a fault with odd thoughts and reflections of donors included at

random. To his credit, much of the description Müller provided to give an account of his

management of the funds that were entrusted to him by donors without any sort of direct

oversight. However, the details that served as proof of God's faithfulness also made the

Narrative bulky and laborious to read. Consequently, no American edition of Müller's life and

work had been published in the United States.[36]

The challenge of publishing an affordable and easy-to-read volume of Müller's *Narrative*

for American audiences was solved in 1860 when an edited book entitled, *The Life of Trust:*

Being a Narrative of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller, Written by Himself, appeared

from the Boston publishers Gould and Lincoln. The volume was edited by Rev. H. Lincoln

Wayland (1830-1898) and included an introduction by H. Lincoln's father, Rev. Francis

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[35] A significant number of stories published in American periodical literature in the nineteenth century were items that first appeared British periodicals. Some stories about Müller were first published in Britain and later reprinted in American magazines.

[36] This, however, does not mean that British editions of Müller's *Narrative* and annual reports were not available in the United States. Rather, no American publisher proceeded with the publication of Müller's written works before 1860. The Wayland edition included a table of contents, separated the text into chapters, and reduced the length of the *Narrative*. H. L. Wayland, "Editor's Preface," in George Müller, *The Life of Trust: Being a Narrative of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller, Written by Himself*, ed. H. L. Wayland, intro. Francis Wayland (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1860), v.

Wayland (1796-1865), the former president of Brown University.[37] Francis Wayland, due to his

scholarship and role at Brown,[38] was a leading public intellectual in America.[39] His son was also

a successful pastor who benefited from the name recognition associated with his father's

achievements. Therefore, their decision and effort to focus attention on the story of Müller did

not go unnoticed. With the tediousness of Müller's meticulous recording efforts limited to key

examples and his essential thoughts encapsulated more succinctly through editing, the Waylands

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[37] Francis Wayland and H. L. Wayland, *A Memoir of the Life and Labors of Francis Wayland, D.D., LL.D., Late President of Brown University: Vol. II* (1867; repr., New York: Arno Press, 1972), 247. Francis Wayland besides serving as president of Brown was also the Professor of Moral and Intellectual Philosophy, see *A Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Brown University, 1851-1852, First Term* (Providence, R.I.: A. C. Greene, 1851), 7.

[38] Mark Noll notes, "Wayland [was] an intellectual of consequence but one who has been neglected by historians . . . ." Noll, *America's God*, 250. Senator Charles Sumner wrote of Francis Wayland that he was an, "eminent person, honored wherever the pulpit and philosophy of our country are known." Charles Sumner, "Letter on Parties, and the Importance of a Free-Soil Organization; Addressed to a Committee of the Free Soil Party in Boston, Oct. 26, 1848," in Charles Sumner, *Orations and Speeches: Vol. 2* (Boston: Ticknor, Reed, and Fields, 1850), 286.

[39] In 1835 Francis Wayland published *The Elements of Moral Science*, a landmark volume that reached a significant publishing milestone of 100,000 books printed and sold. In 1841, he followed the previous publishing success with another noted volume entitled, *The Elements of Political Economy*. When a revised volume of the latter book was published in 1886, Aaron L. Chapin, the President of Beloit College, stated, "His [Dr. Wayland's] effort was attended with remarkable success, and no other text-book on the subject has gained such general acceptance and been so extensively and continuously used." Francis Wayland, *The Elements of Political Economy*, rev. by Aaron L. Chapin (New York: Sheldon & Co., 1886), i. An advertisement in the 1886 volume promoting Wayland's other books declared: "As an educator, no man in this country ever stood higher than Dr. Wayland. These books were books built up from his work in the class-room, and are, therefore, adapted to meet the wants of both teacher and scholar. They are now used in most of the leading schools and colleges in the country." For Wayland's importance on this point also see, Noll, *America's God*, 222. Wayland was recognized nationally as an education reformer, a prison reformer, a hospital reformer, supporter of public libraries, and, most notably, an opponent of slavery. He engaged in political debate about the issue of slavery after he came to believe the southern states wanted to extend the practice outside of the South. Ultimately, his beliefs about slavery drove him to align himself with the Free Soil Party and later the Republican Party. Matthew S. Hill, "God and Slavery in America: Francis Wayland and the Evangelical Conscience" (Ph.D. diss., George State University, 2008), 3-4.

laid the foundation for Müller to become an example and, eventually, a "hero of the faith" for

American evangelicals.[40] However, the key contribution for Müller's obtaining legitimacy in the

eyes of American readers was found in the introduction provided by Francis Wayland.

Wayland wrote the introduction while recovering from a period of paralysis, or possibly a

stroke, when he struggled both physically and mentally to recover from a physical aliment that

followed in the wake of two national crises that he had addressed publicly.[41] First, throughout

the 1850s he railed against the practice of slavery.[42] Second, he assisted the business community

during the financial turmoil of 1857 and the subsequent revival.[43] As a nationally recognized

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[40] Wayland also preserved the memory of fellow Christians who impressed him with their life of service and devotion to God. See, Francis Wayland, *A Memoir of the Christian Labors, Pastoral and Philanthropic, of Thomas Chalmers, D.D. LL.D.* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1864); Francis Wayland, *A Memoir of the Life and Labors of the Rev. Adoniram Judson, D.D., 2 volumes* (Boston: Phillips, Sampson, and Company, 1853); Francis Wayland, *A Memoir of Harriet Ware, First Superintendent of the Children's Home, in the City of Providence* (Providence, RI: George H. Whitney, 1850); Francis Wayland, *A Discourse in Commemoration of the Life and Services of William G. Goddard, LL.D., Delivered at the Request of the Faculty, in the Chapel of Brown University, March 12th, 1846* (Providence, RI: B. Cranston and Company, 1846); Francis Wayland, *A Discourse in Commemoration of the Life and Character of the Hon. Nicholas Brown, Delivered in the Chapel of Brown University, November 3, 1841* (Boston: Gould, Kendall, and Lincoln, 1841). In a written reflection on Wayland's life Brown University Professor George Ide Chace wrote, "Literature has hastened to embalm in her own frankincense his name, that it may go down to posterity among the benefactors of the race." George I. Chace, *The Virtues and Services of Francis Wayland: A Discourse Commemorative of Francis Wayland, Delivered Before the Alumni of Brown University, September 4, 1866* (Providence, RI: Sidney S. Rider & Brother, 1866).

[41] His biographer suggests that Wayland's physical collapse, at the age of sixty-five, was due to overwork and too many preaching engagements. James O. Murray, *Francis Wayland* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1891), 137-138.

[42] Ibid., 139-143.

[43] Francis Wayland, *Thoughts on the Present Distress. Two Sermons Preached in the First Baptist Church, Providence, on the 11th and 25th of October, 1857* (Providence, RI: George H. Whitney, 1857).

moral reformer who also desired Christian unity and revival,[44] Wayland's introduction would be seen as a major endorsement that launched the Bristol philanthropist to the forefront of American religious and social life.[45] Even more importantly, Wayland did not simply present Müller as a curiosity, but instead argued that Müller's life of total dependence on God was worthy of emulation by all. Wayland wrote, "With this understanding of the promise granted to the prayer of faith, I do not see why we should not take the case of Mr. Müller as an example for our imitation. Whoever attains to this same simple desire in all things to do the will of God, and to the same child-like trust in his promises, may, I think, hope for a similar blessing. God is no respecter of persons."[46] Wayland, as the former president of Brown University and onetime pastor of the historic First Baptist Church in Providence, Rhode Island, gave legitimacy to Müller's story in a manner that did not promote spiritual or intellectual elitism. Instead Wayland focused on the common need for Christians to embrace a similar "child-like trust" in an effort to see God work in their own lives. The weight of Wayland's endorsement in the introduction and

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[44] Wayland held that the Christian Church existed beyond the walls of local churches and denominational alliances. The idea of the Church, for Wayland, existed in the moral identity of the individual as they were led by God through his Spirit. Consequently, true Christians could be recognized by their piety, their actions, their love, and their service to humanity. Francis Wayland, "Sermon 16. The Unity of the Church," in *University Sermons. Sermons Delivered in the Chapel of Brown University*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1854), 237-252.

[45] James O. Murray, the main biographer of Wayland and a professor of English literature at Princeton University, explained that, "His [Wayland's] deeds went with his words, went before his words often, and of no man could it be more truly said that his philanthropy was that of common sense as well as common humanity. He had studied with care the lives of such philanthropists as John Howard, Caroline Fry, and George Müller. That in them which most impressed and moved him was the self-denying, individual labors they had put forth. He never wearied of referring to them in his class room and from the pulpit. He had studied the career of John Howard, as thoroughly as he had that of Lord Erskine and Napoleon I. There was in it an element of the morally heroic which stirred his nature to its depths." Murray, *Francis Wayland*, 262.

[46] Müller, *The Life of Trust*, xxix.

his son's editorial skill immediately allowed the book to gain a wide readership that was as curious as it was questioning about the person and work of George Müller of Bristol. If, after all, an immigrant German to Great Britain could achieve such amazing feats based on a "child-like trust," imagine what a nation of immigrants could accomplish in the cities of America.

Shortly after the Wayland volume went on sale, critical reviews began appearing in newspapers, magazines, and journals that took Müller's claims seriously. The *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier* reported in its front-page section on "New Publications" that,

> This book [*The Life of Trust*] illustrates the old axion [*sic*] that truth is stranger than fiction. It is the personal record of the self-denying labors of a man who from the smallest beginnings has accomplished great results; who by prayer, asking help of no one but God, has build up a most extensive and successful Orphan Asylum, containing 700 children, besides largely engaging in Bible and Tract distribution. It is attracting great attention and being read by all the friends of Christian benevolence.[47]

The Maine newspaper recognized the stir that *The Life of Trust* was creating as people became more familiar with the story of what Müller supposedly accomplished by prayer. By the end of February 1861, Pharcellus Church, editor of the influential *New York Chronicle*, wrote to Francis Wayland the following:

> Your Muller fell into my hands at this crisis & I now see that God had already stirred you to do just what I requested you to do in my last with a view to leading Christians to live by faith & to know the thing freely given to them of God. There & for more this after I had never heard the name of Muller or of his existence. But let me tell you, it was impossible for me to conceive at the time any mode of doing what I decried so effectual as you have adopted in linking yourself to this work . . . to have the blessed experience of a life of faith in all the ordinary transactions of every day [*sic*] business & duty? I long & pray for more light, more love, more power; what else can I do? Can you not think of some other work of the same general effect with Muler's [*sic*]? . . . I wish we had a library of such books.[48]

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[47] "New Publications," *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, January 12, 1861, Saturday Morning edition.

[48] Pharcellus Church to Francis Wayland, 25 February 1861, The President's Papers, Francis Wayland Papers, Special Collections, The John Hay Library, Brown University, Providence, RI.

Just prior to receiving *The Life of Trust* Church was suffering through a period where he wrestled

with his own human frailties and shortcomings as a Christian. As his comments to Wayland

indicate, Müller's book was read in the midst of this personal struggle. However, Church saw

more than a simple story of child-like faith in Müller's account. Rather, Müller's "blessed

experience" was a story that must be shared with others. Church encouraged Wayland to send

along other accounts of "earnest religion" and, even more telling, asked that Wayland explain the

significance of such accounts so that he could share them with his readers.[49] In the exchange

between Church and Wayland, the influence of the latter on Civil War-era religious thought is

clearly articulated. Wayland was seen as a trusted expert and a reliable conduit from which to

learn more about what was happening in the broader Christian world.

As the book gained a wider reading audience, periodicals and newspapers wrestled with

the implications of Müller's thought and practice. The region of the United States most troubled

by Müller was New England. The *Boston Review*, a Congregational periodical, proclaimed:

> Mr. Müller succeeded, through many trials; and the faith-giving element was preserved.
> And now how important it is that the whole believing and unbelieving world should look
> upon this latter-day monument of God's fidelity, and have their faith strengthened and
> their unbelief removed. Or if that cannot be, how important that, in the place thereof, this
> book should be circulated throughout the Christian world, and stand side by side with the
> Bible as a text-book of religious appeal.
>   This seems presumptuous indeed, and yet it is the conclusion which the positions
> of the book have forced upon us. We do not doubt that Mr. Muller is right in thinking
> that the people of the present day desire something remarkable in religion that can be
> seen by the natural eye, but whether he is right in conceiving that they *need* it, and that it
> is God's purpose to give it, is not quite so clear.[50]

The issue for the reviewer was the notion that the book served as evidence that God acted in

response to Müller's prayers. The reviewer went on to state that so much of what Müller

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[49] Ibid.

[50] "Article VIII: Literary Notices," *Boston Review* 1, no. 1 (January 1861): 88.

proclaimed as an answer to prayer could ultimately be explained according to "natural principles."[51] The *Boston Review* did not, however, feel compelled to support Müller's claims and went on to explain that "We frankly confess ourselves unable to reduce Mr. Muller's enterprise to Bible principles."[52] If this statement was not clear enough the editors went on to proclaim that "we are not ready to admit that he sanctions any experiments which are made at the present day for the express purpose of proving that he is a faithful God. These proofs are recorded in his Word."[53] The *Boston Review* did not see the need for an extra-biblical account of God's faithfulness to provide proof that God still worked in the world.

Another Congregationalist periodical, *The New Englander*, also was troubled by Müller's account of his life of faith. *The New Englander* asserted that "It is with mingled feelings, therefore, that we greet the appearance of Müller's Life of Trust. The aim of the book is excellent. It is designed to encourage prayer, and that in a time when men are apt to forget God, because they have so much to do for him."[54] However, the reviewer goes on to state in caution, "But we fear that the impulse it was designed to give will be more than counteracted by the errors it upholds."[55] *The New Englander* proceeded to inform the reader that Müller "has a zeal, but not according to knowledge. There is a vein of fanaticism in his character, which must

[51] Ibid., 89.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

[54] "George Müller and the Life of Trust," *The New Englander* 19, no. 2 (April 1861): 429.

[55] Ibid., 429-430.

impair his usefulness as an example."[56] This critique was expanded further when the reviewer

stated, "But we think that the depending upon prayer alone for supplies, whatever the effects

may have been in this case, is a principle radically unsound, and is but a part of an intensely one-

sided view, held, indeed, by an excellent and devout man, but marking him as fanatical, rather

than wise."[57] *The New Englander* felt no sympathy toward Müller's peculiar practice of the

Christian faith and went on to clarify that his approach to Christian practice was "opposed to the

precepts of the Scriptures," was "opposed to the Apostolic practice," and if followed would have

"pernicious effects."[58] Ultimately, *The New Englander* portrayed Müller as a decisive figure

who would "cause those to fall, whom he does not repel."[59] Müller, as *The New Englander*

foreshadowed, repelled some, caused others to fall, and marked a divide erupting among

Protestants over the tension between faith and reason, God and science, piety and irreligion.

 The New Englander, however, could not match the ferocity of a second review article

analyzing *The Life of Trust* that appeared in the *Boston Review* in September of 1862 entitled,

"Religious Self-Complacency." The second article not only criticized Müller but linked him to a

mysterious "sect" called the Plymouth Brethren. The anonymous author of the article posited

that, "It has been found a matter of no small difficulty to ascertain precisely what 'the Brethren'

believe, as they are characterized by a peculiar cautiousness as regards any positive declaration

of their faith."[60] The inability to define the Brethren led the article's author to conclude "that

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[56] Ibid., 432.

[57] Ibid., 433-434.

[58] Ibid., 434-435.

[59] Ibid., 436.

their [the Plymouth Brethren's] central principle is the higher Christian life, or perfectionism."[61]

Mixing Müller with the goals of the Holiness Revival also implied a link to the Revival of 1857-1858 that challenged the dominance of clergy over lay people.[62] Fearful of readers embracing the holiness practices of the Brethren, like Müller, the article proclaims, "The visionary schemes of George Müller, as set forth in the '*Life of Trust*,' are the direct outgrowth of the same spirit of conceit and presumption."[63] Müller's aim to live a life of faithfulness to God by only engaging in prayer to have his needs met is recast as a horrific deviation from both the Bible and the historic traditions of Christian benevolent institutions that allow and promote the raising of funds to support those in need. The article openly counters Müller's claims to supernatural involvement by arguing,

> Funds have flowed in to clothe and feed George Müller's orphans, because the benevolent and tender-hearted English community has been made fully aware of the urgency of the case—that there was a large number of fatherless and motherless children at Bristol to be cared for; that the institution had no regular income, and that no agency was employed to solicit funds, and nobody was asked to give; consequently that not only the orphan children but Mr. Müller and all concerned must suffer unless voluntary contributions were sent in. Could a stronger appeal be made?[64]

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[60] "Religious Self-Complacency," *Boston Review* 2, no. 11 (September 1862): 483.
[61] Ibid.

[62] Holiness teaching paralleled, in many ways, the German Pietist practice that focused on living an exemplary Christian lifestyle developed in the context of small group meetings. Consequently, Congregationalist ministers would have feared such associations since holiness teachings would have weakened their hold over the life of their congregations and challenged their place as spiritual and social leaders. Melvin Easterday Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century,* 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1996), 41. Also see William G. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform: An Essay on Religion and Social Change in America, 1607-1977* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), 141-142.

[63] "Religious Self-Complacency," *Boston Review*, 483.

[64] Ibid., 483-484.

Müller's grandiose claims for answered prayer are denied in the article and the conscience of the English people was provoked to act on behalf of the children for whom he cared. The "dreamy prophet of perfectionism," as the article labeled Müller in its concluding paragraph, was disarmed of a biblically valid form of Christian practice and re-fashioned a religious radical from a deviant English sect that could do more harm than good if his example were followed. This critique all but labeled Müller a charlatan whose approach to prayer was really about manipulating human giving. As the article's author asserted, "We set him [Müller] down as a man of singular tact and cleverness in the use of means, one that would bear off the palm from all the 'agents' we have ever known."[65]

As reception of the book varied according to the perceptions of the reviews to the claims Müller made, even the Waylands found themselves questioned. *The Christian Review*, a periodical that disagreed with Müller's claims that all his needs were being answered through prayer, criticized Francis Wayland's lack of warning about the Müller's approach to the Christian faith. The reviewer stated, "The task of the editor has been a difficult one, and has been performed with judgment and good taste. We could wish the venerable writer of the Introduction to the volume, had stated the cautions and 'limitations' required alike by Scripture and reason, in the application of Mr. Müller's theory."[66] Although respectful of the senior Wayland's status among American Baptists, *The Christian Review* believed that he should have more clearly discerned and clarified the problem with Müller's hypothesis about the efficacy of prayer, something the reviewer saw as not God's work but instead as "the natural result of

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[65] Ibid., 484.

[66] "Müller's Life of Trust," *The Christian Review* (April 1861): 349.

second causes, which he [Müller] had himself set in operation."[67] Although *The Christian*

Review was troubled by Müller's interpretation of God's answer to his prayers, the reviewer

stated that the book should be read because "it will quicken the spiritual life, and if read in the

light of all Scripture, lead to a more constant and a devouter [*sic*] daily trust in the living God."[68]

Others, beside *The Christian Review*, targeted Francis Wayland, as the former president of

Brown University, as holding some responsibility for presenting Müller as a legitimate model of

Christian practice to the American reading public.[69] These criticisms provoked genuine

reflection by Wayland on what he and his son had endorsed. For example, in response to a letter

by the Congregational minister the Rev. Dr. Leonard Withington, Francis Wayland was forced to

concede that much in Müller's account could be called into question.[70] Wayland qualifies his

endorsement of Müller's approach to the Christian life with the following comment:

> You ask me about Müller and his book. The book has, I think, many imperfections: cases
> are set down as answers to prayer which can as well be accounted for in other ways; and
> some things are published which might better have been left between God and his own
> soul. My son (and I agreed with him) did not feel authorized to do anything else than

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[67] Ibid., 348.
[68] Ibid., 349.

[69] The review of *The Life of Trust* in *The American Theological Review* stated, "So far as
such cases illustrate the power of prayer, and the fact of answers to fervent petitions, they are in
accordance with the general experience of Christians. But so far as they seem intended to
change, as Dr. Wayland suggests, the whole economy of our benevolent operations, we think that
the facts are unwisely interpreted. We cannot see why it is not just as Christian, and just as
trustful, to ask a brother directly to help us in good works, as it is to solicit him by letting him
know that we have asked the Lord to induce him to help us. If we may ask the Lord to help us,
why may we not ask a brother also?" "Practical Religious Literature," *The American
Theological Review* 3 no. 11 (July 1861): 575.

[70] Rev. Dr. Leonard Withington (1789-1885) was the pastor of First Church, Newbury,
Massachusetts. A graduate of Yale and Andover Theological Seminary he remained pastor of
the Congregational church in Newbury from 1816 to 1858 when he retired. He was respected for
his scholarly activities and was awarded the Doctor of Divinity in 1850 by Bowdoin College.
"The Rev. Leonard Withington," *The New York Times*, April 23, 1885, 5.

condense the book, leaving it to make precisely the impression which Mr. Müller intended.[71]

Wayland, however, did not simply present Müller and his work as having no flaws, but rather proposed that Christian's copy Müller in their everyday life. Unsatisfied with Müller's description of his answered prayers, many individuals, such as Rev. Withington, questioned the use of Müller as a model for Christian practice. The issue for many reviewers was Wayland's uncritical endorsement of Müller as a model for philanthropic fundraising.

Rev. Joseph S. Clark, editor of *The Congregational Review*, provided the only positive review of Müller's life that was published in Boston. Clark, an Amherst College board member and promoter of church history through the Congregational Library Association,[72] recognized the criticism directed at Müller was unwarranted based on his reading of text of *The Life of Trust*. Clark noted that Müller became a Baptist in Teignmouth and qualified this claim with the following: "at least to the extent of being immersed."[73] Although he did not state it explicitly, Clark insinuated that there was a shared Baptist identity that connected Wayland and Müller in an effort to explain Wayland's endorsement. Clark's aim, however, was not to discredit Müller, but rather to move past the "conflicting opinions which critics and writers of brief book notices have already thrown out."[74] Clark surmised that most of the debate was related to remarks posited by Wayland in the Introduction that offended the sensibilities of readers before they

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[71] Wayland, eds., *A Memoir of the Life and Labors of Francis Wayland*, 259.

[72] J. William T. Youngs, *The Congregationalists* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998), 123.

[73] Joseph S. Clark, "George Müller," *The Congregational Quarterly* 3, no. 2 (April 1861): 191.

[74] Ibid., 194.

actually read Müller's account.[75] Clark attempted to set the record straight for his fellow

Congregationalists by making three arguments for Müller's theory of prayer. First, Clark noted

that Müller's method did not go against the Bible. Second, he argued that Müller's theory of

prayer matched biblical teaching on prayer. Third, Müller's theory had already been "*tested by*

others," most notably, August Francke.[76] As a minister with a committed interest in church

history, Clark was less threatened by Müller's theory of living by faith because Müller fit within

a continuum of practice that went back to the eighteenth century. Francke, as Clark was

probably aware, was an important Continental connection for New England Puritans and this

may have been why he was far more tolerant of Müller's perceived radicalism than his peers.[77]

Clark, in fact, posed the question of what the universal church would be like if all Christians

engaged in prayer with the same vigor as Müller. Clark ended his review with a hopeful claim

that the book would help fulfill this possibility of a powerful prayer life in every Christian.[78]

What Clark acknowledged, and the issue that many of the critics of *The Life of Trust*

expressed in their reviews, was the possible catastrophic results for philanthropic and religious

institutions that relied only on prayer for fundraising. If charities or missionaries adopted this

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[75] Clark argued, "Those who will read that touching narrative with care, instead of finding, what the introduction foreshadows, 'something as remarkable as if Mr. Müller had commanded a sycamine [sic] tree to be removed and planted in the sea, and it had obeyed him,' will find what that able essay of Dr. Wayland more aptly gives on another page as the substance of Mr. Müller's teachings, viz., 'that God is as ready now as ever to answer prayer; and that, in the discharge of any duty to which he calls us, we may implicitly rely upon his all-sufficient aid in every emergency.'" Ibid., 195.

[76] Ibid., 197.

[77] Clark was aware that Müller, based on his approach to Christian practice, could be labeled a "pietist," and his understanding of prayer a "superstition." Ibid., 197.

[78] Ibid., 198.

unorthodox approach for supporting their operations they, most likely, would fail to serve their

constituencies successfully.[79] The criticism of Müller was linked directly to Francis Wayland's

assertion that his model of "living by faith" was, in fact, something that should be put into

practice. Consequently, the reviewers discovered they were faced with, what appeared to them,

an aberration of Christian practice that did not match any previously explored vision of the

Christian faith. Müller's orientation for his life of faith was rooted in his own experience with

German Pietism and his brother-in-law Anthony Norris Groves. However, few American

Protestants were able to place Müller into a continuum that linked German Pietism and Anglo-

American evangelicals. Therefore, when Wayland claimed in his Introduction to *The Life of*

Trust that, "We cannot resist the conclusion that if any one [*sic*] will undertake any other

Christian work in a similar spirit, and on the same principles, his labor will be attended with a

similar result," he became an advocate of Müller.[80] More powerfully, Wayland endorsed Müller

with the clout and prestige of being the foremost Baptist minister in America as well as a leading

voice of justice in various social issues, such as abolition and prison reform. Given Wayland's

prestige as a critic of America's moral fabric, he brought a moral weight to bear on how funds

were obtained to support ministries, missionary work, and philanthropic institutions.

Consequently, Wayland's endorsement as a moral leader was what troubled those who now

feared that ministries and organizations that served the most vulnerable and needy in America,

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[79] *The American Presbyterian Review* observed, "though there may be cases of marked individuality, like Müller, who can go on and do a great and good work alone, without the aid and care of an organization, such cases are simply exceptional, and for limited branches of benevolent activity. The more expanded works of charity require organisation and strict responsibility. Let us then derive all the good we can from the memorials of such a self-denying life, without being led astray by its partial theories." "Practical Religious Literature," 575.

[80] Müller, *The Life of Trust* (1861), xxviii.

not to mention missionaries overseas, would be placed in a position of relying solely on prayer to support their work.

Although some critics dismissed Müller's life of faith, editors of some religious journals complained that Wayland did not go far enough in his support of Müller. An unsigned article in *The Christian Examiner* argued,

> His [Wayland's] prefatory essay upon the efficacy of prayer seems rather a cold introduction to so glowing an experience. Müller will not feel inspired by such faith suggestions as to the possibility of a heavenly aid of which more than twenty-five years of philanthropic effort have been to him a daily demonstration. The suggestion at the close of Dr. Wayland's Preface, that, if Müller is right, all the present machinery for raising money for religious uses must be wrong, is the overwhelming conviction of every unprejudiced reader of this 'Life of Trust.'[81]

The excitement that Müller raised for some to challenge the status quo of Protestant Christianity in America, similar to how Pharcellus Church embraced Müller, provoked responses from those who believed his approach to the life of faith was admirable and, more importantly, something worthy of emulation. Even though *The Christian Examiner* found Wayland's remarks about Müller to be inadequate, Wayland's message still attracted the attention of readers who recognized the importance of his comments whether they found Müller's approach to fundraising biblical or not.

The main point that Wayland emphasized in his Introduction was the notion that Müller's practice, if correct, was something that should be followed and practiced by other Christians. This idea was also embraced by the Unitarian periodical, *The Monthly Religious Magazine*, which embraced the book. The periodical stated in its review of *The Life of Trust*,

> This book is a practical illustration of the might of single-minded trust and faith in God over worldly expediences [*sic*] and calculations. The compiler has condensed the work from reports and bulky documents, and has thereby made one of the most useful books

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[81] "Review of Current Literature," *The Christian Examiner*, 141-142.

we could have. Faith is quickened and strengthened, the efficacy of prayer practically proved, and the reader, catching the spirit of George Müller as he reads on is drawn to the Lord in a more perfect childlikeness, and with a new resolve to do the duties of to-day with confiding piety, in the assurance that the uncertain future will all be well.[82]

The practical aspect of Müller's approach to the life of faith matched with tangible outcomes from simple prayers inspired the reviewer to embrace "a new resolve" to face the complexity and uncertainty of life with a renewed sense of spiritual vitality. The inspirational quality of *The Life of Trust* would, in fact, draw many toward "catching the spirit of George Müller." Often individuals who were contemplating how best to serve God with their lives and, in many cases, searching for means to support their ministries saw in *The Life of Trust* a model and method that was accessible to even the lowliest and least educated Christians who desired to do great things for God.

The question of legitimacy, however, was not resolved simply by the endorsement of the volume by Francis Wayland. In the March 1861 issue of the *American Publishers' Circular* an advertisement appeared that indicated *The Life of Trust* was now published with "a Prefactory Letter from Dr. E. N. Sawtell, giving the results of a personal visit to the scene of Mr. Müller's labors."[83] The letter from Sawtell, a chaplain working with American and British seamen in France, was included in all subsequent printings of the book until the plates were destroyed in the Great Boston Fire of 1872.[84] A month later *The Evangelical Repository*, reported that a pamphlet was sent to them by the publishers that contained a letter from Sawtell. According to the periodical's editor, the content of the pamphlet "verifies all the facts of Mr. Müller's

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[82] "Notice of Books," *The Monthly Religious Magazine* 25, no. 2 (February 1861): 139.

[83] "The Life of Trust [Advertisement]," *American Publishers' Circular* 7, no. 11 (March 16, 1861): 104.

[84] Müller, *The Life of Trust* (1877), v.

narrative."[85] Gould and Lincoln, the publisher of *The Life of Trust*, worked hard to bolster public confidence that Müller's testimony was based on genuine experience.

Sawtell's account of Müller's work was repeatedly sought by Wayland who desired to have a first-hand account of the Bristol Orphan Homes by an outsider to confirm the truthfulness of the text Wayland endorsed. The letter affirmed that the orphanage and Müller's approach to the life of trust were real and widely known in Great Britain. Furthermore, the letter noted a number of times the "peculiar" aspects of Müller's "living, active faith," his constant daily and even hourly reading of the Bible, and notes that "his prayers also are as peculiar as his preaching."[86] Although noting that Müller was "peculiar" on a number of points, the real goal of the letter was to affirm that what he accomplished by faith was not due to a special gift from God, the sovereignty of God, or the miraculous, but rather the idea that Müller was an ordinary Christian who had lowered himself economically to such a point that he was forced to rely on God to meet all of his everyday needs in order to survive. Müller, therefore, should be a model of Christian piety because he was an ordinary Christian doing, quite literally, what all Christians should do if they take their relationship with God seriously. Sawtell ends his letter by linking Müller to Martin Luther and the reformer's "glorious doctrine of 'JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH," when he stated,

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[85] *The Evangelical Repository*, which had favorably reviewed *The Life of Trust*, published large extracts from Sawtell's letter for their readers. "The Life of Trust," *The Evangelical Repository* 19, no. 11 (April 1861): 616-619. Also see "New Publications," *The Evangelical Repository* 19, no. 9 (February 1861): 529-530.

[86] E. N. Sawtell to Francis Wayland, "Letter [Concerning George Muller and the Orphan Houses at Ashley Down, England]," 14 December 1860, John Hay Library, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island. Also see E. N. Sawtell, "Dr. Sawtell's Letter," in Müller, *The Life of Trust* (1861), 477-486.

[W]hy should it be thought a thing incredible that the same glorious God should, in our day, raise up a Müller to rear this 'Monument' on Ashley Down, in the face of all Christendom, to prove that the God of the Bible, whom we serve, is still the 'Living God,' the hearer and answerer of prayer; and that the faith taught by Luther, and by which alone we can be justified before God, is not a *dead*, but a living, active, practical faith, which has in it the power of an endless life, and a power that can move the heart and the hand of Him who moves the world?[87]

Sawtell's letter was an affirmation that Müller was a legitimate part of the Protestant tradition that stretched back to Luther. His practice of the Christian faith was not innovative, but rather part of traditional Protestant practice that God was now using to show the world that he was still active in the world.

The inclusion of Sawtell's letter in subsequent printings of *The Life of Trust* served to counter criticism of the Wayland introduction and affirm that Müller's text accurately recorded the details of life and work in Bristol. The letter also helped to promote the idea that Müller was an ordinary Christian who took an extraordinary step in actually trusting God to hear his prayers and provide for him.[88] *The Life of Trust* attracted widespread attention and the Sawtell letter served as an affirmation that American Christians should also acknowledge, like Christians in Great Britain, the amazing work of faith that Müller was leading as an ordinary person.

Wayland and Revival

In addition to the Wayland and Sawtell endorsements of Müller's legitimacy, the timing of the publication of *The Life of Trust* was also important to Müller's rise to prominence among

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[87] Ibid.

[88] *The Vermont Chronicle* published parts of the Sawtell letter in a front page article that highlighted Müller's physical appearance and dress, his scholarly abilities, his study habits, and his library. The focus on these aspects of his life may indicate what kinds of questions were circulating about Müller in the general public and, possibly, were a rebuttal to the torrent of criticism articulated by educated-elite clergy of New England against Müller. "George Muller," *The Vermont Chronicle* [Windsor], May 28, 1861, 1.

American evangelicals. The concluding chapter highlighted the impact of Müller's *Narrative* on

the start of what was subsequently known as the Revival of 1859-1862 in the United Kingdom.

Simply by reading Müller's *Narrative*, James McQuikin, a newly professed Christian and Irish

layman, was inspired to begin praying in earnest for God to move in Ireland.[89] According to the

account, in 1857 McQuikin began a prayer meeting with some friends with the aim of seeing a

revival start.[90] The small prayer meeting saw its prayers answered on January 1, 1858, with the

conversion of a "farm servant," which subsequently resulted in a revival beginning in Ireland and

spreading throughout Great Britain.[91] The emphasis placed on the revival story at the end of *The

Life of Trust* reinforced the connection to those whose lives had been recently transformed by

events of the Revival of 1857-1858.[92]

On the point of encouraging a continuation of the revival through the publication of *The

Life of Trust*, Francis Wayland and his son H. Lincoln Wayland were building on publication

efforts that Francis had already engaged in to promote revivalism. Capitalizing on the

opportunity presented to influence lay piety during the revival, Francis Wayland published a

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[89] By the end of May 1859 the revival was spreading and soon reached England, Scotland, and Wales. Therefore, Müller could claim that his *Narrative* sparked the most important nineteenth-century revival in Great Britain. George Müller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller, Fifth Part* (London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1874), 3-6.

[90] Müller's story of answered prayer encouraged a small group of men to pray with expectation that God would answer their petition to "pour out Thy Holy Spirit on this district and country." Max Reich, ed., *Selected Letters with Brief Memoir of J. G. M'Vicker* (London: Office of Echoes of Service, 1902), 33.

[91] For an overview of the revival, its transatlantic connections, and its impact on British society see Brown, *Providence and Empire*, 214-226.

[92] Joseph S. Clark recognized the connection between Müller and the British Revival of 1859-1862 that followed directly in the wake of the American Revival of 1857-1858. Clark affirmed that Müller's *Narrative* sparked a revival in Great Britain that "is still spreading, whose fruits already number many tens of thousands of souls converted." Clark, "George Müller," 194.

book of sermons in 1858 that encouraged all Christians, regardless of their vocation, to preach

the Gospel though their day-to-day lives. Wayland also included sermons on personal piety,

"prevalent prayer," and the Christian's moral responsibility for "others."[93] Wayland was heavily

involved in leading prayer meetings and speaking in any venue possible to promote Christian

piety during the revival.[94] Wayland, to keep up with a hectic schedule prompted by his desire to

be involved in events, even embraced an entrepreneurial preaching method that attracted

attention. He abandoned his lifelong practice of reading written sermons and shifted to

impromptu remarks that could be given immediately and appropriately to any audience he

encountered.[95]

Wayland stepped forward to offer local leadership when the Businessmen's Revival

reached Providence, Rhode Island, in 1858. Some congregations embraced the revival and saw

their buildings filled beyond capacity, while as Wayland explained, "There seems something

peculiar among our old churches here. Nothing moves them. All is dry as the mountains of

Gilboa. It may be to illustrate the sovereignty of God that he withholds a blessing, or it may be

because of our sinful formality and conformity to the world."[96] Wayland promoted revivalism as

a proper experience for all churches, and even speculated as to why the phenomenon was not

normative for all churches. For the established New England clergy, especially those in the

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[93] Francis Wayland, *Sermons to the Churches* (New York: Sheldon, Blakeman, & Company, 1858). An advertisement at the back of the book promotes *The New York Pulpit, in the Revival of 1858, Sermons Preached in New York and Brooklyn*, followed by *Select Discourses* that included German and French theologians and ministers, most notably August Tholuck.

[94] Wayland, eds., *A Memoir of the Life and Labors of Francis Wayland*, 209-210.

[95] Ibid., 216.

[96] Ibid., 211.

Congregationalist ranks, his assessment pointed either to an act of Providence or, more troubling, sin.

In Wayland's mind, adding to the local church in a period of revival was normal and served to indicate what should be a common, if not, constant occurrence. Wayland argued, "The spirit of a revival should always be the spirit of the church."[97] From his perspective the local church should always be adding new members through the vigorous life of piety proclaimed through the lives of its congregants. Wayland envisioned an American Christianity that was vibrant, dynamic, and self-sacrificing. He believed that through the work of the Holy Spirit individuals would seek a serious personal piety that resulted in the moral improvement of society. Wayland emphasized that the laity were the means to effect change in both the local church and society.

Wayland, like his son, recognized the power of Müller's account of his own conversion experience and his subsequent life of determined Christian service. The pews of many churches throughout the Northeast were filled by ordinary men and women who also identified with Müller's humble introduction to vital Christianity via a layman.[98] Müller's life was permanently altered by his encounter with German Pietism, the Continental expression of evangelicalism, which encouraged the laity to take a more active role in the life of the church.[99] A remnant of

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[97] Ibid., 210.

[98] Pietism, as other scholars have noted, "allowed the laity to have a greater voice than before, and thus gave concrete expression to Pietism's belief in the priesthood of all believers." David Crowner and Gerald Christianson, eds., *The Spirituality of the German Awakening* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2003), 10.

[99] For August Tholuck's view of Halle Pietism just prior to his own arrival at the university see A. Tholuck, "Evangelical Theology in Germany: Survey of My Life as a Teacher of Theology," trans. L. Witte, in *History, Essays, Orations and Other Documents of the Sixth*

German Pietism remained deeply embedded within American evangelicalism and, as historian Randall Balmer has argued, appeared most clearly in an "experiential piety" that manifested itself in America's tradition of revivalism.[100] Consequently, when the Wayland-endorsed *The Life of Trust* appeared on the heels of the revival, the book was intended as a form of spiritual self-help literature based on the everyday experiences of someone who came into Christianity in a very similar manner as tens of thousands of Americans.

Prayer and the Businessmen's Revival

In addition to inspiring lay piety and service, Müller's life of prayer would have also connected with central tenets of the revival, namely, prayer and the empowerment of the laity. According to Rev. Samuel Irenæus Prime, a leading New York minister intimately involved in events, the revival would be unique in the history of Christianity in America because of the direct connection to prayer.[101] Prime noted, "This revival is to be remembered through the coming ages, as simply an answer to prayer. We must look behind all means, and acknowledge

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General Conference of the Evangelical Alliance, Held in New York, October 2-12, 1873, ed. by P. Schaff and S.I. Prime (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1874), 86.

[100] Randall Balmer, "Eschewing the 'Routine of Religion': Eighteenth-Century Pietism and the Revival Tradition in America," in *Modern Christian Revivals*, ed. Edith L. Blumhofer and Randall Balmer (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 13-14.

[101] Rev. Samuel Irenæus Prime, D.D. (1812-1885), a member of a prominent banking family in New York, was a leading religious personality in New York City because he edited the *New York Observer*. He also gained widespread renown through the publication of a number of books dealing with prayer and faith. He was intimately involved in trying to resolve sectional politics about race in the Presbyterian Church. He also served in various capacities in American religious societies and as a trustee for both Wells College for Women and Williams College. "Representative Religious Journalists: 4. The Rev. Samuel Irenæus Prime, D.D., of the New York 'Observer,'" *Frank Leslie's Sunday Magazine* 17, no. 4 (April 1885): 356-359.

that this is the Lord's doings."[102] The revival first and foremost, from Prime's perspective, was

about God working in the world in answer to the prayers of ordinary people. Recording these

answers to prayer was an important element in making the revival relevant to those outside of

New York. In his Preface to *The Power of Prayer*, which detailed the first twelve months of the

prayer meeting revival, Prime explained the significance of prayer when he wrote,

> Here I find it confirmed by scores of facts and examples—not in history, sacred or
> secular; not traditionary [*sic*] or second-hand; but facts of present occurrence, in the midst
> of this noisy, restless, worldly city; facts beyond all doubt or cavil—that the Lord will
> give His praying people whatsoever they ask in faith! We raise no question about
> miracles. . . . Here is the written proof that God will answer prayer, and religious man
> can enter into the spirit of these prayer-meetings, or read the accounts here presented,
> without being overshadowed with the conviction that it is a solemn as well as a blessed
> privilege to pray; that God is willing to give His Spirit to them who ask Him; and that
> believing PRAYER is SURE to be ANSWERED.[103]

Prayer, in Prime's estimation, led to the revival.[104] Consequently, recording answers to prayer

associated with the revival served to reinforce the legitimacy of events as well as inspire

Christians to continue to focus on prayer as action. Prime published several volumes that

described prayers that were answered by those affiliated with the Fulton Street Prayer Meeting.

The books also were intended to challenge the growing skepticism of the nineteenth century.[105]

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[102] Samuel Irenæus Prime, *The Power of Prayer: Illustrated in the Wonderful Displays of Divine Grace at the Fulton Street and Other Meetings, in New York, and Elsewhere* (Halifax: Milner and Sowerby, 1860), 18.

[103] Ibid., vii.

[104] Samuel Irenæus Prime, *Fifteen Years of Prayer in the Fulton Street Meeting* (New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Co., 1872), iv.

[105] By the early 1880s Prime was convinced that there was a desperate need for examples of faith to counter what he believed was the dominant role of science in contemporary thought. This focus on scientific evidence was, in his estimation, connected to his designation of the period as having "grown to be an unbelieving age." Samuel Irenæus Prime, *Prayer and Its Answer: Illustrated in the First Twenty-Five Years of the Fulton Street Prayer Meeting* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1882), 18.

Prime's books circulated widely and were credited for starting noor-hour prayer meetings in the United States and abroad.[106] As a follow up volume to *The Power of Prayer*, Prime published *Five Years of Prayer, With the Answer*. This book was important for continuing the work of Wayland in establishing Müller's legitimacy, since the book embraced Müller's testimony of answered prayers without question.

In *Five Years of Prayer*, Prime included a chapter on Müller and another German pastor, Ludwig Harms, who was also deeply influenced by his relationship with German Pietists.[107] Müller was presented as a Christian who was both devout and scriptural in his methods, which resulted in his prayers being answered. Prime apparently based his knowledge of Müller on the Wayland edited and endorsed volume, *The Life of Trust*. However, familiar with Rev. Sawtell

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[106] Of particular importance among evangelicals in the United States and Great Britain was *The Power of Prayer* that was first published at the end of the first twelve months of the Fulton Street meetings. "Literature," *Evangelical Christendom: A Monthly Chronicle of the Churches* 5 (July 1, 1864): 362.

[107] Georg Ludwig Detlev Theodor Harms (1808-1865) became associated with a group of Pietists in Lauenburg, Saxony, after studying theology at the University of Göttingen from 1827-1830. The Pietists Harms affiliated with emphasized an active personal faith, missionary work, and cooperation among fellow Christians despite doctrinal differences. Similar to Müller's own development within a group of Pietists, Harms soon found himself preaching, leading the small group, and eventually becoming a pastor of a church. Like Müller, Harms was also deeply interested in missionary work. Harms attracted international attention because he developed his Lutheran church into a center of missionary work. The Hermannsburg Mission that Harms founded purchased its own ship to send out missionaries, developed a press, recruited and supported missionaries, and held large mission conferences. The work of the mission, similar to Müller's Scriptural Knowledge Institution, operated on the method of faith and answered prayer. G. Uhlhorn, "Harms, Georg Ludwig Detlev Theodor," in *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol. 5*, ed. Samuel Macauley Jackson (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1909), 156-157. Also see D. Read, "The Faith of the Suppliant, the Limit of the Exercise of the Divine Power in Answer to Prayer," *The Missionary Magazine* 48, no. 1 (January 1868): 10.

from some recent speaking engagements, Prime also employed Sawtell as an eyewitness to affirm the accuracy of Müller's book.[108]

Prime decision to include Müller's story in his follow up account on the Fulton Street Prayer Meeting was important for promoting Müller among American evangelicals. The weekday prayer meeting that was the source of the Revival of 1857-1858 was now directly connected to the story of the Bristol philanthropist. The significance of this connection is even more important given the key role religious presses played in selling newspapers, tracts, and books that chronicled and promoted the revival.[109] Although there were no bestseller lists in the mid-nineteenth century, Prime's books were widely available and were the equivalent of contemporary bestsellers with publication runs in the tens of thousands of volumes.[110] The inclusion of Müller's story in subsequent accounts of the Fulton Street Prayer Meeting would have confirmed his importance among a generation of Americans whose spiritual lives were shaped by this last great revival of the antebellum period and were, as a result, keenly interested in testimonies of answered prayer.[111] When the Fulton Street Prayer Meeting held its twentieth

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[108] S. Irenæus Prime, *Five Years of Prayer, With the Answers* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1864), 300.

[109] Long, *The Revival of 1857-1858*, 35.

[110] *The Power of Prayer* was his most widely read book and was published in multiple languages and circulated in Europe, Africa, and Asia. According to nineteenth-century sources, the book sold over 175,000 copies. "Representative Religious Journalists," 356. Also see "Literature," *Evangelical Christendom*, 362.

[111] Another Presbyterian minister and Andover Seminary professor, Austin Phelps, also published a devotional book focused on prayer in 1859 entitled, *The Still Hour: Or, Communion With God*. According to historian Rick Ostrander, Phelps' book "was a popular devotional treatment of the doctrine of prayer that maintained a solid following over the decades." Rick Ostrander, *The Life of Prayer in a World of Science: Protestants, Prayer, and American Culture 1870-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 11. By 1861 Gould and Lincoln, the

anniversary service on September 24, 1877, Müller was present and delivered an address to commemorate the moment.[112]

American evangelicalism in the antebellum period also witnessed a dramatic change as democracy and revivals influenced the place of the laity in religious life.[113] The Revival of 1857-1858 was the culmination of this movement towards the empowerment of the laity. Therefore, Wayland's endorsement of *The Life of Trust* and Prime's later connection to Müller in his follow-up volume on the Fulton Street Prayer Meeting served to link ordinary evangelicals to the practices contained within the books, such as personal holiness, social activism, and prayer.[114] Because Müller's story did not emphasize spiritual elitism but his failures and reliance on God, the book offered those who were marked by guilt or a lack of confidence in their own spiritual prowess the ability to imagine what they could accomplish for God. Wayland and Prime produced accounts that not only consciously linked Müller to the aspirations of the revival, but also to the hopes of ordinary evangelicals who desired to see God answer their prayers.

publisher of *The Still Hour*, noted that sales had reached 30,000 volumes in the previous year. "Gould and Lincoln [Advertisement]," *The Presbyterian Historical Almanac*, n.p.

[112] "New York Items," *Boston Daily Advertiser*, September 25, 1877, 1.

[113] For further explanation about the role of democratization and notions of equality in American religion in the first half of the nineteenth century, see Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 9-11. Also see Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism*, 3-5.

[114] Donald W. Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988), 25-62.

A Peculiar Charm

Müller's story, as contained within *The Life of Trust* and other works, connected to the ideas and values that were essential to the Revival of 1857-1858 and explains much of his appeal to American audiences.[115] Müller met the ecumenical ideal of the revival and did not give preference to a particular denomination, but embraced Christian unity.[116] Furthermore, Müller was not seen as an elite clergyman, but as an ordinary Christian guided by the Holy Spirit to help those less fortunate in society. When the Boston publishers, Charles D. Gould and Joshua Lincoln, promoted the volume in American periodicals they recognized the attractiveness of the story to American readers and gave the following explanation of the book's significance in an advertisement that stated, "This work has a peculiar charm for every child of God, as an unadorned story of the experience of a Christian man who believed in the mighty power of prayer, and lived by daily faith in God's providence and grace. It contains the entire history of the famous Orphan Asylum at Bristol, Eng."[117] The "peculiar charm" centered on God's providence in response to prayer in everyday life.   Müller, according to the advertisement, was an ordinary Christian who allowed God to use him. In March of 1861 another Gould and Lincoln advertisement revealed the response the book was generating with the following claim: "This volume is attracting in all quarters the liveliest attention. Pastors and laymen are earnestly commenting it to the people as fraught with suggestions, and lessons of the highest value, and the

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[115] Historian Richard Carwardine points out that these qualities in American revivalism, which D. L. Moody and Ira Sankey employed in their British revivals, "were simply better-organized versions of characteristics that had been apparent in British revivals for twenty years or more." Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism*, 200.

[116] Balmer, "Eschewing the 'Routine of Religion'," 14.

[117] "Gould and Lincoln [Advertisement]," *The Presbyterian Historical*, n.p. Also see "Gould and Lincoln [Advertisement]," in E. H. Gillett, *The Life and Times of John Huss; or, The Bohemian Reformation of the Fifteenth Century, Vol. 2* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1863), n.p..

press declares it to be one of the most interesting and remarkable books ever published."[118]

Despite the obvious exaggeration in an attempt to encourage sales, the advertisement also

indicates that the book was causing quite a stir among Christians who were interested in Müller's

approach to the Christian life.[119] The volume attracted attention because of the claims it made

about the effectiveness of prayer, the visible work of God in the world, and, even more troubling

for some, a radical approach to the financing of churches and philanthropic institutions. The

advertisement also reveals the raised status of the laypersons who were able to recommend the

volume to "the people." Müller's successful entry into the social milieu of Civil War-era

American Christianity drew together various elements that allowed his story, despite

controversies, to resonate with a newly empowered laity who saw in him a vision of what they

could become if properly committed to the work of God in the world.[120]

Advertisements merely articulated what was becoming a consensus about the tangible

benefits of Müller's spiritual practices among evangelicals. Maria King was one of many who

hoped to change the world like Müller. In an article she wrote about him, King presented Müller

as "a noble witness of a life of unwavering trust and confidence in God" who was able "to prove

that God is the same unchangeable being yesterday, to-day, and forever."[121] Accordingly,

Müller provided many evangelicals with a model upon which to form their Christian identity. In

an article by Rev. S. L. Leonard that appeared eleven pages prior to King's article on Müller,

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[118] "Gould and Lincoln [Advertisement]," *American Publishers' Circular and Literary Gazette* 7, no. 11 (March 16, 1861): 104.

[119] "Practical Religious Literature," 574-575.

[120] "Mr. Muller's Institutions at Bristol, England," *The African Repository* 39, no. 9 (September 1863): 287.

[121] Maria King, "George Müller—A Life of Faith," *The Ladies Repository* 22, no. 7 (July 1862): 428.

faith is presented as the foundation that allows ordinary people to accomplish great and "noble

acts." According to Leonard, "Faith nourishes heroism by unvailing [*sic*] to us man's

immortality and his destiny beyond the grave," which allows Christians to sacrifice the pleasures

of the present life and do great things for God knowing that there is a life to come after death.[122]

Leonard was convinced that faith in God and an immortal destiny is what allows men and

women to give their all as missionaries or reform the church and society as Luther, Wesley, and

Wilberforce did. The article links the life of faith to a life of heroism, sacrifice, and greatness.

The placement of Leonard and King's articles in the periodical illuminates how both laity and

clergy saw the potential for how Müller's example could transform individuals into reformers

and missionaries.

Years after the Businessmen's Revival ended, Müller remained a significant point of

reference for practical piety.[123] In 1875 the Fulton Street Prayer Meeting published a book to

honor its seventeen-year history since the beginning of the revival. Two devotional stories were

included about Müller in the book and both emphasized his American-like democratic ethos

regarding social class and his reliance upon God to meet his material needs.[124] The stories

highlighted themes relevant to the generation shaped by the Revival of 1857-1858, but also

reinforced Müller's status as a hero of the faith for the generation who had grown up in the

shadow of the revival and the horror of the Civil War. When Müller and his wife visited the

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[122] S. L. Leonard, "Faith and Heroism," *The Ladies Repository* 22, no. 7 (July 1862): 417.

[123] "A Man With A Large Family," *Every Saturday* 2, no. 38 (September 29, 1866): 377-378. The same article was first published in London and Edinburgh in *Chamber's Journal*, see "A Man With A Large Family," *Chamber's Journal of Popular Literature* 142 (Saturday 15, 1866): 586-587.

[124] Matthew Hale Smith, *Marvels of Prayer, Illustrated by the Fulton Street Prayer Meeting, with Leaves from the Tree of Life* (New York: The Evangelical Publishing Co., 1875), 410, 434.

United States for the first time in September of 1877 he spoke on two different occasions at the Fulton Street Prayer Meeting in New York.[125] For those shaped by the businessmen's noon-hour prayer meetings, Müller served as an embodiment of what a lay Christian could become through holy living, prayer, and service.[126]

Americas in the post-Civil War years, in many ways, realized the hope and dreams of those involved in the revival. The men and women of the last major revival of the antebellum period embraced *The Life of Trust* as a resource that provided a legitimate model of Christian practice that was accessible for those who desired to do great things for God in the ordinary circumstances of everyday life. The Civil War lessened the attention initially paid to Müller, but the "peculiar charm" of his story would not be forgotten. In an era marred by doubt and tragedy, Müller's story moved providence from the realm of speculation to a detailed account of God's interaction with an ordinary man who simply prayed.[127] By the end of the 1860s a *New York Times* correspondent visited the New Orphan Homes in Bristol and reported back that the homes "are known over the world as having been built and sustained now for many years by voluntary

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[125] Susannah Grace Müller, *The Preaching Tours and Missionary Labours of George Müller*, 2nd ed. (London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1889), 30.

[126] When visiting Boston in October of 1880, Müller also spoke at the noon-hour "Market men's prayer meeting." Ibid., 163.

[127] Noted historian of the American Civil War and professor of history at Texas Christian University, Steven E. Woodworth, explains, "Prayer could be a confusing topic, if one thought deeply about it. What if one prayed for something that was not truly the best? Would God grant such a prayer? And how did a belief in prayer square with a simultaneous belief in God's sovereignty? In fact, not all prayers appeared to be answered, at least not in the way conceived of by those who offered them. Clearly the sovereign God was not a menial servant at the beck and call of mere humans. Those who reflected on the matter at any length had to come to the conclusion that a prayer was just that, a request, and God in His wisdom and love might choose to grant it, deny it, or modify its fulfillment. But many still struggled with the concept." Steven E. Woodworth, *While God is Marching On: The Religious World of Civil War Soldiers* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 76.

contributions, given or sent from all parts—even from India, California and Australia—in answer

to prayer."[128] God, the reporter affirmed, still heard the prayers of George Müller of Bristol.

One young man who was deeply impressed by Müller's lifestyle of prayer and faith was Dwight

L. Moody, a Congregationalist layman who in the 1850s was struggling to find a way to serve

God and the poor in the growing city of Chicago.

Prayer and Practice

Like the Revival of 1857-1858, *The Life of Trust* made a significant impact on American

evangelicals whether or not they agreed with the premise of Müller's approach to the Christian

faith. In 1861, as the Civil War fragmented the nation, *The Life of Trust* moved from the hands

of a Presbyterian elder named J. B. Stillson to another layman by the name of Dwight L.

Moody.[129] Moody found himself presented with a story about devotion to God that transformed

his understanding of the Christian faith.[130] Moody, in fact, was deeply impressed by Müller's

complete dependence on God for his material needs. At the time of his reading of *The Life of*

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[128] "George Muller," *The New York Times*, December 22, 1868, 2.

[129] J. B. Stillson, a businessman from Rochester, New York, mentored Moody while
working in Chicago. Lyle Dorsett reports that "J. B. Stillson had given *A Life of Trust* to Moody
in the late 1850s. Certainly it was one factor in Moody's decision to give up business and go
into full-time ministry, expect great things from God, and never ask anyone for money for
himself." Dorsett's dating is flawed since the first edition of *A Life of Trust* was copyrighted in
1860 and was being reviewed widely in American religious periodicals by the spring of 1861.
Moody could, however, have read *A Narrative of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller*
published in Great Britain, but this seems unlikely. W. H. Daniels reported in a biography that
Stillson gave Moody a copy of *The Life of Trust* as part of Moody's Christian education.
Daniels, *D. L. Moody and His Work*, 55. The impact on D. L. Moody was significant as Richard
Ellsworth Day claims when he states, "He [Moody] made a close study of that miracle of faith,
George Müller, and from that time on Müller's *Autobiography* became Moody's *Pilgrim's
Progress*." Lyle W. Dorsett, *A Passion for Souls: The Life of D. L. Moody* (Chicago: Moody
Press, 1997), 134. Also see, W. H. Daniels, *D. L. Moody and His Work* (Hartford, CT: American
Publishing Company, 1876), 33.

[130] Dorsett, *A Passion for Souls*, 134.

Trust, Moody and Stillson, with limited financial resources at their disposal, were attempting to reach out to the poor in Chicago. Moody saw in Müller's example a solution for the challenges he faced financially that could allow him to continue his ministry efforts through dependence on God through prayer. The influence of Müller on Moody is significant and important to both of their life stories and those of their followers. Their relationship would define world evangelicalism in ways that they could have never imagined.

When Moody took the opportunity to travel to England in 1867, there were only two individuals who he wanted to see. The great Baptist preacher in London, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, was the first to draw the attention of Moody after he crossed the Atlantic Ocean. The next person whom Moody sought out in England was Müller. Writing from London in March of 1867, in a letter to his mother Moody explained his anticipation at meeting Müller, "The great orphan schools of George Muller are at Bristol. He has 1150 children in his house, but never asks a man for a cent to support them. He calls on God and God sends him the money. It is wonderful to see what God can do with a man of prayer."[131] In his short description, Moody revealed how he imagined Müller's piety.

The Life of Trust is credited with being the source of Moody's life of faith, but another aspect of Müller's life that attracted Moody was Müller's lack of official status as a minister in any denominational body. Müller was, from Moody's view of his life, a mere layman. After Moody's visit to England in 1867, while speaking at the Missouri State Christian Convention in

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[131] Dwight L. Moody to Mother, 19 March 1867, Dwight L. Moody Papers, Record Group No. 28, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, New Haven, CT. Also see William R. Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1900), 133.

February of 1868,[132] Moody talked to attendees about "what the laymen could do, by showing

what laymen had done."[133] Moody went on to explain, "George Müller, another layman, has a

church of nine hundred members and a congregation of fifteen hundred, sends out forty of them

each Sabbath to preach the gospel, supports two thousand orphans, has erected magnificent

buildings for them, but has never asked a man for a cent, and has no money except as God sends

it to him."[134] For Moody the evidence of God's hand in the life and work of Müller was obvious

and had nothing do to with any official ordination as a minister.

The connection Moody felt with Müller led to a lifelong friendship between the two

men.[135] Moody continued to affirm Müller as an ideal example for ordinary Christians to model

their own lives upon. Moody reinforced Francis Wayland's endorsement of Müller. Moody,

however, was not the only American dedicated to making Müller known to American audiences.

Moody's praise of Müller from the pulpit and in his books conferred distinction on Müller.[136] As

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[132] Moody also served as a figure of unity after the Civil War and was selected as the presiding officer at the Missouri State Christian Convention, even though he was not a resident of Missouri. Although Moody sided openly with the Union during the War, he was seen as the only Christian present whose loyalties to either the Union or Confederacy would succumb to his Christian ethics and values. Consequently, Moody's decision to focus on Müller may have also been an attempt to refocus Missouri Christians on a common model of Christian piety that was not associated with either the North or the South. Daniels, *D. L. Moody and His Work*, 171-172.

[133] "The Missouri State Christian Convention," *The Advance* (February 13, 1868): 6.

[134] Ibid.

[135] The relationship between Moody and Müller has not attracted the attention of scholars in the same manner that the relationship between Moody and Charles Spurgeon has and, as Thomas Corts notes, should warrant more attention.   Thomas E. Corts, "D. L. Moody: Payment on Account," in *Mr. Moody and the Evangelical Tradition*, ed. Timothy George (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 52.

[136] Dwight L. Moody, *Prevailing Prayer: What Hinders It* (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1885), 111. Also see Dorsett, *A Passion for Souls*, 132-135; Bruce J.

315

a result, Moody was joined by a broad chorus of American evangelical pastors and lay leaders in

the last quarter of the nineteenth century who praised and promoted Müller to the American

public.[137] Individuals from John R. Mott[138] to Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage[139] who was America's

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Evensen, *God's Man for the Gilded Age: D. L. Moody and the Rise of Modern Mass Evangelism*
(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 17.

[137] Historian Alvyn Austin explains this phenomenon in terms of Anglophilism when he
argues, "Moody was one of many Anglophile Americans who went to England to sit at the feet
of George Müller. They included Gordon, Pierson, and above all, Albert Benjamin Simpson,
each of whom founded a Bible school. When British movements transplanted themselves across
the Atlantic, they had to go through a process of de-Anglicization, removal of their British
peculiarities, simplification and codification; Americans like things written down in black and
white." Alvyn Austin, "Only Connect: The China Inland Mission and Transatlantic
Evangelicalism," in *North American Foreign Missions, 1810-1914: Theology, Theory, and
Policy*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 295.

[138] John R. Mott (1865-1955), a Methodist, was as his biographer notes "a hero to
thousands" and became a leading figure among Anglo-American Christians in the nineteenth and
twentieth centuries by promoting ecumenical activism through his involvement in the Y. M. C.
A., the Student Volunteer Movement, and later the World Council of Churches. Widely
celebrated for his promotion of Christian unity he was the leading ecumenical statesman of his
time. For his efforts to promote unity Mott was jointly awarded, with Emily Greene Balch, the
Nobel Peace Prize in 1946. C. Howard Hopkins, *John R. Mott, 1865-1955: A Biography* (Grand
Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), vii; P. E. Pierson, "Mott, John Raleigh," in *Dictionary of
Christianity in America*, ed. Daniel G. Reid, Robert D. Linder, Bruce L. Shelley, Harry S. Stout
(Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 779-780. M. Craig Barnes, "John R. Mott: A
Conversionist in a Pluralist World" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago Divinity School, 1992),
76-84.

[139] Thomas DeWitt Talmage (1832-1902), though initially affiliated with the Dutch
Reformed Church, gained national renown while serving as pastor of the Central Presbyterian
Church in Brooklyn, New York, from 1869 to 1895. During that time the church grew to hold
over 5,000 seats and Talmage became, arguably, the most well-known and popular preacher in
America. His sermons were published in thousands of newspapers and religious periodicals and
his influence reached from coast to coast. J. R. Wiers, "Talamge, (T)homas DeWitt," in
Dictionary of Christianity in America, 1157.

most popular preacher, promoted and legitimized Müller as a powerful example of prayer[140] and

biblical piety.[141]

Rev. Arthur T. Pierson, however, played the greatest role in keeping Müller at the

forefront of American evangelicalism. Müller, at the twilight of his life, was widely promoted

and celebrated by Pierson who ensured that the story of Ashley Down and Bristol's orphans

would survive into the twentieth century. Pierson wrote the most widely read and, consequently,

most re-published biography of Müller.[142] Others, such as A. J. Gordon, emphasized how Müller

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[140] T. DeWitt Talmage, "Good Examples: 'The Constellations of The Redeemed," *The Atlanta Constitution*, June 25, 1888, 3.

[141] In an address at the third conference of the Student Volunteer Movement, Mott listed Müller with other evangelical leaders who made a mark on the world through prayer. In addition to Müller, Mott also included John Wesley, George Whitefield, and David Brainerd among others and noted that they all were men who rose early in the morning to pray and study the Bible. John R. Mott, "The Morning Watch," in *The Student Missionary Appeal: Addresses at the Third International Convention of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions Held at Cleveland, Ohio, February 23-27, 1898* (New York: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, 1898): 237. Also see John R. Mott, "Prayer and the Missionary Enterprise," in *World-Wide Evangelization the Urgent Business of the Church: Addresses Delivered Before the Fourth International Convention of Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, Toronto, Canada, February 26 – March 2, 1902* (New York: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, 1902), 241-247; John R. Mott, *The Pastor and Modern Missions: A Plea for Leadership in World Evangelization* (New York: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, 1904), 202.

[142] Arthur Tappan Pierson (1837-1911), a leading Presbyterian minister and prolific writer, first heard about Müller while on a trip to England in 1866. However, Pierson did not meet Müller until 1878 when he happened to travel on the same train as Müller and his wife who were returning from their California preaching engagements. This first encounter resulted in Pierson and Müller becoming lifelong friends who prayed for each other daily. Pierson became a trusted confidant and wrote the only authorized biography of Müller. Pierson's influence was transatlantic and he later served for two years, after the death of Charles Spurgeon, as pastor of the Spurgeon's Tabernacle church in London. Arthur T. Pierson, *George Müller of Bristol and His Witness to a Prayer Hearing God*, intro. James Wright (1899; repr., Old Tappan, NJ: n.d.), 260-261. Dana L. Robert, *Occupy Until I Come: A. T. Pierson and the Evangelization of the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 103-108; D. L. Robert, "Pierson, (A) rthur (T)appan," in *Dictionary of Christianity in America*, 901-902.

matched their particular understanding of Christian experience and gave evidence that their view

was legitimate.[143] Endorsement by leading religious figures ensured readers and admirers that

Müller practiced a legitimate form of Christianity.[144]

Müller was able to appeal to the broad spectrum of nineteenth-century evangelicals,

whether they identified with the new theology of liberal evangelicals or the higher life theology

of revivalist evangelicals,[145] because his claims were anchored in a chronicle of everyday life

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[143] Adoniram Judson Gordon (1836-1895), an influential Baptist pastor who later founded Gordon College and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, promoted Müller to young college students who were involved in missionary work as an adherent of higher life theology. Higher life proponents asserted that it was necessary to have a subsequent spiritual experience after conversion that they labeled "baptism in the Holy Spirit." This subsequent work of the spirit would empower a believer for service and evangelism. Gordon claimed that Müller also experienced a subsequent work of the Holy Spirit based on a conversation they had. Gordon records a meeting with Müller in which Müller supposedly relayed the following: " 'If you ask when I was born again, it was in such a year, while I was a student in the University of Halle; but if you want to know when I became out and out for God, it was such a year,' mentioning a later day. And he went on to tell me how, having lived a barren and fruitless Christian life for many years, he, with a few intimate friends, met together in a room and began to prayer that they might receive the gift of the Spirit. 'He came to us with such power that at some times it was almost impossible for me to leave Him, His power was so sweet and so entrancing; and I knew what it meant to be baptized with the Holy Ghost.' " The importance of this statement was based on the fact that Müller was a true Christian because he was able to show love to others as well as morally improve society, both of which were markers of someone guided by the Holy Spirit. A. J. Gordon, "The Holy Spirit in Missions," in *Report of the First International Convention of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, Held at Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A., February 26, 27, 28, and March 1, 1891* (Boston: T. O. Metcalf & Co., 1891), 11. Also see Dieter, *The Holiness Revival*, 17. Also see, D. L. Robert, "Gordon, (A)doniram (J)udson," in *Dictionary of Christianity in America*, 487-488.

[144] James A. Harding, a leader in the Churches of Christ after their separation from the Diciples of Christ in 1890s (both were part of the Stone-Campbell Movement of the early nineteenth century), wrote and published articles on Müller and used him as a personal example of how best to live as a Christian. Shawn Z. Daggett, "The Lord Will Provide: James A. Harding, J. M. McCaleb, William J. Bishop, and the Emergence of Faith Missions in the Churches of Christ, 1892-1913" (Th.D. diss., Boston University School of Theology, 2007), 86-91.

[145] For a detailed study of the problematic tension between new theology and higher life theology at the end of the nineteenth century see, Grant Wacker, "The Holy Spirit and the Spirit

that revealed them to be legitimate.[146] Müller was first and foremost a man of action, not a

theologian or philosopher. His demeanor and presence were always described as humble,

simple, and gracious, despite the fact that he ran a massive ministry organization that managed

businesses, employed hundreds, and had a global reach through publications and missionaries.

His emphasis on personal experience, however, was essential for legitimizing him among both

liberal and conservative minded evangelicals. His publications that recounted the goods and

money he received,[147] the children he helped, and even his ability to travel without first raising

the necessary funds to meet expenses seemed to offer further evidence that his practices were

biblical.[148] Publications and endorsements by respected churchmen pushed Müller to the

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of the Age in American Protestantism, 1880-1910," *The Journal of American History* 72, no. 1 (June 1985): 45-62.

[146] A. J. Gordon argued that "Experience is the surest touchstone of truth. It is not always infallible indeed, especially when it deals with our spiritual states and conditions. For these are often deceptive and difficult to interpret. But certainly one ought to know when an infirmity which has long oppressed the body has been removed, or when a pain that has incessantly tortured the nerves has ceased. This is a kind of testimony which is not easily ruled out of court." A. J. Gordon, *The Ministry of Healing; or, Miracles of Cure in All Ages* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1882), 211.

[147] The details in the annual reports of how each penny donated was allocated affirmed for many the superiority of Müller's methods. "The Müller Orphanages," *The Missionary Review of the World* 22, no. 11 (November 1899): 863.

[148] In Boston, news of Müller's expanded work in Bristol was presented to the reading public in the following manner: "George Muller, of Bristol, England, since the commencement of his Orphan Establishment, has received and expended $2,750,000, which has all been paid without personal solicitation. He has now under his care 1200 children, in five large buildings; his own style of life is said to be of the simplest and plainest kind." "Religious Intelligence," *Boston Daily Advertiser*, August 3, 1867, Saturday Morning edition. As typical of nineteenth-century American newspaper production the same short explanation of Müller's work was "borrowed" without reference or citation and appeared in other newspapers. For an example see "General News Items," *The Vermont Chronicle* [Windsor], August 17, 1867, 3.

forefront of popular evangelical thought, but it was his speaking tours that secured his position as

a hero of the faith.[149]

"A Continual Ovation": Being Celebrated in North America

Thanks to the efforts of the Waylands, Moody, and others, Müller's renown among

American evangelicals resulted in a flurry of invitations to visit America and share his story

firsthand.[150] At the age of seventy, Müller decided to make a concerted effort to appear in

person before his fellow Christians and to non-believers. He believed that the story of his life

and his experiences might challenge unbelief and encourage ordinary Chrisitans. Müller's

decision to share his life of faith was perfectly timed. Following in the wake of the Prayer-

Gauge Debate[151] that began in England and excited emotions just as profoundly in the United

States,[152] Müller attracted attention as someone noted for seeing prayer answered. Americans

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[149] "Good Examples. 'The Constellations of The Redeemed,'" *The Atlanta Constitution*, June 25, 1888, 3. "Personal," *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, January 30, 1882, 2; "Persons Worth Knowing About," *The Morning Oregonian* [Portland], December 9, 1895, 4; "Religious Notes," *The Los Angeles Times*, March 29, 1897, 9.

[150] T. DeWitt Talmage, pastor of Brooklyn Tabernacle, claimed, in his welcome to Müller, "The story of your faith and works has been told everywhere." The director of the Brooklyn Tabernacle Lay College, E. P. Thwing, noted in his introductory comments, "We have desired that the members of our congregations and of our seminaries might see and hear one who has furnished the present age the most conspicuous illustration of the power and willingness of God to answer believing prayer." "The Churches," *Brooklyn Eagle*, September 10, 1877, 2.

[151] For an explanation for the origins of the Prayer-Gauge Debate see chapter 4. For the debate it provoked in the American context see Ostrander, *The Life of Prayer*, 20-34.

[152] The president of Princeton College, James McCosh, wrote a response to Tyndall's proposition to scientifically test prayer and argued that answered prayer does not depend on human agency, but instead on the sovereignty of God to act according to his will. McCosh used the example of Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert, dying of illness in spite of the hundreds of thousands of prayers said on his behalf. For McCosh, the death of the prince ensured that the British did not side with the South in the American Civil War, because Queen Victoria ignored

embroiled in the Prayer-Gauge Debate used Müller as a rebuttal that not everyone appreciated. One critic complained,

> I am a little out, dear brother, with this prayer controversy, on both sides. For, wherever I go, I find that the Christian world is always sticking that man, Müller, in my face, as a proof that God does answer prayer. Millions of saints praying, all over the world, and when I ask, 'Are your prayers answered?' they say, 'There's Müller, at Bristol; see how his prayers are answered!'"[153]

Although Müller did not indicate that he had launched out on a series of speaking tours that would take him, quite literally, around the world to prove the efficacy of prayer, he most certainly was aware that his long, detailed chronicle of prayers answered over decades was a material witness against unbelief.[154]

The Bristol philanthropist arrived in the United States after following in the wake of the highly celebrated revivals of D. L. Moody and Ira Sankey in the United Kingdom. Müller's practice of following Moody and Sankey began in August 1875 when Müller's second preaching tour was explicitly launched to follow up on the Moody-Sankey revivals in England, Ireland, and Scotland.[155] After Moody and Sankey rallied people to accept Christ as savior, Müller built upon their efforts and educated and encouraged those who were new to the Christian faith.[156] Records

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her advisors appeals to fight and honored Albert's wish to keep out of the war. James McCosh, "On Prayer," *The Contemporary Review* 20 (October 1872): 777-782; this same article was published by *Littell's Living Age* in Boston see James McCosh, "On Prayer," *Littell's Living Age* 27, no. 1482 (November 9, 1872): 351-362; James McCosh, "On Prayer," in *The Prayer-Gauge Debate*, ed. John O. Means (Boston: Congregational Publishing Society, 1876), 135-144.

[153] William W. Patton, *Prayer and Its Remarkable Answers: Being a Statement of Facts in the Light of Reason and Revelation* (Chicago: J. S. Goodman, 1876), 402.

[154] Details of these preaching tours were recorded by his second wife, Susannah, who made them available to the general public in her book, Müller, *The Preaching Tours*.

[155] Ibid., 3.

of his preaching efforts appeared in British newspapers and were deemed effective.[157] The

practice of trailing Moody and Sankey in the United Kingdom was applied, it appears, to some

degree in North America when Müller first arrived in August of 1877.

Moody led a revival campaign in Boston from late-January through April 1877 that was

noted for its catholic character and affirmation of democratic inclusiveness.[158] These ecumenical

assemblies were, as the Revival of 1857-1858 had been, affirmations that Moody and the revival

were part of a genuine work of God.[159] After Moody ended his Boston evangelistic meetings, he

ventured on to small towns such as Montpelier, Vermont, Providence, Rhode Island, and New

Haven, Connecticut, where his preaching would make an impact on the students of Yale

College.[160] In a similar fashion, Müller and his second wife, Susannah, traveled across the

United States as a preaching evangelist from August 18, 1877 to July 8, 1878.[161] Although there

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[156] It is unclear whether Moody and Sankey encouraged Müller to engage in the preaching tours after them or Müller simply saw an opportunity to build on the foundation they had established. A. T. Pierson stated that the motivation was Müller's own desire to "follow up the revival work of Mr. Moody and Mr. Sankey." Pierson, *George Müller*, 248.

[157] *The Bristol Mercury* re-published an article from the *Liverpool Daily Post* that dealt directly with Müller's weaknesses as a preacher, but concluded with the affirmative statement, "And the demonstration, while you listen to him, seems as irresistible as the story of his life." "Mr. George Muller in Liverpool," *The Bristol Mercury*, February 12, 1876, 4.

[158] Evensen, *God's Man*, 166. For a detailed analysis of the revival and role of the press in making Moody a celebrity in Boston see Bruce J. Evensen, "It Is a Marvel to Many People": Dwight L. Moody, Mass Media, and the New England Revival of 1877," *The New England Quarterly* 72, no. 2 (June 1999): 267-274.

[159] Journalism historian Bruce J. Evensen argues that by the time D. L. Moody returned from Great Britain in 1877 he was being openly marketed in the Boston press "as an evangelical superstar 'whose fame is in all the world.'" Ibid., 166.

[160] Ralph Henry Gabriel, *Religion and Learning at Yale: The Church of Christ in the College and University 1757-1957* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1958), 189.

is no conclusive evidence to establish a direct tie between the Moody-Sankey revivals and

Müller's arrival in the United States, several activities do warrant consideration. Müller spoke at

the twentieth anniversary celebration of the Fulton Street Prayer Meeting in New York and a

similar prayer-meeting in Boston that dated from the Revival of 1857-1858 (possibly the same

meeting organized and conducted by Charles G. Finney at Park Street Church). He also visited

some of the same small towns where Moody and Sankey conducted revivals. Most notably,

however, when Müller and his wife arrived in Boston on October 21, 1877, his first speaking

venue was Moody's Tabernacle.[162]

Müller first visited Canada[163] en route to New York City where he spoke at Talmage's

Brooklyn Tabernacle.[164] After completing his engagements in New York, the Boston Y.M.C.A.

organized meetings for Müller that operated in a similar fashion to Moody's revival meetings

with a choir, organist, and song leader, in this instance George C. Stebbins.[165] The large

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[161] Müller and his wife visited the United States and Canada four times: August 1877-July 1878, September 1879-June 1880, September 1880-May 1881, November 1885-December 1885.

[162] For an account of Müller's visit to the Boston Tabernacle see, "Trusting God," *Boston Daily Globe*, October 22, 1877, 8.

[163] Canadian Christians had also written in hopes of attracting Müller, which he did fulfill in his second visit to North America. "Amphitheatre Gospel Meeting," *The Daily Globe* [Toronto], August 27, 1877, 4; "Christian Conference, Shaftesbury Hall," *The Daily Globe* [Toronto], December 11, 1879, 2.

[164] Müller, *The Preaching Tours*, 30.

[165] "The Tabernacle," *Boston Daily Advertiser*, October 22, 1877, 1. A hymn-writer and composer, George C. Stebbins (1846-1945), served as the music director for Moody in many of his evangelistic meetings. Stebbins also served as a song leader for Y.M.C.A. meetings and edited the esteemed *Northfield Hymnal*. R. J. Stanislaw, "Stebbins, George Coles," in *Dictionary of Christianity in America*, 1131. Also see, George C. Stebbins, ed., *Northfield Hymnal* (New York: The Biglow & Main Co., 1904).

temporary "tabernacle" that could seat almost 6,000 people, however, was not noted for its

comforts. To make matters worse, the weather did not cooperate and a heavy rain storm kept the

congregation at 9:00 a.m. on a wet Sunday morning to the modest size of 2,000 people.[166]

Although Müller may have been disheartened by the lack of initial turn out to hear him speak,[167]

an orchestrated media campaign kept him before the public eye as advertisements heralded his

speaking engagements in the city.[168]   Müller was given access to the city's most celebrated

pulpits. Rev. A. J. Gordon invited Müller to speak at the Clarendon Street Baptist Church.[169]

Müller was also invited to preach at Rev. George F. Pentecost's Warren Avenue Baptist

Church,[170] Winthrop Congregational Church, First Baptist Church, Dudley Street Baptist

Church, and the ever influential Park Street Church led by the theological conservative Rev. J. L.

Withrow.[171] Despite the denominational mélange of Müller's speaking venues, he was working

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[166] "The Tabernacle," 1.

[167] Susannah Müller noted her account of events that "the congregation was comparatively small." Although 2,000 people may have been a large congregation for most ministers, given the size of the "tabernacle" the crowd would have filled only one third of the seats available. Müller, *The Preaching Tours*, 31.

[168] "The Rev. George Muller," *Boston Daily Globe*, October 30, 1877, 1; "The Rev. George Muller," *Boston Daily Globe*, October 31, 1877, 1, "The Rev. George Muller," *Boston Daily Globe* (November 1, 1877): 1; "The Rev. George Muller," *Boston Daily Globe*, November 2, 1887, 1.

[169] A. J. Gordon organized the Niagara Bible Conferences, which were a center for promoting premillennial theories. Bernie A. Van De Walle, "A Man for His Season: A. B. Simpson, The Fourfold Gospel and Late Nineteenth-Century Evangelicalism" (Ph.D. diss., Drew University, 2004), 244.

[170] George F. Pentecost would later distinguish his ministerial career by becoming an evangelist and highly respected friend of D. L. Moody. L. T. Remlap, ed., *"The Gospel Awakening," Comprising the Sermons and Addresses, Prayer-Meeting Talks and Bible Readings of the Great Revival Meetings Conducted by Moody and Sankey*, 20th ed. (Chicago: Fairbanks and Palmer Publishing Co., 1885), 814-816.

[171] J. L. Withrow served as pastor of the Park Street Church from June 1876 until November 1886 when he accepted the pastorate of the Third Presbyterian Church of Chicago. Prior to his departure he would be involved in the "Andover Creed" controversy at Andover

with ministers who were vitally interested in seeing revival happen in Boston. Ministers,

laypeople, and the general public were all drawn together to see "Rev. George Muller of 'the

Bristol miracle' fame," who according to *The Congregationalist*, was a public curiosity who

attracted much attention. [172]   Those intrigued by scientifically measuring prayer, as argued in the

Prayer-Gage Debate, saw in Müller a possible source of evidence, while some saw him as living

proof that biblical Christianity was, indeed, still relevant in the age of science.[173]

The tour of the North American continent continued throughout 1878 and affirmed his

broad appeal among Protestants, including African Americans.[174] Müller's celebrated status

among American Protestants can be understood by taking into account the diverse churches that

invited him to speak from their pulpits.[175] Impromptu invitations to speak, access to college

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Theological Seminary. The *New York Times* reported of his departure from the church that "the
extreme orthodoxy of his religious teachings has been the most marked feature of his
ministrations there. The acceptance of a Presbyterian pastorate at this time is noteworthy,
coming as it does in the midst of the animated controversy over the Andover creed, and pending
the investigation of the charges of heresy against Andover Professors." The "Associate Creed"
controversy was centered on debate over the theological liberalization of Andover Theological
Seminary. Edwards A. Park, *The Associate Creed of Andover Theological Seminary* (Boston:
Franklin Press, 1883), iii. "Dr. Winthrow's Change of Pulpits," *The New York Times*, November
22, 1886, 1.

[172] Winthrop, "Letter from New York," *The Congregationalist* [Boston], September 19,
1877, 1.

[173] "The Prayer Test," *Harford Daily Courant*, September 13, 1877, 1. *The Chicago
Daily Tribune* also made the connection between Müller and the debate about the effectiveness
of prayer in an article entitled, "The Prayer Test," *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 16,
1877, 9.

[174] While visiting Charleston, South Carolina, in February 1878, Müller spoke to several
large audiences of African Americans. Müller, *The Preaching Tours*, 45.

[175] In a front-page interview with a reporter for *The Washington Post* that was published
on New Year's Day 1878, Müller explained his reason for coming to the United States, "I came
simply to preach and teach the word of God. My visit has no connection with the institution; it is
not a collecting, but a preaching tour. I have had for many years very many invitations to the

students and politicians, including President Rutherford B. Hayes, all indicated that Müller held

significance among the general public and, in particular, evangelicals.[176] However, not everyone

was an admirer of the Bristol philanthropist. The radical Western Unitarian Conference in its

periodical *Unity*[177] offered a sarcastic assessment of Müller's visit when they reported,

> GEORGE MULLER, of Bristol, England, famous for his Orphan House built and supported
> by 'faith', seems to have found his recent tour in this country almost a continual ovation.
> The evangelical clergymen who for years have been confounding and putting to flight
> whole armies of 'infidels' and 'skeptics' by the mere mention of MULLER's name, seem
> to have regarded themselves wonderfully favored to be able to get the gentleman alive
> into their pulpits for a sort of object lesson to their congregations. 'Didn't we tell you?
> There he is—the very man—look at him—you suspected that we were humbugging you
> when we insisted that prayer 'moves the arm that moves the world,' and that there is no
> limit to what we can get by asking God for it, if we only have faith enough. Behold,
> then, ye doubters! there [*sic*] are the very lips that prayed hundreds of thousands of
> pounds sterling out of men's pockets, and great buildings into existence. Doubt again if
> you can.'[178]

Respectful of Müller's philanthropic activities that benefited so many children, the editors

questioned his approach to prayer that simply relied on "sufficient faith."[179] Instead, the editors

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United States and Canada, but of late they were more pressing and urgent than ever before. And
after much prayer and consideration I decided to comply with these requests, believing I shall
have vast spheres of usefulness in this country, not only among the English speaking population,
but also among the millions whose native language like my own is German." "The Power of
Prayer," *The Washington Post*, January 1, 1878, 1.

[176] Müller, *The Preaching Tours*, 41.

[177] Unitarians denied the deity of Jesus and the doctrine of the Trinity and focused on the
ethical teachings of Christianity. The Western Unitarian Conference (WUC) was radical in that
it completely rejected any reference to Christianity, and promoted, as Allen Ruff, explains, "a
nondoctrinal 'ethical basis' of 'freedom, fellowship and character in religion.'" Intellectual and
moral growth was, for the WUC, the means by which a person achieved salvation. They began
publishing the periodical *Unity* on March 1, 1878, in an effort to undermine the influence of
more conservative Unitarians throughout the western United States. Allen Ruff, *"We Called
Each Other Comrade": Charles H. Kerr & Company, Radical Publishers* (Urbana-Champaign,
IL: University of Illinois, 1997), 7-8, 25, 29.

[178] "George Muller and His Prayers," *Unity* 2, no. 4 (October 15, 1878): 103.

wondered if Müller had not managed "the *shrewdest advertising dodge* of this century" by

making it widely known through his publications that he would not ask anyone but God for the

funds he needed to support his orphan home.[180] The editors were troubled by Müller's approach

to prayer and went on to argue,

> But what a farce does this turn prayer into? What a laughing stock in the eyes of
> intelligent lookers on! No! we can tell our good evangelical friends that if they want to
> win infidels and skeptics, they are proceeding in quite the wrong way when they quote
> Mr. Muller, and his Orphan House, and his prayers to God which he so shrewdly assures
> the answer of, by taking care that all the Christian world shall hear about them and what
> they are for. Infidels and skeptics are generally smart enough to see through a wall that
> has in it as big a hole as that.[181]

As the periodical *Unity* highlights, not everyone was as impressed with Müller as America's

ministers and the heirs of the Revival of 1857-1858. Despite the criticism, however, his first tour

was followed in the newspapers and affirmed his status as an important social and religious

figure.

The question of Müller's status is answered by examining how he was received on the

West Coast. Upon their arrival in San Francisco, California, in April 1878, Müller and his wife

found they had entered into an elite category of celebrated individuals. Susannah Müller records

in her account of their travels that they were met by "friends" who ". . . conducted us to the

rooms which had been engaged at the Palace Hotel."[182] No explanation of the Palace Hotel was

provided by Müller's wife in her account of their travels, but their "friends" "engaged" them a

room at what was regarded at the time as the finest hotel in the United States. The Palace Hotel

opened on October 2, 1875, and was one of the most expensive hotels in the world that was

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[179] Ibid., 104.
[180] Italics in the original. Ibid., 103.

[181] Ibid.

[182] Müller, *The Preaching Tours*, 59.

328

purposely built to rival the most majestic hotels in Europe.[183] Although there appears to be a

discrepancy between Müller's frugal lifestyle back in Bristol and his accepting lodging at such

an elite establishment while on his "missionary" and "preaching" tours, the discontinuity points

to how evangelicals respected Müller as a religious celebrity.

American evangelicals rewarded Müller and his wife for their life of faith by caring for

their physical and material well-being. In San Francisco, like in most other larger cities, the

Y.M.C.A. arranged Müller's speaking appointments at local churches.[184] Although the

Y.M.C.A. may have wielded some influence in the city, it is unlikely that they would have had

the funds available to lodge Müller and his wife in the most expensive hotel in the city. Rather,

the use of the Palace Hotel indicated that Müller attracted the attention of the city's elite who

were deeply interested in his serious piety and philanthropic work and, most likely, covered the

cost of accommodation.

The best surviving evidence for a connection between Müller and San Francisco's high

society appears in a report of the Golden Gate Kindergarten Association published in 1890. The

report celebrated the Association being in operation since October of 1879. Established

originally in the form of "a large Bible class" the kindergartens expanded into a thriving system

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[183] Paul Groth, Professor of Architecture and Geography at the University of California, Berkeley, explains that, "The heyday of residential life in palace hotels occurred between 1880 and 1945. In name as well as in experience, the Palace Hotel of San Francisco exemplified the type for the Victorian era. The $5 million hotel opened in 1875 and covered an entire city block. Its two prominent owners—the state's most audacious capitalist and a wealthy U. S. senator—set its social status. It had 755 rooms in seven stories arranged around a large central courtyard with a skylight and two additional very large air wells. For the next thirty years, the Palace reigned as a landmark. Its massive seven-story volume loomed over the city, and its hundreds of bay windows dominated downtown vistas." Paul Groth, *Living Downtown: The History of Residential Hotels in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 40.

[184] "Rev. George Muller, The Evangelist," *Daily Evening Bulletin* [San Francisco], Second Edition, April 27, 1878, 6.

of independent schools supported by donations.[185] The article originally appeared in the San

Francisco *News Letter* and reported on the expansion of the free kindergartens throughout the

city. The article compared the Association with Müller's "famous orphanage at Bristol" and

went on to state,

> . . . no less have the honest workers in the Golden Gate Free Kindergarten Association
> looked to the Lord for His direct intervention in behalf of the cause that has grown so
> dear to them. . . . and the way in which much of this money has come to them, entirely
> unsolicited by personal effort, but as if providentially sent to meet a special need, has
> confirmed them in their faith that ways and means will be provided.[186]

Although the article aligned the work of the Association with Müller, it did not clarify how

important the wealth of San Francisco's leading women factored into the work. The wives of

San Francisco's wealthiest residents, such as Phoebe Elizabeth Apperson Hearst, wife of mining

millionaire and U. S. Senator George Hearst, and Jane Elizabeth Lathrop Stanford, wife of

railroad tycoon and former California governor Leland Stanford, were intimately involved in the

work of the Association.[187] For those supporting the work of the free kindergartens, the use of

Müller's name as a reference point to the success of the Association could only have had

currency if his name and methods were seen as a mark of distinction for Christian philanthropy.

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[185] Sarah B. Cooper, "Practical Results of Ten Years' Work," in *Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction at the Sixteenth Annual Session Held in San Francisco, Cal., September 11-18, 1889*, ed. Isabel C. Barrows (Boston: Press of Geo. H. Ellis, 1889), 187.

[186] Di Vernon, "Free Kindergartens," in *Eleventh Annual Report of the Golden Gate Kindergarten Association for the Year Ending October 6, 1890* (San Francisco: George Spaulding & Co., 1890), 41-42.

[187] Ibid., 4.

Müller's preaching engagements in American cities,[188] like San Francisco, were interdenominational,[189] aimed to reach those who might benefit most from his testimony such as college students[190] and German immigrants.[191] Müller conducted four preaching tours in the United States that affirmed his reputation as a man of faith, prayer, and holiness. Advertisements in local newspapers announced his speaking engagements for curious audiences who discovered that he was an ordinary man who was not distinguished in size, intellect, or rhetorical abilities.[192] Instead his ordinary physical and speaking attributes served to prove even more firmly the idea

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[188] Müller spoke in even more remote places, including the Yosemite Valley on his visit to California. C. F. Gordon Cumming, "In the Yosemite Valley," *The Churchman* 8 (London: Elliot Stock, 1883): 424.

[189] According to the *Daily Evening Bulletin*, while in San Francisco Müller was scheduled to speak at cross sections of the city's churches from Tabernacle Presbyterian Church and First Congregational Church to Broadway German M. E. Church. "Rev. George Muller, "The Evangelist," *Daily Evening Bulletin* [San Francisco], Second Edition, April 27, 1878, 6.

[190] On November 18, 1880, Müller visited the women of Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts, for a second time (his first visit was on November 9, 1877). His visit was recorded in a letter by Ellen P. Bowers. A simple sentence summarized the whole of Müller's visit for her when she wrote, "Rev. George Müller, of Bristol Orphan House fame, was in town for two days, with his wife, and spoke to us twice in his usual simple, earnest fashion." Muller was invited to speak at a number of colleges and universities in the United States, such as Howard University, Virginia Episcopal Theological Seminary, Roanoke College, Wellesley College, the University of Michigan, and Yale College. Ellen P. Bowers, "Printed Letter 11: November 1, 1880-February 22, 1881," Mount Holyoke Journal Letters, 1843-1891, Record Group 22.1. Mount Holyoke College, Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, Massachusetts. Müller, *Preaching Tours*, 35, 165.

[191] In Hartford, Connecticut, Müller spoke to the German Union and to German congregations in the city. This was a practice he maintained in most cities that had German-speaking congregations. "The Praying Evangelist," *Hartford Daily Courant*, November 22, 1880, 1.

[192] "The Founder of the Bristol Orphan Asylums," *New York Daily Tribune*, December 9, 1880, 8.

that God alone was responsible for his success.[193] This first tour ended in June of 1878 and

affirmed his distinguished status among evangelicals.[194] Consequently, his first tour in North

America became a period of celebration that venerated his philanthropic work and his method of

living by faith.[195]

Celebration Leads to Imitation

Evangelicalism in the United States reached a pinnacle of influence during the last thirty

years of the nineteenth century, and Müller's prominence among evangelicals coincided with this

"summit."[196] Müller's acclaim was due to the popularity of *The Life of Trust* and his speaking

tours. His sermons published in American religious periodicals,[197] and newspapers tracked his

subsequent preaching tours in North America and around the world.[198] His story moved faith

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[193] Susannah Müller noted in one of her speaking engagements that her husband, as she stated, "was enabled to unreservedly to surrender himself to the Lord, to believe God, and to take Him at His word with the simplicity of a child, and honestly to carry out the light given to him." Susannah Müller, "Brief Account of the Life and Labours of Mr. George Müller, given at a Ladies Union Prayer Meeting, Broadway Tabernacle, New York, February 1881," George Müller and Family, Letters and Papers, Muller House, 7 Cotham Park, Bristol, England.

[194] "Miscellanea," *National Repository* 4 (Cincinnati: Hitchcock and Walden, 1878): 567.

[195] "Faith: A Philanthropist's Life of Prayer and Trust," *Brooklyn Eagle*, September 11, 1877, 2.

[196] Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth Century America* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1957), 15.

[197] For examples see, George Müller, "The Speedy Return of Christ," *Christian Herald and Signs of Our Times* (August 7, 1879): 661-663; George Müller, "Faith," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (March 5, 1880): 3; George Müller, "The Second Coming of Christ," *Christian Herald and Signs of Our Times* (March 31, 1881): 204-206.

[198] "Sunbeams," *The Sun* [New York], January 22, 1882, 4.

and prayer to the forefront of public discussion.[199] For some evangelicals who sought a restoration of New Testament Christianity in the contemporary church of their day, Müller's example provided evidence that trusting God would not lead to failure but something new in the ordinary lives of serious Christians. Lay people and ministers found his story to be compelling and many followed Müller's example and reapplied his attitude toward living by faith to their own needs and desires in regard to healing, finances, and personal holiness.[200] The influence of Müller's story on America was not limited to the tracts, annual reports, press releases and revised volumes of *The Life of Trust* being sold. In the last thirty years of the nineteenth century, newspaper editors ran short updates that emphasized Müller's continued success at providing for orphans simply by praying. In addition to reports in newspapers and periodicals, those concerned with the challenge of modern scientific skepticism employed Müller as evidence for answered prayer in the modern world.[201] For many evangelicals, there was no greater display of God's faithfulness in meeting human material needs than Müller and his orphan homes.[202]

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[199] Daniel Curry, "Prayer—Its Nature and Potency," *National Repository* 4 (Cincinnati, OH: Hitchcock and Walden, 1878): 263-269; Daniel Curry, "The Vision of Faith," *National Repository* 4 (Cincinnati, OH: Hitchcock and Walden, 1878): 551-555.

[200] "Religious Intelligence," *Hartford Daily Courant*, August 16, 1879, 4.

[201] William W. Patton, president of Howard University, wrote one of the many books in the late-nineteenth century that used Müller as part of a simplistic "scientific" rebuttal to criticisms of supernatural Christianity. Patton, *Remarkable Answers*, 390-393. Authors such as D. W. Whittle and S. B. Shaw employed Müller's accounting of answered prayer along with such diverse individuals as John Knox, Abraham Lincoln, and ordinary laypersons. Whittle also included answers to prayer from the Fulton Street Prayer Meeting. D. W. Whittle, ed., *The Wonders of Prayer: A Record of Well Authenticated and Wonderful Answers to Prayer* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1885), 201-207 ; S. B. Shaw, ed., *Touching Incidents and Remarkable Answers to Prayer* (Grand Rapids, MI: S. B. Shaw, 1893), 237-238.

[202] Whittle, ed., *The Wonders of Prayer*, 201.

Other evangelicals not only promoted him in their sermons and books, but they also began to imitate him.[203] Rev. A. T. Pierson adopted Müller's method of living by faith, as did other well known ministers who believed that his practice of Christian piety was the most biblical.[204] Rev. A. B. Simpson, founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance,[205] thoroughly embraced Müller's life of faith and was proclaimed a second Müller.[206] Untold scores of men and women devoted their lives and ministries to living by faith and following the example of Müller and those who endorsed him. The result was that the public heard Müller's story presented in a triumphal manner by those who had made a decision to follow, quite literally, his example in their everyday lives.[207] The influence wielded by these ministers allowed Müller's memory to transcend the immediate sphere of his own ability to attract attention through the curious claims of his story and become a permanent part of popular religious memory.

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[203] Those interested in overseas missionary work were attracted to Müller's methods and even questioned if the traditional fundraising methods of missionary societies did not bring dishonor upon God, because they appealed to the "world" rather than to God for help. "Faith, Work, and Self-Support in Missionary Effort," *The Gospel in All Lands: An Evangelical Monthly Magazine* (March 1881): 139-140.

[204] Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 178.

[205] H. P. Shelly, "Simpson, (A)lbert (B)enjamin," in *Dictionary of Christianity in America*, 1087.

[206] "Editor and Evangelist," *The Christian Alliance and Missionary Weekly* 6, no. 12 (March 20, 1891): 188.

[207] One of the more widely recognized institutions that used Müller's method of living by faith was the Christian Home Orphanage founded in 1882 by the Baptist minister, Rev. Jospeh G. Lemen in Council Bluffs, Iowa. Elia W. Peattie, "A Singular Institution: The Christian Home of Council Bluffs and Its Founder (1 March 1891)," in *Impertinences: Selected Writings of Elia Peattie, a Journalist in the Gilded Age*, ed. Susanne George Bloomfield (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 234-240. Also see, John Sobieski, *The Life Story and Personal Reminiscences of Col. John Sobieksi* (Shelbyville, IL: J. L. Douthit & Son, 1900), 207-208.

One of the most famous examples of an individual imitating Müller occurred in the city

of Boston. Dr. Charles Cullis (1833-1892), the founder of one of the city's most well-known

charities, Cullis's Home for Indigent and Incurable Consumptives[208] acknowledged that George

Müller inspired his life work.[209] After suffering from persistent poor health as a young man

Cullis was convinced by a physician friend to train to become a doctor. During his medical

studies at the University of Vermont, Cullis experienced a religious awakening that, according to

W. H. Daniels, ". . . he temporarily silenced by going forward in confirmation in the Episcopal

Church, and attending to the outward duties of a Christian life."[210] After completing his medical

studies, Cullis married and began to practice medicine, but he was soon faced with tragedy when

his young wife died. Daniels reported that Cullis, himself only in his mid-twenties, was

devastated by the event and notes that Cullis vowed ". . . to devote his entire income, over and

above his personal expenses, to works of charity and religion."[211] Soon Cullis was faced with a

challenge that became an opportunity when he encountered a man who suffered from

tuberculosis, or as it was referred to in the period "consumption," and could not gain admittance

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[208] Charles Cullis (1833-1892) was responsible for establishing a number of charities that, according to the *New York Times*, included, "Consumptives' Home at Grove Hall, the Faith Cure College in Boston, the Boydton (Va.) Orphanage and Institute for Colored Children, the Chinese Mission in California, besides two schools in India, the Cancer Home at Walpole, the Deaconesses' House, the Spinal Home, and many other departments." "Dr. Cullis Critically Ill," *The New York Times*, April 30, 1892, 1. Also see, Raymond J. Cunningham, "From Holiness to Healing: The Faith Cure in America, 1872-1892," *Church History* 43, no. 4 (December 1974): 499-513; Heather D. Curtis, *Faith in the Great Physician: Suffering and Divine Healing in American Culture, 1860-1900* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 51-80; D. D. Bundy, "Cullis, Charles," in *Dictionary of Christianity in America*, 331.

[209] Robert Bruce Mullin, *Miracles and the Modern Religious Imagination* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 91-92.

[210] W. H. Daniels, ed. *Dr. Cullis and His Work: Twenty Years of Blessing in Answer to Prayer* (1885; repr., New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1985) 4-5.

[211] Ibid., 5.

to any of Boston's hospitals. Cullis saw his opportunity and leapt at the chance to assist those who were beyond the scope of traditional sources of help due to the incurable nature of the disease.

Cullis's Home for Indigent and Incurable Consumptives, however, operated by principles that put the institution into the hands of providence and prayer when Cullis decided that the institution would not seek solicitations or sponsors to help fund the charity. Rather, following the principle of living by faith that Müller used for his Orphan Homes in Bristol, Cullis presented all of his needs to God in prayer. In 1887, Rev. William I. Gill reported in an article on Cullis's work, "Here he [Cullis] was influenced by the story of Francke's Great orphanage in Germany, and by Müller's 'Life of Trust,' then recently published. He decided to walk by faith and prayer, and make the Lord his unpaid agent for the collection of all needed moneys."[212] The Cullis home opened in 1864, just four years after *The Life of Trust* was published for American audiences. The impact of Müller on Cullis was something that Susannah Müller found noteworthy when she wrote, ". . . visited Dr. Cullis's Institution for Consumptive patients, whom he [George Müller] addressed, when Dr. C. remarked, 'But for your example, all this would never have been in existence.'"[213]

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[212] Wm. I. Gill, "The Faith Cure," *The New England Magazine and Bay State Monthly* 5, no. 5 (March 1887): 446.

[213] Müller preached at a number of locations in the greater Boston vicinity in late October and early November of 1877. Müller also spoke at Dr. Cullis's Chapel and Faith College while visiting Boston. Müller, *The Preaching Tours*, 33.

Conclusion

American Protestants came to know about Müller through the Wayland edition of *The Life of Trust* that established his reputation as a legitimate example of a "saintly life."[214] However, the book's release just after the spiritual fervor of the Revival of 1857-1858 made the book important for a generation of evangelicals who came to define Protestant Christianity in the last third of the nineteenth century. Despite the influence of *The Life of Trust* among American evangelicals, historians have not noticed the correlation among Müller's renown, *The Life of Trust*, and the Wayland endorsement.[215] Drawing on primary sources that have never been examined in reference to Müller, this chapter has argued for a new understanding for how Müller was able to achieve prominence and influence among evangelicals in North America. The Revival of 1857-1858 created a context for Müller's legitimization. His renown was established on the reputation of others who gave validity to his method of living by faith and saw him as offering a rebuttal to modern skepticism.[216] Ministers and laypeople came to celebrate his

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[214] A. B. Simpson wrote in remembrance of Müller, "it was the privilege of the writer a quarter of century ago, after having received special inspiration and blessing from the record of this saintly life, to meet him in the most intimate fellowship for many weeks together, and to listen from day to day to his ministrations and the story of his life as it fell from his modest yet frank and simple-hearted lips." Editor [A. B. Simpson], "Memories of George Muller," *The Christian and Missionary Alliance* 20, no. 12 (March 23, 1898): 1.

[215] Charles Adams, "The Life of Trust," *The Methodist Quarterly Review* 53 (July 1871): 427.

[216] When a new edition of *The Life Trust* was prepared in 1877, H. Lincoln Wayland argued, in his editorial preface, that Müller's story was still vitally important. Wayland stated, "If science denies that God can interpose to overrule or guide his laws, an appeal may be made to this testimony of personal experience during nearly forty years." Müller, *The Life of Trust* (1877), vi.

life and invoke his name as a model of what an ordinary Christian could do by fully embracing

Scriptural living and a serious life of prayer.[217]

The democratization of piety Müller embodied held importance for evangelicals on two

points. First, they, too, could experience answers to prayer in their own lives if they trusted God,

lived a holy life, and prayed like Müller.[218] Second, they could contribute to Müller's answers to

prayer or someone else's need as a participant, though properly humbled by anonymity, through

financial and material giving.[219] Whether one prayed or gave, each action was biblical and

available to any serious Christian.[220] Müller's leveling of personal sanctity permitted American

Christians, regardless of denominational affiliation, to identify with at least one aspect Müller's

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[217] Charles Adams affirmed Müller as a biblical example of what occurred in the Pentecostal church of the first century and hoped that such expressions of Christian living "will abound more and more as the Church again rises to her true Pentecostal and millennial level." Adams concluded his thought with the following reflection, "But we thank God for giving us even an occasional George Müller to furnish the spy-glass through which we catch a vista, showing us the route by which the latter-day glory may be attained." Adams, "The Life of Trust," 443.

[218] A. T. Pierson, "George Müller, Patriarch and Prophet of Bristol," *The Missionary Review of the World* 19, no. 8 (August1896): 561-567.

[219] L. S. Beard, "Give Habitually," *Y.M.C.A. Association Monthly* 2, no. 10 (October 1871): 200; also see "George Müller and Giving," *The Missionary Review of the World* 22, no. 3 (March 1899): 220-221.

[220] In a letter to the editor of *The Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanter* published in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, one reader commented, "O let us learn of that wonderful man, Müller, of Bristol, England, who lives by faith only, and is carrying on a greater work than any congregation, or perhaps than any denomination of God's people under the sun. What a miracle of divine grace and love! a [*sic*] man possessing no property, and will not ask man for any assistance, yet God, in answer to prayer, gives him the means to build orphan houses that contain hundreds of children, and provides every necessary for a large institution of learning, and sends the Bible and missionaries to the heathen. Is not this the faith and work of a true Covenanter?" Hope [pseud.], "Are We True Covenanters?" *The Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanter* 5, no. 6 (June 1867): 182-184.

life, teachings, and ministry. The result was that by the end of the nineteenth century preachers admonished audiences, "Be like George Muller a man of one book, the Bible, for faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God."[221]

Once Müller's name was legitimized and celebrated in the transatlantic context his importance in the collective memory of evangelicals was able to persist into the twenty-first century. He appealed to all the different strands of late nineteenth-century Protestantism that would fracture in the twentieth century into the Social Gospel Movement, the Holiness Movement, Pentecostalism, and Fundamentalism.[222] However, within the context of the late nineteenth century these divisions were not conceived along belligerent lines and Müller was able to attract a transatlantic following that connected him to the world through missionaries, technology, and travel that took his name and simple story around the world. The result was that he became one standard of evangelical piety for non-Western peoples who were being introduced to Christianity through the work of missionaries and through Müller's own preaching tours.[223] Müller's transatlantic reputation as a "venerable" Christian who sustained the "Bristol miracle" through prayer and trust in God was essential for his rise to global prominence.[224] The next chapter will analyze how Müller, building upon his success in the transatlantic world, was revered in Australia and Asia, enabling him to become a world evangelical hero.

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[221] "The Sixth Day," *Los Angeles Times*, June 3, 1896, 9.

[222] Historian George M. Marsden argues that the fragmentation of nineteenth-century evangelicalism occurred in 1899 with the death of D. L. Moody and advent of Pentecostalism with the Topeka Outpouring of 1901 and the Azusa Street Revival of 1906 in Los Angeles, California. George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 93.

[223] "Faith: A Philanthropist's Life of Prayer and Trust," 2.

[224] "Religious," *Brooklyn Eagle*, April 29, 1882, 1.

CHAPTER 7

CELEBRATED AROUND THE WORLD

Introduction

On January 18, 1887, writing from Hong Kong to Melbourne, Australia, Müller reported,

> After having labored about three and a half months in five of the large cities of Japan, both among the natives, Europeans, and Americans, we are come back here, to go further, to Canton, &c., and then (D.V.) to Singapore, Penang, Burmah, and India. The Lord has greatly helped me, and much blessed my labours to the missionaries, and the tens of thousands of native Christians whom I have addressed. The large native churches and large native halls were always filled. Generally from eight hundred to three thousand were present, particularly in Japan. We have it still in our heart to go to Adelaide, Tasmania, and New Zealand, if the Lord will after we have been in India.[1]

Twelve years earlier Müller decided to launch out on a series of preaching and missionary journeys that would take him around the world. Five years before he began his speaking tours Müller's first wife, Mary, died on February 6, 1870. Although saddened by the loss, Müller decided to marry Susannah Grace Sanger on November 30, 1871, a mere two weeks after his daughter Lydia married James Wright.[2] Müller, when contemplating the expansion of his orphanage in 1851, acknowledged that Francke had turned leadership of his orphanage over to a pious son-in-law. The statement foreshadowed how Müller followed suit in 1872 by appointing

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[1] "George Muller," *Young Men's Christian Association of New South Wales Monthly Notes* 7, no. 8 (March 10, 1887): 424.

[2] George Müller, *Autobiography of George Müller*, ed. G. Fred Bergin (London: J. Nisbet and Co., 1905), 445-447.

his son-in-law as his co-director.[3] By 1875 Müller decided that the time was ripe for a new

adventure. At the age of 70 he realized the next great work of his life would be preaching and

teaching in countries around the world to people who had read or heard about his great work of

faith in Bristol.

This chapter will expand upon Müller's transatlantic celebrity as detailed in the previous

chapter and show how his fame enabled him to become a world evangelical hero. Building on

the transatlantic relationship with North America, this chapter will also investigate Müller in the

context of the British Empire and, in particular, his influence on Christian missionary activity.

Although a thorough analysis of Müller's reputation and reception in all the countries under

British imperial control in the last half of the nineteenth century is not possible in a single

chapter, it is possible to examine a region of the British Empire and to see how his story was

promoted through publications and the responses of individuals who attempted to imitate

Müller's methods. Therefore, this chapter will examine the response to Müller in Australia as a

case study of how he was received in other regions of the British Empire. Because his influence

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[3] In 1851, while contemplating the expansion of the orphanage, Müller noted that
Francke's "truly pious" son-in-law effectively conducted the Halle orphanage after his death.
George Müller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller, Fourth Part*,
3rd ed. (London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1873), 219. Curiously, Müller talked with Wright about
becoming his successor in February 1870, but Wright declined for a variety of reasons, most
notably that his wife would be unable to bear the burden of the work. Apparently, Wright's wife,
Annie, changed her mind on the subject and soon became ill and died on May 22, 1870.
Sometime in August 1871 he proposed to Lydia Müller and they were married by Müller on
November 17, 1871. Müller, however, in his *Narrative* denied that preference for family, and
the nepotistic control it implied, was the cause for Wright being named his successor (one
wonders if Müller was not responding to possible criticism from within the Bristol Brethren
community). However, A. T. Pierson, in his biography of Wright, revealed that Müller was
overjoyed by the union of his daughter with Wright and that Wright was able to manage
operations during Müller's long absences after 1875. George Müller, *A Narrative of Some of the
Lord's Dealings with George Müller, Fifth Part* (London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1874), 526-527.
Arthur T. Pierson, *James Wright of Bristol: A Memorial of a Fragrant Life* (London: James
Nisbet & Co., 1906), 67-71.

globally was related to his preaching, the chapter will also examine some reactions to his preaching and his published story in other parts of the world where he visited. The chapter will conclude by examining the language evangelicals employed to describe Müller and how this contributed to his worldwide celebrity.

"Cheering Up the Christians"

An essential component of Müller's story becoming so well known outside of the transatlantic context was the fact that he personally traveled to a large number of countries, in every part of the world, and extended his influence beyond those who would have heard about him through newspapers, pastors, missionaries, and evangelical magazines. Müller's world travels are important because he was seventy years old when he began his tours. He was able to find financial support for his long and costly travels and he had the stamina to endure the physical challenges inherent in travel in the nineteenth century that included the hazards of dealing with food borne illness, disease, exhaustion, and accidents.[4] Remarkably, Müller managed to avoid any major challenges and see more of the world after his seventieth year of life than most people saw in their entire lifetime.

What was the rationale for embarking on a series of global preaching tours that would consume seventeen years of his life and allow his second wife and him to travel to, according to

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[4] Müller explained that he had always hoped to engage in preaching outside of Bristol, but he did not feel that he could do so until he realized, in 1874, that he was an effective speaker and that he could trust others to properly manage the orphanage. George Müller, "Introduction," in Susannah Grace Müller, *The Preaching Tours Missionary Labours of George Müller (of Bristol)*, 2nd ed. (London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1889), iii.

A. T. Pierson, "forty-two countries and over two hundred thousand miles"?[5] Reflecting on

Müller's sojourns in 1882, *The Sun*, a New York City newspaper, reported the following:

> The Rev. George Muller of the Bristol Orphanage is still traveling in the East. At the
> latest accounts he was in Egypt, pushing his way toward Palestine. The Orphan House
> has a steady income from benevolent persons who have acquired a habit of giving to it.
> While Mr. Muller is away it is so well managed by others that his absence is not an injury
> to it. Now that Mr. Muller is advancing in years, he has a restless desire to see the world,
> and to encourage such companies of Christians as he can find in remote places. He is
> now bent on cheering up the Christians that he may find being in various parts of the
> Holy Land. He will probably visit Australia next year.[6]

Assuring readers that the orphan homes continued to receive adequate support from benefactors,

Müller's travels served as an affirmation of his youthful vigor and devotion to encourage fellow

Christians in the faith.[7] In fact, the preaching tours that took Müller to North America, the

Middle East, India, Australia, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, New Zealand, Tasmania, and all

over continental Europe were intended to cheer up those who needed cheering.[8] Reflecting on

his rationale for his speaking tours Müller wrote, "it was laid upon my heart to go from city to

city, and from country to country, in order to benefit (if possible) both the Church of God and the

world at large, by my ministry and experience."[9] *The Sun* summarized accurately Müller's

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[5] A. T. Pierson, *George Müller of Bristol and His Witness to a Prayer-Hearing God*,
intro. James Wright (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, n.d.), 257.

[6] "Sunbeams," *The Sun* [NewYork], January 22, 1882, 4.

[7] "Return of the Rev. George Muller," *The Bristol Mercury*, June 2, 1883, 8.

[8] Müller also preached in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Russia, Poland, Bohemia,
Switzerland, Holland, and the United Kingdom.

[9] Müller, "Introduction," iv.

global preaching tours as an extension of his purpose for publishing his *Narrative*. He remained committed to "strengthening the faith of the children of God."[10]

Müller may have imagined that the impact of his preaching tours would be similar to the influence of his *Narrative* on the Revival of 1859-1862 in Great Britain.[11] Müller certainly believed that revivals were vital to the expansion of Christianity. His decision to launch his second preaching tour to follow in the wake of Moody-Sankey revival meetings in England, as discussed in chapter 6, indicates that he believed his personal testimony and preaching could be important. Müller, however, could not be so as arrogant to state that he was going to go out and start a worldwide revival, especially since he could not be certain of the outcome, but the importance of revivalism for him should not be underestimated in his thinking.[12]

In addition to the possible motive to start or promote revivals, invitations to come and preach were as important as Müller's "restless desire to see the world." During his pastoral labors in Bristol he repressed his itinerant spirit, except from August 1843 to March 1844 he conducted a preaching tour in Germany focused on Stuttgart.[13] Almost from the moment that he accepted Jesus as savior Müller had hoped to serve as a missionary.[14] Although the desire to

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[10] George Müller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller: First Part*, 7th ed. (London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1869), 146.

[11] Müller, *A Narrative, Fifth Part* (1874), 3-6.

[12] Tim Grass, *Gathering to His Name: The Story of Open Brethren in Britain and Ireland* (Milton Keyes, U.K.: Paternoster, 2006), 118.

[13] Müller, *Autobiography*,192-198.

[14] Müller wrote in March of 1835, on a visit to Europe, that he had a "natural desire for travelling, and now I went over the same ground in the service of Jesus." This statement reveals Müller's wanderlust, which never seems to have dissipated over the course of his long life. George Müller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller, Minister of Christ, Written by Himself* (London: J. Nisbet, 1837), 125.

serve as a missionary was not realized as a young man, the evangelical network that made

Müller's name recognizable from Chicago to Calcutta also provided the invitations that came

from around the world and enticed Müller to step down from being the sole director of his

Bristol ministry empire to become an itinerant evangelist.

Edward K. Groves, son of Anthony N. Groves and Müller's nephew, did not believe that

the invitations to speak were the real reason for Müller's global preaching tours. Groves asserted

in his exposé on life among the Open Brethren in Bristol that Susannah, Müller's second wife,

suffered from mental illness. Groves claimed that Müller gave up his home on Paul Street, his

full responsibilities with the Scriptural Knowledge Institution (SKI) and the Ashley Down

Orphan Homes, and his pastoral responsibilities at Bethesda Chapel in order to remove his

mentally unstable wife from Bristol.[15] Groves, on one level, may be correct in his assertion that

Susannah's personality was not welcomed by those who adored Müller's first wife, Mary.[16]

Despite her inability to impress Müller's loyal admirers in Bristol, Susannah worked tirelessly as

a promoter of her husband's work while on the preaching tours, speaking with women's groups,

inscribing personalized notes in scores of volumes of the *Narrative* that were given to libraries

and various persons they met. Though these activities could be accomplished by someone

suffering from mental illness, it does not appear that Susannah wilted under the pressure.[17] She

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[15] Edward Kennaway Groves, *George Müller and His Successors* (Bristol: n.p., 1906), 33-34.

[16] The adoration shown to Mary and the minor emphasis given to Susannah Grace in G. Fred Bergin's edited version of Müller's autobiography reveals an obvious bias against Susannah that may have been widespread among the Bristol Brethren. Müller, *Autobiography*, 432-445.

[17] *The Nation* reported that after Mary's death Müller was able to engage in worldwide preaching tours because "the second wife, a much younger woman, took to them like a duck to water." "George Müller of Bristol and His Witness to a Prayer-Hearing God," *The Nation* 69 (September 14, 1899): 213.

met tens of thousands of admirers, she spoke to various groups, she passed out tracts to strangers, and she sat on the platform next to her husband facing crowds of thousands who critically analyzed her appearance as closely as her husband's sermons.[18] Through newspaper and periodical accounts it appears certain that Susannah was a first-rate secretary and companion who made the global tours possible.[19] Groves' comment, therefore, might indicate how some in Bristol were frustrated with Müller's authoritarian method of managing his life and ministry without the input of others.[20] Müller, in fact, appeared to surprise everyone with his announcement that Susannah, a woman whose life he had observed for twenty-five years in his congregation, was to be his wife.[21] Though Susannah most certainly had flaws, it does not appear that her shortcomings were commented on by observers outside of Bristol.[22]

Regardless of the hidden or not so hidden motive that compelled Müller to venture beyond Bristol, he was already a widely acclaimed hero whose name was recognizable around the world by the early 1870s. Personal letters, periodicals, books, tracts, newspapers, and even one-on-one conversations created a network among evangelicals who were interested in learning about what other like-minded people were doing and thinking around the world. This informal international network among evangelicals was essential for creating the context in which

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[18] "Undenominational," *The Australian Christian World* 1 (April 2, 1886): 5.

[19] Pierson, *George* Müller, 253.

[20] Groves, *George Müller and His Successors*, 32.

[21] Müller, *Autobiography*,446.

[22] Susannah Grace (Sanger) Müller (1817-1895), as *The Bristol Mercury* affirmed, "accompanied her husband on all his famous preaching tours round the world, one of which in 1888-90 extended to 37,000 miles. Being a lady of great energy and activity she was of great help to her husband, as she was able to do much of his correspondence, her knowledge of French and German coming to her aid in this respect." "Death of Mrs. Geo. Muller," *The Bristol Mercury*, January 19, 1895, 1.

Müller's ideas and practices continued to provoke thought and reflection for months and years after he had visited. His story became part of the story of people's lives and made his work and acclaim even more important years later when they reflected on whom they had met or heard in the course of their lives.

Missions and Empire

The connection between Müller as a transatlantic evangelical and his relationship with the broader English-speaking world is an important tie that is essential for understanding how he became a worldwide hero of the faith for evangelicals. As the previous chapter noted the connection between Protestant Christians on both sides of the Atlantic predated the First Great Awakening,[23] and grew with the revivals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[24] In addition to the transatlantic exchange that defined evangelical missionary developments in that period, the rise of British imperial power in the late-eighteenth century and early-nineteenth century also shaped evangelical missions.[25] Consequently, missionaries from Great Britain and the United States operated beyond the transatlantic context that gave impetus to the rise of missionary work and created, in reality, a global community from which missionaries, preachers, parishioners, and even non-Western peoples contributed to the development of world

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[23] Thomas S. Kidd argues that prior to the First Great Awakening Protestants embraced, "world news [that] also helped New Englanders imagine themselves part of a beleaguered world Protestant community that, in light of the Catholic threat, was badly in need of revival." Thomas S. Kidd, *The Protestant Interest: New England After Puritanism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 73.

[24] Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Leicester, U.K.: Apollos, 1990), 60. Ruth A. Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya: A Biographical History of Christian Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1983), 121-125.

[25] Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag*, 61.

evangelicalism.[26] Australian historian, Brian Dickey, asserts that, ". . . the evangelical

movement from the very moment of its birth has been an international endeavor," in the

nineteenth century this international element was transformed by missionary work as

evangelicalism became the preferred form of religious practice of unknown thousands of non-

Western peoples.[27] Thanks to the efforts of British and American missionaries, world

evangelicalism was linked by the use of the English language. Historian David Bebbington

argues even more precisely, "Evangelicalism in the Victorian era was very much an international

phenomenon, tying together the English-speaking world."[28] However, British and American

missionaries also worked diligently to present Christianity in the language of indigenous

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[26] The difficulty in recognizing these interrelationships is due to the way historians have written national histories of evangelicalism. Historian David Bebbington notes this problem in the historiography when he states, "Most secondary literature assumes that the nation, or a segment of it, possessed an evangelical movement of its own, largely divorced from other lands, with a role specific to its setting. The books on Australia and New Zealand are probably least affected by this tendency, for they commonly appreciate the close bonds between evangelical groupings within the colonies and between them and Britain. There has been a leaning, however, toward seeing Irish evangelicalism as primarily a seedbed for later loyalty to the British connection that influences even the best work on the Ulster movement. The literature on British evangelicalism commonly recognizes the impact of American revivalists, but does little else to show the way in which the churches of England, Scotland and Wales were part of a self-conscious global force. Works on South Africa also tend to neglect the interdenominational and international linkages created by the common evangelicalism of the late nineteenth-century churches. The treatment of South African religion often (understandably) dwells on the theme of race to the extent of underplaying other aspects of the Christian experience. Yet the reality was that evangelicals of South Africa combined for common purposes and copied their coreligionists elsewhere. . . . Evangelicals in different lands were much more similar and connected to each other than many existing historical works suggest." David W. Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 265-266. Lamin Sanneh also recognizes the problem that national identities play in underestimating the unity of Christianity beyond political borders. Lamin Sanneh, *Disciples of All Nations: Pillars of World Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 168.

[27] Brian Dickey, ed., *The Australian Dictionary of Evangelical Biography* (Sydney: Evangelical History Association, 1994), x.

[28] David Bebbington, "Moody as a Transatlantic Evangelical," in *Mr. Moody and the Evangelical Tradition*, ed. Timothy George (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 76.

peoples.[29] The result was tracts, Bibles, and books to promote Western Christian piety among

non-Western people. Ironically, Western missionary efforts resulted in the freeing of non-

Western peoples, as Andrew Walls, emeritus professor at the University of Edinburgh, explains,

"to move within new systems of thought and discourse."[30]

The Christian Brethren firmly embraced world missionary service as essential to their

identity. The example was set by Anthony N. Groves who served as a faith missionary and

passed along his example to the Brethren to serve as missionaries.[31] Brethren missionaries

continued to draw on Groves' example and Müller's evidence of the life of faith as a key

component of their vision of Christian work, an idea that the Brethren passed along to indigenous

Christians.[32] Besides the impact on Brethren missionaries practice of living by faith, Müller

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[29] The desire to make the biblical texts and other devotional literature available to all peoples in their own language transformed Christianity into a world religion that validated all cultures and peoples as essential to the gospel story. Lamin Sanneh, D. Willis James Professor of Mission and World Christianity at Yale Divinity School, explains the importance of this missionary strategy when he writes, "Christian missionaries assumed that since all cultures and languages are lawful in God's eyes, the rendering of God's word into those languages and cultures is valid and necessary. Even if in practice Christians wished to stop the translation process, claiming their own form of it as final and exclusive, they have not been able to suppress it. At any rate, Christian mission became the most explicit machinery for the cultivation of vernacular particularity as a condition of universal faithfulness to the gospel. In centering on the primacy of God's word, Christian translators invested the vernacular with consecrated power, lifting obscure tribes to the level of scriptural heritage and into the stream of universal world history. Almost everywhere vernacular participation in the Christian movement led to internal religious and cultural renewal, often with immediate consequences for political nationalism. The Christian view that culture may serve God's purpose stripped culture of idolatrous liability, emancipating it with the force of translation and usage." Lamin Sanneh, "Pluralism and Christian Commitment," *Theology Today* 45, no. 1 (April 1988): 27.

[30] Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2002), 42.

[31] James Anderson, *Our Heritage* (Kilmarnock, U.K.: John Ritchie Ltd., 1971), 32-34.

[32] Probably the best example of Brethren missionaries inculcating the life of faith indirectly into an indigenous Christian is found in the case of K. E. Abraham (1899-1974). The

also made a significant contribution to world missionary work through his oversight of SKI. Through SKI hundreds of thousands of evangelical tracts, pamphlets and books were distributed around the world. In addition, to the proliferation of evangelical literature SKI was also an apparatus that supported Sunday Schools, day schools, and missionaries. From funding schools in Italy to supporting evangelists in Australia and missionaries in China, SKI was the primary means by which Müller coordinated his support for the world evangelical missionary movement.[33]

The impact of SKI and the fame of the orphanage insured that Müller's story would not be limited to a local, a national, or a transatlantic story, but global in effect.[34] Rather, Müller's method of living by faith combined with his robust involvement in supporting global missions marked him as a key contributor to the development of a world evangelical identity that linked individuals from Asia to Africa in a web of similar associations that emphasized unity based on

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child of Jacobite Syrian Christians in Kerala, India, Abraham was influenced by the teachings of indigenous Christian Brethren who were the legacy of Brethren missionaries. Abraham became an early adherent of Pentecostal practices in India, which resulted in his separation from the Brethren. He also established the Hebron Bible School that operated by faith. In addition, Abraham established the Indian Pentecostal Church of God, but lived by faith throughout his life. He often recorded instances, like Müller, of amazing provision in answer to prayer. Kunjappan C. Varghese, "Reformation Brings Revival: A Historical Study of K. E. Abraham and His Contributions in the Founding of the Indian Pentecostal Church of God" (Ph.D. diss., Trinity International University, 1999), 173-174, 282-285.

[33] Knowledge of Müller's support of missionaries throughout Europe and overseas was publicly acknowledged. W. H. J. Picken, "Straight Speaking on Missionary Giving," *The Illustrated Missionary News* (July 1, 1890): 107-108; George B. Taylor, *Italy and the Italians* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1898), 389. Some Brethren also acknowledged Müller's financial support. "Jottings from the Foreign Mission Field," *Footsteps of Truth* 2 (February 1884): 176; J. S. Anderson, "Italy," *Echoes of Service* 225 (September 1890): 261-262.

[34] "Mr. George Muller's 'Scriptural Knowledge Institution,'" *Journal of Education,, Province of Ontario* [Canada], 21, no. 2 (February 1, 1868): 27.

practice.[35] The common identity that Müller appealed to among evangelicals was centered on

pietistic practices that emphasized the authority of the Bible in everyday life, personal holiness,

the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer, and the centrality of Jesus Christ in history.[36]

Another aspect of evangelical identity was formed around the role of finances in Christian

philanthropy and missions. Most notable, was the expanding role of faith missions in the world

missionary movement that was inspired by efforts of Müller, A. N. Groves, and J. Hudson

Taylor.

Faith Missions

The development of faith missions in the nineteenth century came as a response to the

funding of missionaries through subscription lists and financial entitlements that appeared to

focus solely on what money could accomplish. Halle Pietists were the first to implant the notion

of living by faith into Protestant missionary and philanthropic practice, which resulted in living

by faith becoming part of the fabric of world Christianity.[37] The most notable case came in the

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[35] This was certainly the case among the Christian Brethren where Müller's method of living by faith was embraced as the ideal manner in which to engage in missionary work. Harold H. Rowdon, "The Brethren Contribution to World Mission," unpublished paper, The Christian Brethren Archive, The John Rylands University Library, The University of Manchester, England.

[36] Even in rural India, Müller attracted "admirers" among Dissenters. "The Neilgherries," *The Friend of India* [Calcutta] 1923 (January 18, 1872): 72-73.

[37] Christian Frederic Schwartz, the Halle Pietist missionary mentioned in chapter 4, made an important impact on the development of an indigenous Christian church in India. Schwartz, while serving as a missionary in India, led the grandfather of John Christian, an important nineteenth-century Indian Christian, to accept Jesus Christ as savior. John Christian attended a Church Missionary Society (Church of England) seminary in India, but was also influenced by the legacy of German Pietism in that he chose to live by faith (the life of faith was something that may have been passed on via oral tradition among Indian Christians influenced by Halle Pietists connected with the Danish-Halle Mission). John Christian preached, wrote tracts, and established the "Village of Refuge" all rooted in the vernacular language and the indigenous

person of Johannes Evangelista Gossner, a former Roman Catholic priest who joined the Pietists

in Berlin and, in 1836, established a series of faith missions that eventually supported two

hundred missionaries.[38] Gossner, who eventually trained Germans for the missionary service,

demanded that they embrace nothing but faith and prayer to support them. The American Board

of Commissioners for Foreign Missions organ, *The Missionary Herald*, noted in 1852 that

Gossner's method for missionary support was very curious.[39] The editors could not foresee that

such an odd way of supporting missions would become the preferred method by the end of the

nineteenth century in both the United States and Great Britain.[40]

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culture of India. Paul Joshua Bhakiraj, "Converting Christianity: Pioneers of Indigenous Christianity in India," (paper presented at Global Christianity: Challenging Modernity and the West, Pruit Memorial Symposium, Baylor University, November 10, 2005).

[38] Johannes Evangelista Gossner (1773-1858) was a Roman Catholic priest who became part of the "Awakened Brethren"—a Roman Catholic pietistic movement in Bavaria that arose under the influence of Martin Boos (1762-1825). Eventually Gossner was persecuted for his beliefs and left the Roman Catholic Church. Marybeth Rupert, "The Emergence of the Independent Missionary Agency as an American Institution 1860-1917" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1974), 117-118. Martin Boos, *The Life and Persecutions of Martin Boos; An Evangelical Preacher of the Romish Church*, ed. J. Gossner, trans. and preface by C. Bridges (London: W. Burnside, 1836), vi. Anthropologist Karla Poewe understands the movement of ideas from Jesuits, through the legacy of Matteo Ricci, to German Pietists. Although German Pietists were influenced by medieval Catholic mysticism, the evidence indicates, contrary to Poewe's argument, that Halle Pietists influenced Roman Catholic priests like Boos and Gossner. Boos, however, remained attached to the Roman Catholic Church, while scores of the Awakened Brethren left the Church after accepting Pietist beliefs. Karla Poewe, "Introduction: The Nature, Globality, and History of Charismatic Christianity," in *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture*, ed. Karla Poewe (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1994), 7-9; Dale W. Brown, *Understanding Pietism*, rev. ed. (Nappanee, IN: Evangel Publishing House, 1996), 16-17.

[39] The author of the article was perplexed by Gossner's fundraising methods and explained, "To those who go forth from under his care he makes no pledges. They must trust in God. 'I promise you nothing,' he says; 'you must go in faith. And if you cannot go in faith, you had better not go at all.'" "Gossner's Missionary Society," *The Missionary Herald* 48, no. 6 (June 1852): 186.

[40] Faith missions from the 1880s onward became increasingly prominent in the United States. Within the British context, the Church Missionary Society of the Church of England was

The concept of living by faith was part of Pietist thinking that had moved from Germany to Great Britain and to the United States through the work of A. H. Francke.[41] After the establishment of the Baptist Missionary Society and the launch of modern Protestant missions the debate over how means should be employed to help missionaries was always an issue.[42] By the early 1820s, in a twist, debate raged among some Dissenters about whether even pastors should receive a stated income or support their own work.[43] In 1824, Edward Irving, a Church of Scotland minister, took up the argument about supporting missionaries in an address to the London Missionary Society and complained bitterly, "Money, money, money is the universal cry. Mammon hath gotten the victory, and may say triumphantly (nay, he may keep silence and the servants of Christ will say it for him,) 'Without me ye can do nothing.'"[44] Irving condemned the connection between money and missionary work by proclaiming in the published form of his lectures that faith should accomplish the work when he wrote,

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the largest entity to embrace faith missionaries. Andrew Porter, *Religion Versus Empire? British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 191-211. A. T. Pierson, *Forward Movements of the Last Half Century* (1905, repr., New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1984), 96-102.

[41] Ernst Benz, "Pietist and Puritan Source of Early Protestant World Missions (Cotton Mather and A. H. Francke)," *Church History* 20, no. 2 (June 1951): 28-55. Also see Rupert, "The Emergence of the Independent Missionary Agency as an American Institution 1860-1917," 114-115.

[42] William Ward, a co-worker of William Carey, the founder of modern Protestant missions, worked diligently to solve some of these issues through the sponsorship of students. "Serampore College for Asiatic Christian and Other Youth," *Continental Evangelical Magazine* 6 (June 1820): 219.

[43] "On the Right of Pastors to Receive Support," *New Evangelical Magazine and Theological Review* 9 (June 1823): 161-168.

[44] Edward Irving, *For Missionaries After the Apostolical School, A Series of Orations* (New York: E. Bliss & E. White, 1825), xv.

> If you thus make a stand for the dignity of faith alone, and show, out of the Scripture, what in all ages it hath accomplished for the well-being of man, in the teeth of expediency and power and wealth, by no ministry or help but that of all-prevailing truth; lo! even the faithful rise upon you like locusts and cry, But [*sic*] these Scripture-men had miracles, and were the mighty power of God; what are we that should liken ourselves to them?[45]

Irving's complaint centered on the lack of the belief in the supernatural and approaching missionary endeavors "in a reasonable prudent way" through calculation and the balancing of accounts. Irving embraced a radical strategy for missions[46] that emphasized faith and a reliance on God for supplying the means to accomplish the work.[47] Henry Craik and Anthony Norris Groves, Müller's brother-in-law, were among the many reading Irving's appeal for radical faith missions in 1826.[48] Groves responded to Irving's call for a radical witness based on faith alone and went out as a missionary living without subscribed support.

In 1853, the same year that Groves died in Müller's home, J. Hudson Taylor arrived in China. After working with the Chinese Evangelization Society (CES) for a number of years and receiving inconsistent financial support in the form of "old Spanish dollars" and feeling limited by being confined to a treaty port, Taylor severed his relationship with the CES on May 29,

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[45] Ibid., xvii-xviii.

[46] Irving argued that a missionary should be "reckoned a fool for Christ; a madman, and content to be reckoned a madman, for Christ." Ibid., 98-99.

[47] Ibid., 27.

[48] W. Elfe Tayler, *Passages From the Diary and Letters of Henry Craik, of Bristol*, intro. George Müller (London: J. F. Shaw, 1866), 81. Also see, F. Roy Coad, *A History of the Brethren Movement: Its Origins, Its Worldwide Development and its Significance for the Present Day* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1968), 19; Grayson Carter, *Anglican Evangelicals: Protestant Successions from the Via Media, c. 1800-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 220.

1857.[49] Taylor and his CES colleagues in China had also fallen under the spell of Müller's living

by faith as depicted in his *Narrative*.[50] Müller was a supporter of the CES and was interested in

seeing Christianity succeed in China. Ultimately, when Taylor applied the notion of living by

faith to missions and established the China Inland Mission in 1865, the first widely-celebrated

faith mission, Müller was there to support him as a benefactor of the mission. Müller's influence

on Taylor predated the establishment of the CIM, and Taylor even bought and read Francke's life

to more thoroughly understand the source of Müller's life of faith.[51] In 1863, Taylor, his wife

Maria, and a Chinese Christian, Wang Lae-djün, arrived in Bristol and spent a week learning

from Müller firsthand his key ideas about the life of faith and how to manage such an

operation.[52]

     According to Alvyn Austin, the CIM slogans, "Ebenezer" ("hitherto hath the Lord helped

us") and "Jehovah-Jirah" ("the Lord will provide") were borrowed from Müller as was Müller's

accounting system. Austin argues, "Müller's second gift was his system of divine bookkeeping:

each donor was given a numbered receipt, which Müller published in consecutive order,

anonymously, on regular occasions. This system satisfied the auditors, while maintaining the

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[49] A. J. Broomhall, *Hudson Taylor and China's Open Century, Book 3: If I Had A Thousand Lives* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1982), 67.

[50] Ibid., 65-66. Also see, Christopher E. M. Wigram, "The Bible and Mission in Faith Perspective: J. Hudson Taylor and the Early China Inland Mission" (Ph.D. diss., University of Utrecht, 2007), 61.

[51] Broomhall, *Hudson Taylor*, 326.

[52] Wang Lae-djün, a former opium addict, became, as A. J. Broomhall labeled him, "one of China's great, if unsung, Christians." He revised the Ningbo New Testament and was a long-serving pastor in the indigenous church. Ibid., 177-178.

fiction that all gifts came from God, that humans were merely 'means,' God's visible hand."[53]

The CIM was heavily subsidized by Müller and, for a time, he kept the organization in

operation.[54]   Taylor also used Müller's name along with other leading evangelicals as a

legitimizing "Referee" to vouch for the work of the mission.[55]   Taylor became famous for the

establishment of the CIM that sent missionaries to foreign lands to establish "faith missions,"

which relied only on prayer and trust in God to meet their needs.[56]   Müller, who supported and

identified closely with the CIM, publicly affirmed that, "The great object of the Mission is the

glory of GOD; and even this record of waiting on the LORD for the necessary means, without

pressing upon any one to help, is in itself, in these days of skepticism, a matter of great

importance to the Church of CHRIST at large."[57]

Faith missions, however, involved many who were indirectly influenced by Müller

through the work of CIM. Taylor was celebrated for using the life of faith to support missionary

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[53] Alvyn Austin, *China's Millions: The China Inland Mission and Late Qing Society, 1832-1905* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 96.

[54] Alvyn Austin indicated that by 1866 Müller was the largest financial donor to the CIM and kept the faith mission functioning. Moira McKay, according to Austin, "has ascertained that Müller contributed one-third of the CIM's income between 1866 and 1871, a total of £780 to the general fund and £560 to individual missionaries; this does not include money he gave Hudson Taylor personally for his own use, nor money he remitted directly to China." Quoted in Austin, *China Millions*, 96.

[55] Müller's name along with Dr. Barnardo, The Marquis of Cholomondeley, H. Grattan Guinness, Henry Varley, Lord Radstock, and C. H. Spurgeon were among the many names of leading churchmen and citizens who served as "Referees" for the China Inland Mission. "China Inland Mission," *China's Millions* 12 (June 1876): 155. Austin explains in his analysis of the referees that they were primarily Brethren, but also included Anglicans, Baptists, and Methodists. The 1876 list of referees included the luminaries of Britain's evangelical community. Austin, *China Millions*, 192-194.

[56] The Africa Inland Mission was another faith mission that copied the methods of the China Inland Mission. "Editorial Notes," *China's Missions* (December 1, 1898): 172.

[57] "Mr. George Müller," *China's Millions* 99 (September 1883): 118.

work overseas. His example resulted in unknown hundreds, maybe even thousands, of "faith missionaries" going out to work overseas independent of missionary boards who, in many cases, would have denied them an official appointment. Faith missions were particularly important to evangelical women who were excluded from serving as pastors in Western countries.[58] Faith missions allowed women to engage in missionary service with greater freedom. For example, in Cairo, Egypt, Margaret Smith was allowed to establish the Fowler Orphanage with the approval of her mission board because she promised that she, like Müller, would never fundraise for the institution but rely on answered prayer alone to support the orphans.[59] The mission board, who represented the United Presbyterian Church of North America, did not want female missionaries establishing social work projects that could not be self-sustained. Hospitals and schools could charge fees, but what could orphans do to support their own upkeep? The solution Smith offered was an acceptable alternative, and she, like Müller, utilized annual reports to record her many answers to prayer and tout her accomplishments.[60]

The ranks of independent missionary agencies that practiced living by faith proliferated in the last of the nineteenth century because Müller's method was seen as the ideal biblical model for missions and because he placed the emphasis on giving glory to God for whatever

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[58] Ruth A. Tucker and Walter L. Liefeld, *Daughters of the Church: Women and Ministry from the New Testament Times to the Present* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987), 317-319; Dana L. Robert, *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), 192.

[59] The Fowler Orphanage took its name from John and Esther Fowler, a Quaker couple from Ohio, who raised the funds to purchase the property for the orphanage. Esther Fowler, "Orphanage in Cairo," *The Friend* 90, no. 18 (October 26, 1916): 208.

[60] Beth Barton, "Orphans and Abandoned Children in Modern Egypt," in *Interpreting Welfare and Relief in the Middle East*, ed. Nefissa Naguib and Inger Marie Okkenhaug (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 24-25.

success he achieved in seeing prayers answered.[61]   Besides the CIM founded in 1865, a number

of faith missions were established by those who admired Müller, including A. B. Simpson's

Christian and Missionary Alliance (1887) and the Oriental Missionary Society (1901) founded

by Charles and Lettie Burd Cowman.[62] The worldwide impact of faith missions is still being

assessed by scholars, but Müller's contribution to faith missions is important regardless of what

some scholars have argued.[63]

"Some Even Lost Their Belief"

Faith missionaries used a model that had turned Müller into a hero for many ministers

and lay Christians by the middle of the nineteenth century.[64] He was revered because his method

of living by faith was seen as uniquely scriptural.[65] Müller was sentimentalized as a heroic

figure who appeared to present a happy ending, through answered prayer, to every challenge that

life offered.[66] The social benevolence that he conducted on behalf of the most vulnerable in

British society brought him to the forefront of religious activism and drew J. Hudson Taylor and

others to him. Müller's example inspired the founding of orphanages both in the United

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[61] Rupert, "The Emergence of the Independent Missionary Agency as an American Institution 1860-1917," 117-120.

[62] Ibid., 123-154.

[63] Klaus Fiedler, *The Story of Faith Missions: From Hudson Taylor to Present Day Africa* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 1994), 171.

[64] J. C. Tildesley, "The Story of George Muller," *The Willenhall Magazine* 1 (1863): 92-98.

[65] "The Conversion of Children," *The Christian Miscellany, and Family Visiter* 8 (January 1862): 262. Also see, C. H. Spurgeon, "Individual Efforts and Successes," *The Baptist Magazine* (April 1862): 287.

[66] "A Faithful One," *Night and Day* (March 1, 1892): 32.

Kingdom and around the world. Two of the most famous orphanages that followed in Müller's

footsteps were Dr. Thomas Barnardo's in London[67] and Charles H. Spurgeon's at Stockwell.[68]

Throughout Great Britain there were unknown numbers of charities established that employed

Müller's methods of relying on faith and prayer for support.[69]   These charities included: Miss

Davidson's Home for the Dying,[70] the Orphan Home at Tottenham,[71] Miss Cole's Mount

Hermon Girls' Orphan Home,[72] Miss Sharman's Orphanage,[73] and William Quarrier's Orphan

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[67] Mrs. Barnardo and James Marchant, *Memoirs of the Late Dr. Barnardo* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1907), 13; also see A. E. Williams, *Barnardo of Stepney: The Father of Nobody's Children*, 2nd ed. (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1953), 198-199; June Rose, *For the Sake of the Children: Inside Dr. Barnardo's, 120 Years of Caring for Children* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1987), 24-25, 36.

[68] J. Clifford and J. Colebrook, "The Bright Side of London: Or, Visits to the Centres of Christian Work, III. Mr. Spurgeon's Orphanage," *The General Baptist Magazine* 76, no. 52 (April 1874): 130-134.

[69] The Christian Home in Landsdowne Terrace, London, founded by Rev. Henry Lance also followed Müller's method. "Twenty-Three Orphans," *The Illustrated Missionary News* 63 (March 1, 1871): 33.

[70] "Miss Davidson," *The Woman's Signal* (February 3, 1898): 66.

[71] J. Clifford and J. Colebrook, "The Bright Side of London: Or, Visits to the Centres of Christian Work, V. The Orphan Home at Tottenham," *The General Baptist Magazine* 76, no. 54 (June 1874): 214-217.

[72] J. Clifford and J. Colebrook believed that Miss Cole's orphanage was a model of answered prayer when they argued, "the demands of Tyndal's 'prayer-gauge' have been filled in the most complete and thorough going manner. Faith and prayer have been vindicated: and the spirit of the Christian Religion honoured in the work done by this Orphan Home at Mount Hermon." J. Clifford and J. Colebrook, "The Bright Side of London: Or, Visits to the Centres of Christian Work, IV. Mount Hermon, Kilburn," *The General Baptist Magazine* 76, no. 53 (May 1874): 170-172. Also see, "Mount Hermon Girls' Orphan Home," *The Christian* (Thursday, August 10, 1871): 12.

[73] "Miss Sharman's Orphanage," *The Christian* (June 23, 1870): 11.

Homes of Scotland.[74] In addition to philanthropic institutions established in the United

Kingdom, there were also institutions established in the United States, Latin America,[75]

Europe,[76] China,[77] and India,[78] such as Miss Anstey's Orphan Home in Colar, which was

modeled on Müller's work in Bristol and supported solely by prayer and faith.[79] In 1894 the

Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle reflected on the achievements of Müller's life thus

far with the following statement,

> Mr. George Muller, of Bristol, who has just entered upon his ninetieth year, is known to
> the world as one of the most unostentatious of philanthropists. He has never sought to
> advertise himself, he has never sought fame by proclaiming in one moment that the
> proper way to do good is to do it by stealth, and by in the next moment sending
> surreptitiously a laudatory par to the newspapers—he has done his work in a simple,
> earnest, devoted way. People seldom reflect that he whom we accept as the Nestor of our
> philanthropists is a Prussian, but so it is.[80]

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[74] Alexander Gammie, *William Quarrier and the Story of The Orphan Homes of Scotland*
(London: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.), 141; also see Anna Magnusson, *The Quarriers Story: One
Man's Vision That Gave 7,000 Children a New Life in Canada* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2006),
32-33.

[75] An orphanage was established in Cuba by an American missionary Elmer Hubbard
who hoped to do for the poor orphan children in Cuba what George Müller had done in Bristol.
Frank S. Mead, *Tales from Latin America* (New York: Friendship Press, 1942), 60; "Cuban
Orphans," *The Outlook* 68, no. 8 (June 22, 1901): 423-424.

[76] "Notice of Books," *The Indian Female Evangelist* [London] 6, no. 36 (April 1, 1881):
66.

[77] One report noted that a Chinese Christian read a translation of Müller's life and
immediately "started a night-refuge for taking in little children" that used prayer to obtain the
necessary supplies. Bishop Cassels, "As Never Before," *China's Millions, American Edition*
(Philadelphia: China Inland Mission, 1905): 80.

[78] Peter Cousins has argued that Robert Stanes was influenced by the memory of Müller
in establishing charity schools in India. Peter Cousins, "Robert Stanes (1841-1932): A Merchant
'Son' of George Müller," *Brethren Archivists and Historians Network Review* 3 (2004): 52-53.

[79] "Faith Work in India," *Willing Work* 193 (August 26, 1881): 197.

[80] "People of Note," *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle*, October 6, 1894, 5.

His personal longevity and success in providing for the orphans continued to astound

observers.[81] His legend as a pious benefactor to orphans was not based on personal wealth or

political connections, but his "devoted way."[82]

Samuel Smith, a Liverpool M.P. who was noted for his evangelical activism, was also

awed by Müller's piety.[83] Smith wrote the following about Müller,

> What impressed me was his implicit belief in prayer. For some sixty years all the wants
> of these children were supplied without a single appeal for money. Though there was
> often but a single day's food on hand, invariably the supplies came in answer to prayer,
> so that not a meal was lacking!—as true a miracle as the feeding of Elijah by the ravens!
> It has always seemed to me that the life of Müller was as clear a proof of the overruling
> care of God as any demonstration of Euclid is in the region of pure mathematics. I also
> learned from Müller the immense importance of beginning the day by the devotional
> reading of the Holy Scriptures. During his life he read through the Bible 200 times, and
> found it equally fresh and new up to his death at ninety-one.[84]

Smith's comments reflect the biblical connections observers often made about Müller. However,

Smith did not end his observation with simple praise but voiced a serious criticism about the

deference paid to Müller.[85] Smith continued,

> He [Müller] died a very poor man, though more than two millions sterling passed through
> his hands, much of it given to himself. Yet I have to acknowledge that I have known

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[81] "Politics and Society," *Leeds Mercury*, Thursday, April 9, 1896, 6.

[82] A Mr. Perry, an intimate friend of Müller, remarked at his death, "The reputation of his godly, holy life was the means which gave him access to the multitudes who flocked to hear him rather than any attempt at gathering crowds by eloquence." Müller, *Autobiography*, 706.

[83] "Saving the Children," *Chambers's Journal* 11, no. 570 (October 1908): 762.

[84] Samuel Smith, *My Life-Work* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1902), 40-41.

[85] Smith, who was not fond of the Plymouth Brethren, associated Müller with their lack of "charity to their fellow-Christians" and their requirement for, as he explained, the "absolute concurrence in their systems of interpretation." Smith goes on to explain in his interpretation of the Brethren, with an ironic tone, that ". . . so it has happened that a sect started as a protest against priestly pretensions, and founded on the idea of the direct guidance of each believer by the Spirit of God, has been rent by divisions more than any other." Ibid., 42.

several sincere people who tried to imitate Müller's 'living by faith,' and who signally failed—some even lost their belief: Mere imitation does not answer in the Christian life: "Call no one your master on earth, for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren."[86]

Smith's comments illuminate another aspect of Müller's reputation for inspiring imitation. According to Smith, he knew of individuals who openly attempted to follow Müller's example and failed to see similar results. In a similar manner, John P. Jones, a missionary who had served as an appointed missionary with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in southern India, explained that there was a problem for those who attempted to put Müller's method of living by faith into practice overseas. Jones wrote,

> Few men have the staying, as well as the supporting, faith of a George Müller; yet every missionary in this class should be a hero of the faith—a man with that special gift and power from God which will maintain itself and go on working under the most adverse circumstances. And this is what the ordinary "faith missionary" does not possess in an exceptional degree.[87]

Most faith missionaries, as Jones indicated, were unable to match the achievement of their model in seeing their prayers answered. Jones' critique highlighted that instead of facing the difficulties of missionary service certain that their needs would be met, faith missionaries were encumbered by the difficulties associated with being in material want.

 Smith and Jones' comments are important because evangelicals did not record a history of failure and disgrace in their popular literature. This was primarily due to the fact that

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[86] Smith also stated, "Nor could I now accept the excessive literalism with which Müller interpreted Scripture, nor his insistence upon entire agreement with his views. Experience has taught me that 'God fulfils Himself in many ways, lest one good custom should corrupt the world.' One cannot but see that true saints are found among all varieties of Christians; that they are equally guided in answer to prayer even when differing as much as Thomas a Kempis and Luther, as Bunyan and George Fox, as Wesley and Whitefield, as Spurgeon and Keble." Ibid., 41.

[87] John P. Jones, *India's Problem: Krishna or Christ*, 4th ed. (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1903), 232-233.

evangelical history writing operated in the triumphal spirit of Protestant history writing.[88]

Evangelical memory is constructed on triumph not failure. The inability of a Christian to imitate the methods of a hero of the faith was not grounds for public debate about the legitimacy of the hero's practices. Liberal critics could question the methods that enabled Müller to raise large sums of money, Spiritualists could wonder as to the true cause of his claims for answered prayer, but a Christian who believed in the triumphal life of the hero of the faith could only surmise that failure to match the example of the heroic model was due to his or her own spiritual defect. Failure to experience similar results demanded silence to protect oneself from ridicule and shame as a faithless Christian. Smith and Jones are among the few to provide a glimpse below the surface of a triumphalistic evangelical print culture that celebrated those who also claimed to be victorious in the life of faith. The silent scores who failed in their attempt to follow Müller's example remain unknown because their stories were not worthy of inclusion in evangelical history. Müller's celebrity increased with each passing year and he remained a model for the faithful to follow even on the periphery of the British Empire.

"No Name is Better Known in the Christian World"

Australia was marked by a constant flow of emigrants from Great Britain to its vast open spaces, as well as the lure of enormous wealth. Although Australia's early colonial history is marked by its use as a penal colony, the flow of free settlers from Great Britain steadily increased over the course of the nineteenth century. The most important factor for the growth of

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[88] Evangelical historiography has been shaped by the Protestant and Whig historiography that historian Herbert Butterfield described in his classic study, *The Whig Interpretation of History*. Butterfield asserted that Protestants and Whigs wrote history "to praise revolutions provided they have been successful, to emphasise certain principles of progress in the past and to produce a story which is the ratification if not the glorification of the present." Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1965), v.

Australia was the "Gold Rush" that began in 1851. Ignited by Edward Hammond Hargraves, an English-born Australian who had failed strike it rich in the California gold rush as a "Forty-Niner," this event transformed the landscape of Australia. Boom towns arose when thousands of men and women from around the colony and the world came to strike it rich.[89] The states of New South Wales and Victoria became epicenters of a new gold rush that rivaled and, in many individual discoveries, surpassed California.[90] As a region that appeared on the periphery of the British Empire, Australians were deeply concerned with the colony's relationship with the transatlantic world. Therefore, Australia may present the best case study for understanding Müller's impact on global evangelicalism.

The route Müller took to Australia was via a steamship that departed from Liverpool on November 4, 1885, and arrived in New York City a few weeks later. After arriving in New York on November 28, 1885, Müller addressed German-speaking congregations as well as Methodist ministers before his wife and he departed New York on December 19. The Müllers arrived in San Francisco on Christmas morning 1885 and left California on December 31, travelling aboard the steamship "Australia." The transatlantic and transcontinental journey, although long and taxing for an octogenarian, did not seem to take a notable physical toll on Müller. His wife records in detail their travel aboard steamships and Pullman train sleeping cars. Nowhere in the detailed account of their travels from Liverpool to Sydney does Susannah Müller mention money. Rather, the journey is marked by types of accommodation obtained, especially in regard to the names of hotels and ships.

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[89] Robert Hughes, *That Fatal Shore: The Epic of Australia's Founding* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987), 561.

[90] Ibid., 562.

By the time Müller and his wife arrived in Sydney on January 23, 1886, the city and the

state of New South Wales had been thoroughly transformed by the wealth extracted by miners.

Müller, whose testimony was well-known, attracted attention from a wide variety of dignitaries

and popular audiences after their arrival.[91] The *Sydney Morning Herald* of Monday, February 1,

1886, reported that he preached on Sunday at the Scots' Church, Church-hill, where he gave a

sermon on 1 Peter 1:8. The newspaper reported that ". . . there was a very large congregation

including members of various denominations."[92] The article goes on to explain what may have

drawn the large crowd to the church with the following summary of the service,

> It had been expected that reference would be made to the charities of which Mr. Muller is
> the founder, but the rev. gentleman refrained from alluding to the subject, and he
> preached an earnest sermon upon the words which he had selected. He mentioned the
> fact of his having had for sixty years the experience of a Christian believer, and he
> steadfastly exherted [*sic*] one and all to follow the Saviour, in order that they might
> participate in the joy unspeakable which came from a believing and godlike life. He
> announced that on the evening of the 9th instan [*sic*] he would, in the same church, give
> the first and the only public account of the charitable institutions to which reference has
> been made.[93]

The "members of various denominations" that were drawn to hear Müller preach that Sunday

morning soon realized that the aged minister was aware that his presence in Sydney was

provoking some excitement in regard to the orphanages. However, instead of meeting the

expectations of his large audience he chose to wait and offer only one opportunity for learning

about his work among the orphans back in Bristol. His aim in visiting Australia was to do more

than recount, in person, what had consumed the bulk of his life and resulted in a massive

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[91] "George Muller's Testimony," *Illustrated Works of Grace* 4, no. 17 (June 24, 1880):
402-403.

[92] "News of the Day," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Febrary 1, 1886, 9.

[93] Ibid.

autobiography. He was there to challenge Christians to engage in a serious devotional life.

Therefore, he preached a sermon aimed at encouraging faithfulness.

Müller's visit to Australia was conducted in much the same manner as his visits to the

United States. Based on newspaper reports and the testimony of his wife's accounts everyone

from ordinary people to leading government officials welcomed the philanthropist from Bristol.

For example, Müller and his wife met the Governor, Sir Henry Brougham Loch, of the colony of

New South Wales.[94] Likewise, the Y.M.C.A. of New South Wales celebrated his arrival with

words of praise: "No name is better known in the Christian world; no man more esteemed for his

philanthropic labours in connections with the famous Bristol orphanages, than George Müller."[95]

The article continued, "Our aged brother, in his 81st year, is here to build up the churches and

encourage God's people, and no one is better fitted for the work."[96]

News of Müller's presence in Australia moved quickly from the initial host city of

Sydney to other locations. The *Intercolonial Christian Messenger* in Sydney ran a front-page

article on Müller that gave a concise account of his life work and how he used prayer alone to

support the orphans on Ashley Down and educate over 100,000 children in Sunday Schools

conducted through SKI.[97] In Melbourne, Methodist minister William H. Fitchett,[98] publisher of

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[94] "News of the Day," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, February 22, 1886, 7.

[95] "The Rev. George Muller," *Young Men's Christian Association of New South Wales Monthly Notes* 6, no. 6 (February 8, 1886): 309.

[96] Ibid.

[97] "The Story of the Orphanages," *The Intercolonial Christian Messenger* 3, no. 47 (Friday, February 19, 1886): 739.

[98] William Henry Fitchett (1841-1928) was a leading Australian evangelical who was elected leader of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference of Victoria and Tasmania and eventually came to be regarded as the "Australian Wesley." Fitchett's primary influence on evangelical

the highest quality interdenominational periodical *The Southern Cross*, took note of Müller's

unexpected appearance in Sydney and his soon arrival in the south. Fitchett noted that Müller's

"visit to Melbourne is awakening great interest . . . [and] will be welcomed by a large circle of

readers."[99] The excitement that Müller generated among evangelicals in Australia was

noteworthy. He was esteemed as "venerable" and a "noble saint" whose presence in Australia

was seen as a definitive moment in the history of the colony.[100] Australian evangelicals also

seemed to be certain that Müller did not labor in vain; the Y.M.C.A. of New South Wales

reported that his visit "has comforted God's people and strengthened their faith."[101]

"Household word the world round"

Since 1823 when Rev. John Dunmore Lang arrived in the colony a concerted effort had

been made to turn the penal colony into a bastion of democracy and evangelical Protestantism.[102]

The influence of evangelicals does appear to have been sought out by the Colonial Office. For

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Christianity in Australia came through his high quality periodical the *Southern Cross*, which was "interdenominational and international in character." He founded a women's college and established a world-wide literary reputation writing a number books, including the best-seller entitled, *Deeds that Won the Empire* (1897). Robert D. Linder, "William Henry Fitchett (1841-1928): Forgotten Methodist 'Tall Poppy,'" in *Making History for God: Essays on Evangelicalism, Revival and Mission in Honour of Stuart Piggin Master of Robert Menzies College 1990-2004*, ed. Geoffrey R. Treloar and Robert D. Linder (Sydney: Robert Menzies College, 2004), 197-238. Also see, Susan E. Emilsen, "Fitchett, William Henry," in *The Australian Dictionary of Evangelical Biography*, ed. Brian Dickey (Sydney: Evangelical History Association, 1994), 113-114.

[99] "The Week," *The Southern Cross* 5, no. 12 (Friday, March 19, 1886): 5.

[100] "The Month," *The Victorian Freeman* 10, no. 5 (April 1886): 67.

[101] "The Rev. George Muller," *Young Men's Christian Association of New South Wales Monthly Notes* 6, no. 7 (March 8, 1886): 313.

[102] Ian Breward, *A History of the Churches in Australasia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 17-18.

example Charles Joseph LaTrobe, who was appointed the first governor of Victoria, was raised in a leading Moravian family in London and worked hard to shape the colony according to his evangelical convictions.[103] By the time of Müller's arrival, evangelicalism was at the apex of its influence in Australia.[104] Australians were following the movements and ideas of transatlantic evangelicals, many of whom had traveled to Australia between 1860 and 1914. Many of the notable evangelical ministers and lay leaders made the journey to Australia including the following: Henry Varley, Thomas Spurgeon, Harry Grattan Guninness, J. Hudson Taylor, Henry Drummond, John R. Mott, Reuben A. Torrey, and George Müller.[105]

Australian historian Mark Hutchinson notes that within the Australian context in the nineteenth century, the difficulty of travel resulted in Australians equating the distance someone traveled to their significance and importance. Therefore, a British minister or evangelist who traveled first to the United States to speak and then on to Australia to continue holding meetings was viewed with high esteem because the assumption was that no unimportant person would

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[103] The LaTrobe family supported William Wilberforce in the anti-Slavery fight and he was sent in 1837 to the West Indies to report on the condition of freed slaves for the British government. LaTrobe's eventual appointment to Australia in 1839 was probably due to the fairness he would show in the treatment of Aboriginal peoples. When appointed governor of Victoria in 1851. His service in Australia coincided with the gold rushes, massive growth in agriculture, and arrival of immigrants from all over the world. In this sea of change, LaTrobe fought to focus the development of the colony on religious institutions and values over individual wealth and possessions. His evangelical convictions ran against the grain of the popular opinion that wanted to extract wealth from the colony; he retired from office in 1854. However, he was instrumental in the establishment of a number of institutions that were definitive in the history of Australia such as the Royal Melbourne Hospital, Royal Philharmonic, and the University of Melbourne. John Harris, "LaTrobe, Charles Joseph," in *The Australian Dictionary of Evangelical Biography*, ed. Brian Dickey (Sydney: Evangelical History Association, 1994), 217-218.

[104] Stuart Piggin, *Evangelical Christianity in Australia: Spirit, Word and World* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1996), 49.

[105] The roster of internationally renowned evangelicals who traveled to Australia was quite extensive in this period. For a listing with dates of visits see Piggin. Ibid., 57.

make such a trip.[106] The result for Müller was that his travels became a means of increasing his prestige and importance as a model of evangelical Christian practice, particularly outside of the transatlantic world and on the periphery of the British Empire. As he traveled, he became more widely celebrated by evangelicals who learned through submarine cables of his visits to exotic locations and publications that rapidly dispersed news of the event.

Müller's arrival in Australia was perfectly timed in response to controversies that swirled over the supernatural, the efficacy of prayer, and the rise of scientific skepticism.[107] In the 1870s and 1880s churches in Australia and New Zealand were debating the same theological issues that raged in Great Britain and North America.[108] When he arrived in the city of Melbourne his preaching engagements overflowed the churches where he spoke. *The Victorian Freeman* reported that,

> Mr. Müller's first public appearance in Melbourne on the morning of Sunday, March 7, brought together an immense congregation, and the capacity of the church was strained to the utmost to accommodate the people who assembled in such numbers to see the *man* whose name has so long been a household word the world round, and to hear from his own lips the story of a triumphant faith.[109]

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[106] Mark Hutchinson, "Telescopes and Mirrors: Why a Project on Evangelicalism & Globalization?," in *A Global Faith: Essays on Evangelicalism and Globalization*, ed. Mark Hutchinson and Ogbu Kalu (Sydney: Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity, 1998), 18.

[107] "Science and Religion," *The Argus* [Melbourne], August 25, 1883, 13.

[108] Breward, *A History*, 194. Also see, T. Suttor, "The Criticism of Religious Certitude in Australia, 1875-1900," *Journal of Religious History* 1, no. 1 (June 1960): 31-36.

[109] The article went on to state, "On each of the two occasions on which he has officiated at the Theatre, the spacious building has been crowded to repletion, and no doubt his striking personal testimony to the power of prayer has been the means not only of convincing many waverers of the reality of divine things but of leading believers to the exercise of a simpler and, therefore, stronger faith in the 'Living God.'" "Collins-Street," *The Victorian Freeman* 10, no. 5 (April 1886): 72.

The fact that Müller's name and work were widely known in Australia and that he drew large

crowds indicated the level of international cooperation among evangelicals of all denominations.

The result was that evangelicals could coordinate highly successful speaking tours that were

celebrated outside of the religious presses. Although many in the audiences did not necessarily

identify with Müller's form of piety, his celebrity drew skeptics, non-Christians, and even those

of other religious faiths to the public venues where he spoke. The attention garnered by Müller

kept Australian newspaper and periodical presses busy giving accounts of his meetings and

travels, and offering reflections on his method of living by faith.[110]

  The Southern Cross provided the most comprehensive coverage of Müller than any other

newspaper or religious periodical in Australia. William Fitchett's Methodism embraced both the

self-improvement element in Müller's story as well as Müller's testimony of answered prayer to

combat secularism. In an early article on Müller, Fitchett asked,

> Would George Müller's principle answer as a working rule for everyday life, for the
> shop, for the kitchen, for the nursery, for the palour, for the ship's forcastle? Why not? It
> is but the burdens of a thousand promises and of a thousand commands, translated into
> action. . . . How few lives there are that have learned the divine secret of *resting on the
> Lord and waiting patiently for Him!* Prayer for most of us is vague and indefinite; it is
> made up of mere generalities; it is utterly unexpectant in spirit; it seldom touches the
> sharp daily troubles of secular life. And *this*, certainly, is not what God meant prayer to
> be. Why should not the tradesman pray about his shop, the physician about his patients,
> the lawyer about his suits, the schoolmaster about his classes, the toiling wife about her
> cooking and her cleaning? And having prayed about these things, why should we not
> expect God (within the limits, of course, of His own wise knowledge of what is good for
> us) to actually and instantly answer those prayers?[111]

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[110] The most humorous of these reflections included a counter-example of Müller's faith
with that of a swindler who had arrived in Melbourne after bankruptcy, divorce, and leaving
huge debts in San Francisco. Mortimer Franklyn managed to gain the faith and trust of
Melbourne businessmen who financed his business operations to a debt of £60,000. Franklyn
was the antithesis of Müller in that he relied on the faith of other men in his business prowess
that caused them to lose their investment. "The 'Ages of Faith,'" *The Daily Telegraph*
[Melbourne], March 30, 1886, 4.

[111] "George Müller," *The Southern Cross* 5, no. 12 (March 19, 1886): 9.

Fitchett questioned why Christians did not engage in a prayer life like Müller. Their prayers lacked specificity and the urgency of need that arose from the issues of everyday life. The prayers of Christians were dull and insufficiently expressed. From Firchett's vantage point positive gains could be made by engaging in prayer that, like Müller, aimed at the challenges of everyday life. The practical application of Müller's example was endless and could reap, from Fitchett's perspective, genuine benefits for ordinary laypersons in the course of their daily work. Fitchett recognized that Müller's celebrated story could motivate ordinary Christians to develop a vibrant prayer life that would be expressed in the course of their daily lives. For this Methodist minister who had raised himself up through his own efforts from working as a sheepherder to a university educated minister, the model Müller provided for seeing God work in the day-to-day realities of life was something that could transform society.[112] Fitchett also defended Müller from attacks by newspapers who questioned whether his faithful prayers to God were the source of his apparent success.

Müller's claim that his prayers were answered by God was challenged by those who regarded his publications and the widespread knowledge of his name through the press as the source for his fundraising success.[113] Besides those who asserted that his success was due to his own celebrity and publication efforts, *The Age* in Melbourne took up another argument against Müller that drew the attention of its sixty thousand readers. *The Age* asserted in an editorial that

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[112] Linder, "William Henry Fitchett," 197-199.

[113] "Mr. George Müller," *The Daily Telegraph* [Melbourne], March 13, 1886, 5; This argument was widespread in Great Britain, the United States, and even was still being debated in New Zealand after his death. Frederick F. Twemlow, "The Ashley Down Orpahnages—Prayer or Telepathy: Which is it?" *Otago Witness* [New Zealand], March 16, 1899, 55.

Müller's success was most likely due to some other scientific explanation.[114] Taking up the

issues of the Prayer-Gauge Debate and the ideas of a Spiritualists in trying to explain the efficacy

of prayer,[115] *The Age* apparently created enough of a stir that a Spiritualist lecture on

"mediumship," one of the theories used by Spiritualists to expand Müller's success, competed

with one of Müller's Friday night meetings on the Second Coming of Christ.[116] What Müller told

audiences drew even more attention to him. He talked about his Orphan Homes, his oversight of

a large ministry enterprise, and how to live out the Christian faith in everyday life. He pleaded

with his audiences, as one witness observed, to "live lives of purity, 'being living epistles seen

and read of all men.'"[117]

Catholic in Influence

Müller intended to reach the broadest cross-section of Christian society that his story and

life experiences would allow him to access. *The Intercolonial Christian Messenger* reported that

those who assembled in the Y.M.C.A. building in Sydney represented all churches and,

according to the article, "showed how wide and catholic had been the influence of George

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[114] Some readers joined the two ideas together creating a theory that his name "being continually before the public" combined with "the aura theory" to explain what appeared to be "miraculous" as simply a natural outcome of popularity combined with the power of a spiritual medium. Viator, "Mr. Geo. Muller," *The Age* [Melbourne], March 24, 1886, 6.

[115] Alfred Russel Wallace, "A Defence of Modern Spiritualism, Part II," *The Fortnightly Review* 90 (June 1874): 800.

[116] "Spiritualism," *The Age* [Melbourne], April 8, 1886, 1; "Mr. Müller's Services," *The Age* [Melbourne], April 8, 1886, 1.

[117] M.A.M. "Correspondence," *The Victorian Freeman* 10, no. 7 (June 1886): 104.

Muller, of Bristol."[118] In his farewell appearance at Scots Church, Church-hill, Sydney, on

Tuesday, March 2, Müller addressed a crowd of around 600 people with words aimed at

explaining one of his larger goals. *The Sydney Morning Herald* summarized Müller's comments

as follows:

> Amongst the objects, the accomplishments of which he [Müller] stated he hoped to aid in
> bringing about, was that of Christian unity. He earnestly desired to help to unite the
> children of God. He had during his preaching tour had the privilege of preaching for
> Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Wesleyans, Lutherans, and
> other sections of the Christian Church. He had always striven to destroy the seeds of
> sectarianism, and to remove as far as he was able the cause of heartburnings [*sic*], petty
> jealousies, and envy. He also spoke of the necessity for the Church at large experiencing
> an increase of faith, and he concluded by stating that he and his wife would leave for
> Bathurst this morning, and in about seven or eight days they would pass through Sydney
> *en route* for Melbourne.[119]

On Saturday, May 8, 1886, *The Ballarat Courier* recorded the ecumenical nature of Müller's

preaching tour when the newspaper listed the various churches at which he would preach during

his time in the bustling gold-mining town. The newspaper included the following list of

speaking venues for Müller: "Next Sunday morning in Lydiard street Wesleyan Church; in the

evening in St. John's Presbyterian Church; on Tuesday evening, in the Baptist Church Dawson

street; Thursday, in United Methodist Free Church, Peel street; and Friday, in the Congregational

Church, Dawson street."[120] Müller, the "venerable evangelist" as the *Ballarat Courier* titled

him, spoke to around sixty "ministers of the Gospel and local preachers" in the Christ Church

schoolroom and, according to the newspaper, "counselled his brethren to live a life of daily

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[118] "Muller, of Bristol," *The Intercolonial Christian Messenger* 3, no. 46 (February 12, 1886): 728.

[119] "News of the Day," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, March 3, 1886, 9.

[120] "Mr George Muller," *The Ballarat Courier*, May 8, 1886, 4.

prayer and daily reading of the Word of God."[121] Müller, however, also sought to convey to the

crowd of ministers who thronged to hear him that the philanthropic and ministerial work he

oversaw in Bristol remained a vital and enormous project that was only matched by the elderly

evangelical statesman's global travels to encourage fellow ministers. The *Ballarat Courier*

reported Müller's impressive achievements as an evangelical preacher, pastor, philanthropist,

and leader,

> Mr Muller gave some interesting particulars of his own work, in which he stated that he
> was a pastor of a church with 1200 members, and such was his correspondence that about
> 30,000 letters were received per annum, and to him in answering them he had nine
> assistants, who corresponded principally in English, German, and French, and to a less
> extent in Danish, Swedish, Dutch, and Norwegian. He was the director of 100 schools,
> and the founder and principal of the Bristol Orphanage. He had visited twenty-five
> different countries during the last eleven years, and his great desire was to counsel his
> brethren in the ministry in these places to go forth and preach, having obtained the
> message from God Himself—to expound the word—preach Christ and Him crucified.[122]

From the perspective of the reporter, Müller emphasized his role as the pastor of an enormous

church, massive correspondence and educational enterprises, as well as the orphanage that was

so well known.   The message that Müller conveyed extended beyond simply recounting the

work he managed back in England, but indicated the aged minister was still a vital leader whose

ministry efforts gave him uncommon authority to speak on matters of faith. Most importantly,

his desire to promote his message among all Christians and, if possible, encourage those who did

not know Christ to find him, was not the most enduring message he left Australia.

The life of faith, in fact, was the message Müller wanted to impress on the minds and

thoughts of his listeners. James Blaikie reported for *The Victoria Freeman* that Müller desired to

see all Christians adopt his method of living by faith in all aspects of their everyday lives.

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[121] Ibid.

[122] Ibid.

Müller based his claim on a section of Matthew chapter 6 that he read to the audience. According to Blaikie, he proclaimed, "If you would glorify God, said Mr. Müller in closing, in this unbelieving nineteenth century, sound it out abroad that God's word is true, and God keeps His word. Put your full trust in Him, and prove His power and faithfulness by a life of faith and believing prayer."[123] Apparently audiences were paying attention to Müller's assertion that they should take up the life of faith. By 1899, the *Melbourne Punch* was complaining that multitudes of missionaries were being sent out from Melbourne without asking for funding but instead relying on prayer "*a la* George Muller, till it [the money] comes, and it comes in a deluge!"[124] The *Melbourne Punch* went on to ask, "Why cannot the Muller system be adopted for Melbourne churches, instead of the sickening bazaars, cake and apron fairs, and what not?"[125]

Australia's importance in the history of evangelicalism has not been fully appreciated primarily because it was seen as being on the periphery of the British Empire. However, Müller's successful preaching tour in Australia reflected how he was able to transcend any limits that may have been associated with his affiliation with the Christian Brethren and serve as an ecumenical witness of the faith to fellow Christians living in a context completely unlike his own.[126] He would remain an important figure to Australian evangelicals who would keep in

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[123] Müller grounded his admonition to live the life of faith not on "feeling," "impressions," and "probabilities," but rather on the whole of the Bible. Müller argued that faith increased through "exercise," Bible study, and "Reading the records of our experience." James Blaikie, "Notes of the Rev. George Muller's Address," *The Victorian Freeman* 10, no. 6 (May 1886): 89.

[124] "Church and Organ," *Melbourne Punch* (September 7, 1899): 230.

[125] Ibid.

[126] In 1893, this element of his world preaching tours was still being emphasized in Australia. "Notes on English News—Mr. George Muller," *The Australian Christian World* 7, no. 357 (January 26, 1893): 4.

close contact with Müller and his wife and would welcome them back for a second preaching tour of the colony.

Evangelisation Society of Victoria

Similar to his visits elsewhere in the world, his decision to travel to Australia was preceded by invitations. In North America invitations came from Canadian and American pastors, and the Y. M. C. A. was involved in coordinating meetings in several cities, most notably Boston and San Francisco.[127] In the State of Victoria, the interdenominational and layman-led organization, the Evangelisation Society of Victoria, which had close ties with the Y.M.C.A., invited Müller to the colony to preach. The Evangelisation Society of Victoria had a definitive understanding of Müller's status and gave him a rousing reception at one of their meetings. The task of bearing the financial burden of Müller's visit was significant. Unlike his visits to North America where the costs associated with supporting his speaking tours were never publically mentioned in religious periodicals or newspapers, Australians openly solicited support to pay for Müller's travel, housing, and advertisements for his meetings.[128] Müller's travels through Australia were for him, conducted by prayer and faith that God would meet his needs. For the Evangelisation Society of Victoria, the lay-led religious body that took responsibility for

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[127] Another area that warrants further research is the relationship between the Y.M.C.A. and revivalism around the world, especially in the support and promotion of evangelists from the transatlantic milieu.

[128] "Mr. Muller's Services," *The Age* [Melbourne], April 2, 1886, 1; "Tabernacle, Sackville-Street," *The Age* [Melbourne], March 19, 1886, 1; "Evangelisation Society of Victoria," *The Age* [Melbourne], March 15, 1886, 1; "Mr. Geo. Muller, of Bristol," *The Age* [Melbourne], March 18, 1886, 1; "Mr. Muller's Services," *The Age* [Melbourne], March 25, 1886, 1; "Rev. George Muller's Meetings in Melbourne," *The Age* [Melbourne], March 17, 1886, 1; "Mr. George Muller, of Bristol," *The Argus* [Melbourne] March 18, 1886, 1; "Mr. Muller's Services," *The Argus* [Melbourne], March 25, 1886, 1.

coordinating Müller's speaking engagements and travel expenses, special offerings were taken to

fund his visit.[129]

The task of funding Müller's travels in the colony pressed the society's budget to the

breaking point.[130] W. A. Southwell, secretary of the Y.M.C.A., played a leading role in

coordinating speaking events through the Evangelisation Society of Victoria and he openly

solicited donations through newspaper advertisements to cover the expenses of Müller and his

wife.[131] Questions immediately arose about the raising of funds for Müller who supposedly lived

by faith, and Southwell ran advertisements in *The Southern Cross* and *The Argus* to ensure the

public that the society was soliciting funds to fulfill obligations that it had made when it invited

Müller to visit the colony.[132] Although the Evangelisation Society of Victoria was openly

soliciting support, it does not appear that the needed funds were coming in as expected. Edward

Baines, the treasurer of the Society, and W. A. Southwell, the secretary, wrote a joint letter to the

editor of *The Australian Christian World* dated May 10, 1886, openly stating that the Society had

taken on heavy debt to meet its responsibilities. The letter does not specifically name Müller as

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[129] There were advertized meetings where Müller spoke and notice was given that a special collection was to be taken to support the Society. "Evangelisation Society of Victoria," *The Age* [Melbourne] March 16, 1886, 1; "Evangelisation Society of Victoria," *The Argus* [Melbourne], March 16, 1886, 1.

[130] "Mr. Geo. Muller's Services," *The Argus* [Melbourne], March 20, 1886, 1; "Mr. George Muller's Services," *The Age* [Melbourne] March 23, 1886, 1; "Mr. Geo. Muller's Services," *The Argus* [Melbourne], March 23, 1886, 1. By March 30, 1886, a collection was received to "defray local expenses" before attendees could hear Müller speak about the Orphan Homes in the Melbourne Town Hall. "Mr. Muller's Services this Evening," *The Age* [Melbourne], March 30, 1886, 1. Also see, "Evangelisation Society of Victoria," *The Victorian Freeman* 10, no. 7 (June 1886): 104.

[131] "Donations," *The Daily Telegraph* [Melbourne], March 20, 1886, 1.

[132] W. A. Southwell, "Mr Geo. Muller," *The Argus* [Melbourne], March 25, 1886, 7; W. A. Southwell, "Mr. George Muller," *The Age* [Melbourne], March 26, 1886, 6; W. A. Southwell, "Mr. Muller's Services," *The Southern Cross* 5, no. 14 (Friday, April 2, 1886): 12.

the cause of the debt, but states that the Society was funding and supporting events from which

all the churches in the Melbourne region were benefiting as "membership of many churches has

been increased through the labours of the Evangelists."[133] The need was urgent and the threat of

using a collector was made to encourage giving for the preaching of the Gospel. The funding of

Müller's preaching tour in Australia did little to undermine his successful tour of the major cities

that contributed to his lasting importance to evangelicals.

Legitimization and Celebration

Australians were impressed by Müller's presence in their colony. They embraced him as

an esteemed model of Christian piety and he had an impact on the Australian evangelical

community's sense of what was possible in the Christian life. They embraced him and

celebrated him as having, as *The Victorian Freeman* noted, "such a living witness for Jesus in

our midst."[134] Müller developed close relationships with evangelicals in Australia and wrote to

inform them of how his preaching tours were proceeding after leaving Australia. Müller's world

preaching tours illuminated the highly personal, but entrepreneurial aspect of nineteenth-century

evangelical activism. Evangelicals were interested in living the Christian life as closely to the

biblical text as possible. They embraced Müller's literal interpretation of pietistic practices, but

they also promoted those practices in articles, advertisements, editorials, and news updates.

Evangelicals, like those in Australia, kept Müller in the eye of the reading public and tracked his

movements around the globe. In Müller's case, the references to him in newspapers, religious

periodicals, and secular magazines were not instigated or funded by him. Rather, individuals,

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[133] "Evangelisation Society of Victoria," *The Australian Christian World* 8 (May 21, 1886): 123.

[134] "Denominational Intelligence, West Melbourne," *The Victorian Freeman* 10, no. 6 (May 1886): 88.

organizations, editors and reporters tasked with following the significant events and personalities of the day wrote about him to meet a perceived need in the public arena.

Evidence suggests that once individuals heard Müller's story, they wanted more detailed information due to his unusual claims. For example, *The Inter Ocean Curiosity Shop for the Year 1884* fielded a simple question that asked, "We would like to know about the Orphan Asylum that the Rev. Mr. Muller has near Bristol, England." *The Inter Ocean*, a Chicago-based periodical, responded with a concise life of Müller and his prayer plan for raising support of the orphanage. The article affirmed, "The word of George Muller has been denominated one of the miracles of faith, and truly it has few parallels."[135] *The Inter Ocean* celebrated Müller's work and affirmed that he was unique among Christian workers. The article also linked Müller to The Foundlings' Home in Chicago, which followed his method of seeking support in answer to prayer.[136]

In addition to questions about Müller in periodicals, the fact that he drew large crowds when he preached indicates that he was a celebrated religious figure.[137] Periodicals used

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[135] *The Inter Ocean* was published in various forms as a daily, weekly, and semi-weekly periodical. They also produced annual volumes based on section of the periodical entitled "Our Curiosity Shop." The annual volumes of articles served to function like an encyclopedia of popular knowledge for readers. "Muller's Orphan House," in *The Inter Ocean Curiosity Shop for the Year 1884*, ed. by Thomas C. MacMillan, 6th ed. (Chicago: The Inter Ocean Publishing Company, 1889), 122.

[136] Ibid.

[137] In 1877, *The Bristol Mercury* reported of Müller's most recent tour of the continent that, ". . . when he began preaching in Switzerland it was without having previously received an invitation, but afterwards requests came in so fast and so many that he never went to any one place without having first had a written invitation to come there. He was particularly glad of this because he did not wish to intrude himself on churches, nor to give occasion for anyone to say 'We do not want you here; why do you come here.' He had been on the Continent for ten months; and during that time he had visited 58 places—generally large towns and cities—and preached 302 times, nevertheless, when he left the Continent there were 63 invitations which he

Müller's story in a multitude of ways that reveal his popularity among evangelicals as well as the general reading public who were challenged or perplexed by his story. Müller, therefore, could be used as a source of inspiration for living the Christian life, especially in reference to the effectiveness of prayer, and as a rebuttal to the skepticism of the secular world.

In addition to being found newsworthy, Müller benefited from the technological advances that enabled rapid global travel and communication. Evangelicalism in the nineteenth century was built on a close relationship between transatlantic evangelicals that brought American preachers and evangelists to Great Britain and British evangelicals to America. However, those on periphery of the British Empire were also deeply interested in those individuals who were central to the transatlantic exchange and, consequently, gave evangelicalism a global character. The dividends of this global evangelical network benefited individuals like Moody, Spurgeon, and others who were able to draw the attention of English-speaking peoples around the world, inspire confidence through their authoritative sermons, and challenge those who were skeptical of the claims of Christ. What enabled these men, like Müller, to rise to points of prominence was their ability to benefit from the changes that marked their century from the eighteenth century. A relationship developed between those in the core and the periphery of the English-speaking world that desired to promote revival and Christian vitality across international boundaries. The resulting acclaim propelled Müller to the forefront of global evangelicalism where he was informally canonized as a world evangelical hero.

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had not been able to accept, just as when he left the United Kingdom he had 104 invitations which he was not able to respond to. . . . Through his work in Bristol and through his writings, his name was just as well known in Berne as it was in Great Britain." "The Rev. G. Muller's Recent Evangelical Tour on the Continent," *The Bristol* Mercury, Saturday, July 7, 1877, extra sheet.

Preaching to the People of the World

The first of Müller's worldwide preaching tours included a stop at one of the most dynamic events for nineteenth-century British evangelicals, the Mildmay Conference. The Mildmay Conference was established by an evangelical in the Church of England, Rev. William Pennefather, as Alison Mary Bucknall has argued, to put "the old fire back into Evangelicalism."[138] The first meetings actually began in 1856 in Barnet, England, and moved to St. Jude's, Mildmay Park, in 1864.[139] The conferences were gatherings aimed at promoting Christian unity, individual spiritual renewal, and practical evangelism.[140] Müller spoke at a Mildmay Conference in 1875 and returned on a number of occasions to preach and meet old friends.[141] His sermons, like those of other participants, were republished in periodicals in Great Britain and overseas.[142] Participation in the Mildmay Conference placed Müller in the most dynamic stream of nineteenth-century evangelicalism. What is important to note about Mildmay was that evangelicals saw the conference as a platform from which to contemplate piety. Therefore, when Müller proclaimed to a Mildmay audience that he had read "the Bible through

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[138] Alison Mary Bucknall, "'Be Ye Holy' (1 Peter 1:16): The Mildmay Conference and the Keswick Conference 1856-1900" (M.Phil. thesis, University of Birmingham, 1997), 13-14.

[139] Kenneth Hylson-Smith, *Evangelicals in the Church of England, 1734-1984* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 150-152.

[140] Bucknall, "'Be Ye Holy'," 25-27, 176.

[141] Müller, *Autobiography*, 526.

[142] His sermon preached at Mildmay on June 29, 1879, was published in its entirety for American audiences. George Müller, "The Speedy Return of Christ," *The Christian Herald and Signs of our Times* (August 7, 1879): 661-663. George Müller, "The Fulness of Blessing: In Whom It is Provided," in *The Mildmay Conference, 1882* (London: John F. Shaw and Co., 1882), 36-40.

one hundred times, and each time with increasing delight," evangelicals in Australia took note of this important feat of personal piety.[143]

The ecumenical spirit of Müller's worldwide missionary journeys was important, but he also hoped to influence those who aligned themselves with the Christian Brethren. As early as 1871 Müller began funding the work of evangelists in Australia,[144] and he met specifically with members of the Brethren while on his speaking tours.[145] The Brethren in Australia followed his travels and delighted in his success among the broader Christian public.[146] When he visited Auckland, New Zealand, in 1888 he met specifically with the Brethren there to encourage them in their work. He made efforts to clear up theological debates among them and put teachings on the "Higher Christian Life" on a biblical foundation. Müller's support of the "Higher Christian Life" movement, the basis of the Holiness Movement that formed the basis of the Pentecostal Movement of the twentieth century, was clear and vocal in support of its biblical basis. However, the counsel he gave to a gathering of Christian Brethren "may not have quite squared with the ideas of some brethren present."[147] Other Brethren who heard him speak were

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[143] "Reading the Bible," *The Australian Christian World* 7, no 367 (April 13, 1893): 4.

[144] Kenneth John Newton, "A History of the Brethren in Australia with Particular Reference to the Open Brethren" (Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1990), 22.

[145] Abraham Honore, "New Zealand," *Echoes of Service* 203 (November 1888): 342-344.

[146]"Mr. George Müller, of Bristol, reached San Francisco in June, having travelled 20,000 miles during his evangelistic tour," reported the *Willing Work*, an Australian Brethren periodical. The update goes on to report, "He has been preaching to very large congregations with the most abundant blessing upon his labours, and was expected to reach Bristol about the middle of last month. Mr. Müller's age is 73." "The Lord's Work in Other Lands," *Willing Work* 45 (Friday, August 23, 1878): supplement, 1; "A Tour in France and Italy," *Willing Work* 116 (Friday, January 2, 1880): 268; "Expected Visit of Mr. George Muller to the Australian Colonies," *Willing Work* 87 (Friday, June 13, 1879): 37.

[147] "New Zealand," *Echoes of Service* 202 (October 1888): 319.

impressed by message and by "a deep and solemn impression" that came over the audiences.[148]

Similar to his speaking tours in Australia and the United States, India again provided an

opportunity to connect with like-minded Christians.

The Pietist relationship with India reached back in history to the establishment of the

Danish-Halle Mission in eighteenth century. Müller's initial interest in missionary work in India

developed in the context of Halle Pietism. However, Müller's first visit to the subcontinent was

not until 1884 and was followed in the religious periodicals in England.[149] A later visit provided

the "venerable Mr. George Müller, of Bristol," an opportunity to work alongside the Church

Mission Society (C.M.S.) of the Church of England.[150] At Agra, Müller spoke to Indian

Christian workers. Rev. G. E. A. Pargiter recorded, "The evening was a pleasant one, and all

were glad to find so much unity of the Spirit in the midst of ecclesiastical diversity."[151] The *Pall

Mall Gazette* also reported Müller's ecumenical adventure on the subcontinent in an article

entitled, "The Bishop and the Plymouth Brother." The short article pointed out that, "The spirit

of fraternity, which seems so difficult to compass at home, is often strikingly illustrated in the

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[148] Honore, "New Zealand," 343-344.

[149] "Notes of the Week," *The Christian Life* 10, no. 405 (February 16, 1884): 74; "Notes of the Week," *The Christian Life* 10, no. 427 (July 19, 1884): 341.

[150] The CMS aligned itself with the evangelicals and sought to extend the work of the Church of England outside Great Britain, especially in India. By the end of the nineteenth century China and Japan were also attracting CMS missionaries. Kevin Ward, "'Taking Stock': The Missionary Society and Its Historians," in *The Church Mission Society and World Christianity, 1799-1999*, ed. Kevin Ward and Brian Stanley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 21-23.

[151] Quoted in, "The Mission Field," *The Church Missionary Gleaner* 17, no. 196 (April 1890): 61.

mission-field."[152] The article reported that Müller and the Church of England Bishop of Calcutta

worked together in Agra to preach the gospel to English-speaking Indians. The article

concluded, "It is not often that the Anglican and the Plymouth Brother are found working hand-

in-hand."[153] Although the article also points out a number of issues that still surrounded

Nonconformists and the Church of England, it highlights with a bit of humor Müller's

ecumenical spirit in dealing with other Christians.[154] Although his visit would attract the

attention of periodicals like the *Pall Mall Gazette*, sadness marked this visit to India when he

learned that his daughter, Lydia, had died on January 10, 1890.[155]

Similar to Müller's influence in India, his mark on Japanese Christianity was the result of

his preaching tour that took him to the island nation in December 1886. Müller's visit and the

accompanying publicity sparked an interest in his method of living by faith. According to a

missionary based in Kyoto, Japan, Müller's presentation of his life story to students in schools

and colleges made an impact on the Japanese students in attendance.[156] The impact, however,

was not limited to those who heard Müller in person at Kyoto. Müller's story was instrumental

in Jūji Ishii who founded the Okayama Orphan Asylum,[157] which became one of the most noted

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[152] "The Bishop and the Plymouth Brother," *Pall Mall Gazette* (March 29, 1890): 5.

[153] Ibid.

[154] While in India Müller was received by various mission stations without any acknowledged preference by denominations. In typical evangelical fashion, distinctions among denominations were viewed as secondary issues. "Notes of the Week," *The Christian Life* 10, no. 405 (February 16, 1884): 74.

[155] "Fallen Asleep," *Echoes of Service* 218 (February 1890): 64.

[156] "Japan Mission," *The Missionary Herald* 83, no. 4 (April 1887): 139.

work social work institutions in Japan in the last part of the nineteenth century.[158] Ishii learned

of about Müller's orphanage and "life of faith" from a letter written by an eyewitness who saw

Müller in Kyōto.[159] The *Andover Review* reported in 1891 that,

> The asylum seems to have had some such experiences of the providing care of God as
> those of George Müller. Mr. Pettee remarks that the Housefather, Mr. S., 'is one of those
> rare characters whom such an experience just fits. He is an admiring disciple of George
> Müller and believes implicitly in the prayer of faith.'[160]

Ishii became, thanks to the writings of James Pettee, widely known in the United States and

Great Britain as the "George Müller of the Orient."[161] Ishii followed Müller's method and

became a means to strengthening the faith of Christians who followed the work of the institution

he founded.[162]

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[157] "A Japanese George Müller," *The Chronicle of the London Missionary Society* 14
(February 1, 1893): 34-35.

[158] Jūji Ishii was a medical student in Okayama when he learned from a fellow student of
Müller's method of living by faith to take care of orphans. A year after his introduction to
Müller's story, Ishii began his own orphanage by faith in 1887. Richard H. Drummond, *A
History of Christianity in Japan* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971), 222. Edward Caldwell
Moore, *The Spread of Christianity in the Modern World* (Chicago: The University of Chicago
Press, 1919), 163. Winburn T. Thomas, *Protestant Beginnings in Japan: The First Three
Decades, 1859-1889* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1959), 132.

[159] J. H. Pettee, "Ishii and His Orphanage," *The Missionary Herald* 88, no. 8 (August
1892): 345. J. H. Pettee, "Japanese Religious Workers: Mr. Ishii and His Orphanage," *The
Missionary Guardian* 4, no. 8 (August 1894): 174.

[160] Charles C. Starbuck, "Theological and Religious Intelligence," *The Andover Review:
A Religious and Theological Monthly* 15, no. 89 (May 1891): 550.

[161] "The George Muller of the Orient," *The Church at Home and Abroad* (October 1891):
329; James Pettee, "J. Ishii and His Institution," *The Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal*
24, no. 2 (February 1893): 61-70; James H. Pettee, *J. Ishii and His Institution. Japan's Chief
Apostle of Faith: The George Muller of the Orient and His Unique Orphanage* (Yokohama,
Japan: Yokohama Mission Press, 1892), 13-14.

[162] *The Illustrated Missionary News* published an article that noted that Ishii's orphanage
"has passed through many trials, but they have only served to strengthen one's faith in the

Ishii's choice to rely on trusting prayer and faith in God was exactly the same type that Müller sought to inspire in his preaching tours.   While visiting Shanghai, China, in 1886 Müller stated,

> I do wish in my inmost soul that the Church of God at large knew more the power of prayer and faith in these our unbelieving and skeptical days; and among various other reasons why I am traveling from country to country throughout Christendom, I have also this particular in view, that by seeking to bring back professing Christians to the Bible, I may likewise thus strengthen their faith.[163]

His intention was to produce in person what his *Narrative* had accomplished through print. Müller sought to "strengthen the faith" of ordinary Christians so that they would use prayer in their everyday lives. Griffith John, a missionary with the London Missionary Society, who served as a translator for Müller when he visited Hankow, China, wrote in a letter to a friend in 1886, "We cannot soon forget the visit. In George Müller our ideal of what a Christian man should be seems to have found a striking realisation."[164] The preaching tours were also of great interest to evangelicals in Great Britain and America who wanted to learn more about the impact of the tours, where he visited, whom he met with, and where he was going next.[165]   Müller's

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spiritual verities of life." "Hearts Alike," *The Illustrated Missionary News* 341 (May 1, 1895): 80.

[163] "Mr. George Müller in China," *The Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal* 17, no. 11 (November 1886): 442.

[164] Quoted in R. Wardlaw Thompson, *Griffith John: The Story of Fifty Years in China* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1906), 456.

[165] "Mr. George Muller," *Evangelical Christendom* 33 (April 1, 1879): 121; "Mr. George Muller," *The Family Churchman* 7 (June 27, 1883): 222.

travels were seen as part of a new era in world missions,[166] and he was celebrated as a missionary statesman.[167]

A New Age of Networks

Müller's celebrated status among evangelicals on a global level relied on a network of individuals bound together across broad geographic regions by the use of English.[168] Audiences in Europe, India, the Middle East, Africa, and East Asia were able to learn about him from missionaries, merchants, and colonial agents who made his story available.[169] For example, in Singapore, which Müller visited in 1885, there was a wide range of churches represented from the Presbyterians and Methodists to the "'Bethesda' Brethren."[170] Having a cohort of Brethren openly associated with the Bethesda congregation in Singapore certainly enabled him to draw

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[166] "Editorial," *Medical Missions at Home and Abroad* [London] (November 1, 1887): 20.

[167] D. L. Leonard, *Missionary Annals of the Nineteenth Century* (Cleveland, OH: F. M. Barton, 1899), 219. Also see, "China—George Muller," *The Homiletic Review* 13, no. 3 (March 1887): 261.

[168] The exception, of course, was in Europe where Müller himself conducted correspondence in English, German, and French. Lord Radstock, Granville Augustus William Waldegrave (1833-1913), made Müller's name known in Russia and the Scandinavian countries. George Müller, *Jehovah Magnified* (London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1876), 234; Edmund Heier, *Religious Schism in the Russian Aristocracy 1860-1900, Radstockism and Paskhovism* (Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), 44; also see, Howard B. Grose, "Wilhelm Fetler, Russian Evangelist," *Missions* 2, no. 10 (October 1911): 664-668.

[169] Missionaries, who were supported by Müller, often spread his name and reputation among the local population. George B. Taylor, *Italy and the Italians* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1908), 389.

[170] J. A. Bethune Cook, *Sunny Singapore: An Account of the Place and Its People, with a Sketch of the Results of Missionary Work*, 2nd ed. (London: Elliot Stock,1907), 165.

audiences when he spoke. Brethren in New Zealand, Australia, and other parts of the British

Empire also took note of his arrival and speaking engagements.

The ability of individuals to travel long distances in relative safety and comfort, allowed

for peoples on the periphery to visit the centers of influence, such as Great Britain, and learn

about key persons or events that were shaping thought in these regions. The ease of travel also

allowed individuals to travel from the centers of Western societies to the boundaries of empires

and bring directly to these constituencies firsthand accounts that would both challenge and

encourage them to modify their own lives. The possibility existed for people to be shaped by the

arrival of a significant personality from the perceived center of power, who influenced the lives

of those who were not normally attuned to thoughts of Western colonists or missionaries. In this

moment of cross-cultural interaction indigenous peoples found themselves compelled to hear a

speaker from Great Britain or the United States of whom they had little to no knowledge, only to

discover, through an interpreter, that the story presented moved them to turn from their current

course and imagine a new life. The final aspect of this global travel network involved being

received by local Western elites with some sort of recognition. Celebration was based on the

ability both to travel and to attract the attention of imperial elites on the boundary of the

empire.[171] Individuals who were received with fanfare in regions as diverse as China and

Australia were those who had the wealth to travel and were afforded by their status a level of

importance that enabled them to garner the attention of those who mattered, whether that was a

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[171] Willis N. Whitney, a missionary with the World Friends Missionary Association in Tokyo, noted in a letter the effort he was making to go to Yokohama to "see George Muller." Drawing together theologically diverse groups of Western missionaries in a non-Western culture served to reinforce Müller's elite status. "Correspondence," *The Friends' Review* 40, no. 20 (December 16, 1886): 347-348.

local missionary or the governor of a province. Müller, as a world traveler, benefited directly from the age of the steamship.

To fully grasp the ability of Müller's story to move across the world in any coherent manner in the last half of the nineteenth century the role of communication technologies also must be acknowledged. Technology, in fact, enabled news of his travels, life milestones, and

ideas to circulate around the world from Maine to Melbourne in a matter of a few days.[172] This

revolution in the movement of information relied on the advent and proliferation of the telegraph

lines that spanned continents and submarine cable lines that crossed oceans and moved his story

from newspaper to newspaper and periodical to periodical around the world.[173] This network

connected the world, which evangelicals recognized immediately,[174] with a speed and reach

unimagined at the beginning of the century.[175] The technology was perfected by the British after

several costly experiments with submarine cables that failed to link India with Britain and the

United States with Britain. By 1865, the telegraph cable linked Great Britain with India, an

entire year before Great Britain and America were connected by cable.[176] The full weight of this

technological explosion was not felt until the 1870s when scores of submarine cables and

telegraph lines connected Western Europe with Australia, China, New Zealand, and even South

America. The United States, the British Empire, and countries around the world were part of the

first technology-based network in world history.[177] This literal connection later enabled James

Wright, Müller's son-in-law and successor, to write on March 11, 1898, from Bristol, England,

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[172] "China—George Müller," 261. Also see "Notes of the Week," *The Christian Life* 10, no. 405 (February 16, 1884): 74; "Mr. Müller's Orphan Houses," *The Christian* (August 12, 1875): 13.

[173] "A Missionary of Eighty-Two," *New York Times*, July 3, 1887, 6; George Müller, "The Christian Duty of Giving," *The Missionary Intelligencer* 24, no. 11 (November 1911): 549.

[174] T. De Witt Talmage, "A Sermon to Telegraph Operators," in *The Brooklyn Tabernacle: A Collection of 104 Sermons* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1884), 358-361.

[175] John Tully, "A Victorian Ecological Disaster: Imperialism, the Telegraph, and Gutta-Percha," *Journal of World History* 20, no. 4 (December 2009): 561.

[176] Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 159.

[177] Ibid., 160-161.

"The electric cable has, no doubt, before this, made you, and many more in America, *fellow-mourners* with us here; as you will have learned that my beloved father-in-law fell asleep in Jesus yesterday morning, March 10."[178] Just as news of Müller's travels around the world had moved by cable, so did the experience of learning about his death.

Reading in Other Lands

In addition to electrical impulses sending information along wires, iron and steel hulled ships powered by steam engines traversed the oceans of the world and spread news from the center of the English-speaking world to the edges of the British Empire and to the world through publications. Written accounts, in the form of books, periodicals, newspapers, and tracts connected evangelicals to one another and diffused evangelical thought among non-Western cultures and peoples.[179] This publications bazaar was, in reality, an international devotional exchange that allowed evangelicals to recognize leaders from Great Britain, the United States, Australia, South Africa, to India, China, and Japan. American evangelicals also contributed to the promotion of Müller's story through their involvement in world missions as they moved to the peripheries of European colonial empires in Asia, Africa, and Latin America and established mission stations. The result was that Müller's *Narrative* was available in all corners of the world and evangelicals also translated his story into indigenous languages for those who could not read

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[178] Quoted in "Death of Rev. George Müller, of Bristol," *The Missionary Review of the World* 21, no. 4 (May 1898): 378.

[179] David Bebbington, "Of this Train, England is the Engine: British Evangelicalism and Globalization in the Long Nineteenth Century," in *A Global Faith: Essays on Evangelicalism and Globalization*, ed. Mark Hutchinson and Ogbu Kalu (Sydney: Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity, 1998), 131.

English.[180] Evangelicals were determined that their hero of the faith continue to inspire devotion and serve as an apologetic for the Christian faith.[181] They reported when his *Narrative*, in a translated form, often a tract, was effective in challenging indigenous beliefs about the power of Christian prayers.[182] Through this exchange Müller's story became a model of Christian practice for people as different culturally and geographically as an American minister on the Great Plains to a woman devoting her life to the needs of widows in rural India.

One of the best examples of Müller's influence on a non-Western Christians occurred in the life of Pandita Ramabai, India's most celebrated Indian woman in the modern age. Ramabai, a Brahman and founder of the Mukti Mission that assisted poor widows and orphans, began her work in the city of Mumbai (Bombay) in 1889. As the size of her institution increased she made a decision to follow the example of Müller in funding and supporting Mukti Mission.[183] Subsequently, all fund raising for the institution was based on asking God to meet their needs just as Müller had asked.[184] Ramabai garnered an international reputation as "a woman of faith"

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[180] Cassels, "As Never Before," 80-82. Müller's *Narrative* was also sold in India. "Books Just Received," *The Friend of India* [Calcutta] 1955 (August 29, 1872): 1011.

[181] Arthur T. Pierson noted in 1901 that 8,000 copies of his authorized autobiography of Müller was circulated freely to missionaries around the world. Pierson also saw the book translated into French, Danish, Swedish, and German. "The Life of George Müller," *The Missionary Review of the World* 24, no. 11 (November 1901): 862.

[182] The *Bengali Christian* printed the *Narrative* in serial form and reported to supporters that Müller's story of answered prayer was being read by "Hindus 'with intense interest.'" "Missionary News," *The Irish Church Advocate* 38, no. 460 (November 1, 1875): 379.

[183] After reading about George Müller and J. Hudson Taylor's success with the faith principle she supposedly said, "If others can trust God, why should not I?" G. Sherwood Eddy, *The Students of Asia* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1916), 235.

[184] The story of Pandita Ramabai circulated broadly throughout the world and was known to audiences in America, Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand. For an example of a

inspired by Müller's story[185] and later drew other women inspired by the call to faith missions to her from as far away as the United States.[186] Ramabai is probably the most well-known Indian who followed Müller's example.

Due to the translation work of Western missionaries,[187] Müller's story was also made available in Chinese. By the dawn of the twentieth century there were Chinese Christians who had taken up Müller's method of living by faith to reach orphans.[188] In Japan, a biography of Müller was translated into Japanese by an indigenous Christian leader. The book was instrumental in Gumpei Yamamuro accepting Jesus as savior. The impact of this Japanese translation was significant in that Yamamuro eventually became the leader of the Japanese Salvation Army.[189] In addition to Müller's writings being translated for the benefit of non-Western peoples, there were also those such as P. E. Chakko, an Indian Christian who was trained under the Anglican Church Mission Society, who was deeply influenced Pierson's biography of Müller.[190]

New Zealand report of Ramabai's work, see "Pandita Ramabai's Mukti Mission: For Child Widows of India," *Grey River Argus*, April 30, 1910, 7.

[185] William C. Irvine, "An Appreciation," in J. Chappell and H. S. Dyer, *Pandita Ramabai: A Great Life in Indian Missions* (London: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.), 62.

[186] Gary B. McGee, "Minnie F. Abrams: Another Context, Another Founder," in *Portraits of a Generation: Early Pentecostal Leaders*, ed. James R. Goff Jr. and Grant Wacker (Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 2002), 87-104.

[187] "Rev. F. W. Baller, 'Life of George Muller' Mandarin, .15 [Advertisement]," *The Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal* 38, no. 1 (January 1907): 68.

[188] Cassels, "As Never Before," 80.

[189] "A Japanese Orator," *The Homiletic Review* 66, no. 1 (July 1913): 35. Charles W. Iglehart, *A Century of Protestant Christianity in Japan* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1959),107.

Müller's impact through publications was not limited to India, China, and Japan. The

South African minister Andrew Murray (1828-1917), a leading Dutch Reformed pastor who was

educated in Scotland and Holland, wrote a number of books on prayer that influenced

evangelical piety throughout the English-speaking world.[191] Murray included a section on

Müller in his most famous book on Christian prayer,[192] *With Christ in the School of Prayer:*

Thoughts on our Training for the Ministry of Intercession, published in 1885. *With Christ in the*

School of Prayer was a profoundly important treatise on prayer for evangelicals whose impact is

still felt today.[193] Murray believed that God had raised Müller up to show that God's promises

were true and that God would answer prayer.[194] Murray continued to use Müller as an example

of how God could accomplish great things through individuals who surrendered absolutely to do

whatever God wanted them to do.[195] Murray emphasized absolute surrender in Müller's life in

order to stress the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. Müller claimed that his

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[190] P. E. Chakko to James Wright, 8 April 1905," George Müller and Family, Letters and Papers, Muller House, 7 Cotham Park, Bristol, England.

[191] D. J. Goodhew, "Murray, Andrew," in *Biographical Dictionary of Evangelicals*, ed. Timothy Larsen, David Bebbington, and Mark A. Noll (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 460-463.

[192] Murray followed Müller's career and studied his life along with of other evangelicals such as David Brainerd, John Wesley, D. L. Moody, and Hudson Taylor. J. Du Plessis, *The Life of Andrew Murray of South Africa* (London: Marshall Brothers, Ltd., 1919), 479. Murray followed Müller's global travels and even reported on comments made in India. Andrew Murray, *The New Life: Words of God for Young Disciples of Christ*, trans. J. P. L. (New York: A. D. F. Randolph & Co., 1891), 157.

[193] Many of Murray's books remain in print, but *With Christ in the School of Prayer* is considered a spiritual classic by evangelicals.

[194] Andrew Murray, *With Christ in the School of Prayer: Thoughts on our Training for the Ministry of Intercession* (New York: A. D. G. Randolph & Co., 1885), 255.

[195] Andrew Murray, *Absolute Surrender and Other Addresses* (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1897), 13-14.

devotional life was rooted in the reading of the Bible combined with prayer. Murray believed

that such an approach to the devotional life ensured that the Holy Spirit was able to work in the

life of a believer. Murray wrote in reflecting on how "God wants to teach through the experience

of George Muller" that, "It is through THE WORD AND THE WORD ALONE, that the Spirit teaches,

applying the general principles or promises to our special need. And it is THE SPIRIT, AND THE

SPIRIT ALONE, who can really make the word a light on our path, whether the path of duty in our

daily walk, or the path of faith in our approach to God."[196] Murray contributed to the belief that

Müller was an extraordinary model of piety and firmly held that Müller was distinguished by

God to be an example for others. Murray continued throughout his long ministry career to

promote Müller as a saint[197] who had spent his entire life praying and could be celebrated as a

godly model because, as Murray proclaimed, "the presence of God is on him."[198] Murray was

one of the key individuals who connected Müller[199] to the continent of Africa.[200]

The plethora of publications by or about Müller contributed to his legitimacy. It is

impossible to gauge how readers understood the stories they read about Müller, especially in the

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[196] Murray, *With Christ*, 263.

[197] Murray, *Absolute Surrender*, 13.

[198] Andrew Murray, *The Spiritual Life: A Series of Lectures Delivered Before the Students of the Moody Bible Institute, Chicago* (Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs & Co., 1897), 136. Also see Andrew Murray, *The Ministry of Intercession: A Plea for More Prayer* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1898), 183-184; Andrew Murray, *The Inner Chamber and the Inner Life* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1905), 115.

[199] Mohandas Gandhi met Rev. Andrew Murray at a religious convention in Wellington and was also introduced to the life of story of Müller while living in South Africa. Mohandas K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments With Truth*, trans. Mahadev Desai (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), 135.

[200] For an example of a South African evangelical periodical that recognized Müller's importance in regard to the controversies simmering over the efficacy of prayer see George Müller, "Power of Prayer," *The Christian Express* (January 1, 1876): 3.

non-Western context where evidence of points of contact with Müller's story only survives in Western missionary accounts. Evangelicals believed in the power of literature to transform lives and knew that making accounts available in the vernacular languages of the people of the world was essential for this task. Therefore, the translation of texts into the local indigenous languages ensured that ideas, persons, and an evangelical understanding of Christian piety was cross-cultural and genuinely a global in nature. *The Christian Witness*, in an 1862 review of W. Elfe Tayler's *Mighty Through God*, foreshadowed the worldwide impact of Müller's story when the reviewer argued, "Tens of thousands in this and other lands will read these books to the glory of God, who would never otherwise have so much as heard the name of the holy man who is so beneficently serving his generation. Who can tell the effects that may take place from this most shining example?"[201] The question, for the reviewer, was already answered in 1862 because Müller's work on Ashley Down had recently become commonly known in the United States. When stories finally surfaced that non-Western Christians adopted Müller's method of living by faith to help widows, orphans, or other groups in need after reading about his life in their language, they reinforced his prestige.[202] The foundation for Müller's worldwide recognition as a hero of the faith was built upon publications, but his reputation necessitated individual's distinguishing his piety as unique and worthy of emulation.

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[201] "Literature," *The Christian Witness* 19 (London: John Snow, 1862): 134.

[202] A. W. Halsey, secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, reported that a Chinese Christian started an orphanage after reading an account of Müller's life. A. W. Halsey, "The Value and Use of Missionary Literature," *The Missionary Review of the World* 33, no. 4 (April 1910): 283.

"Venerable and Venerated"

The celebration of Müller's contribution to evangelical piety was formalized in adjectives used to describe his status in magazines and periodicals. A term of particular importance was "venerable." Within the Roman Catholic Church "venerable" is used to describe a deceased individual who is in the process of being canonized, while in the Church of England the term is applied to one who holds the rank of archdeacon in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. In the broadest sense of the term, venerable is a reference to an individual who lived a life distinguished by holy living.[203] The use of venerable as a descriptive term was widely employed by evangelicals and others who revered Müller.[204] Often the term was joined with other descriptors such as "that venerable patriarch of faith,"[205] or when Müller visited Singapore he was esteemed as the "venerable and venerated George Müller, of Bristol." [206] The use of the term venerable among nineteenth-century evangelicals was intended to emphasize Müller's piety. He was usually referenced as "venerable" in unison with praise about his life of faith and prayer or just simply as a marker of his esteemed status.[207] Charles H. Spurgeon, the most widely celebrated preacher of

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[203] "Venerable," in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, 3rd ed. rev. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1698.

[204] "Venerable" was also the term used by British evangelicals to describe the greatest of the second-generation Halle Pietist missionaries, Christian Frederick Schwartz (1726-1793), who worked with the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge in India from 1767 until his death. *Remains of the Rev. C. F. Schwartz, Missionary in India, Consisting of His Letters and Journals; With a Sketch of His Life*, 2nd ed. (London: Jaques and Wright, 1826), iii.

[205] A. B. Simpson, *Larger Outlooks on Missionary Lands: Descriptive Sketches of a Missionary Journey Through Egypt, Palestine, India, Burmah, Malaysia, China, Japan, and the Sandwich Islands* (New York: The Christian Alliance Publishing Co., 1893), 500.

[206] Cook, *Sunny Singapore*, 167.

[207] "Mr. George Müller at Mildmay," *The Christian* (August 26, 1875): 11; "Notes and Comments," *The Christian* (June 8, 1882): 16; "Personal Notes and Comments," *Frank Leslie's*

the late nineteenth century, recognized the unique qualities that Müller manifested. In his

reflection on Müller he wrote,

> A Christian man is the noblest work of God, especially a Christian man who has attained
> to fulness [*sic*] of stature, and has done eminent service for his Master. As in the
> presence of sublime scenery the renewed heart adores the Creator, and never dreams of
> worshipping nature itself, so in communion with a truly consecrated man the spiritual
> mind rises to a reverent acknowledgement of the Holy Spirit, whose workmanship is seen
> in all the saints, and the idea of hero-worship is banished from the mind. . . . It has been a
> great means of grace to us in our exile not only to hear the venerable George Müller of
> Bristol, but to have three long interviews with him, besides uniting with him twice in the
> breaking of bread and in prayer. Mr. Müller has the look of personified order and
> simplicity; his appearance is equally removed from show and slovenliness. His face
> gleams with the quiet cheerfulness which comes of profound restfulness. He believes
> God with great reality, and practically takes Him at His word, and hence his peace is a
> river. His faith has wrought in him great strength of purpose, so far as man is concerned,
> and something more than submission to the will of the Lord, for he evidently delights
> himself therein, and, through divine grace, has been made to move in accordance with it.
> That which struck us most was his evident rejoicing in tribulations, for the only
> excitement which we noticed in him was at the mention of the trials of his early days,
> which gave such room for the display of the divine faithfulness. We do not mean that our
> friend desires trial, but we perceive that when it comes his heart is exceeding glad, and
> his glory rejoices, because the Lord is now about to reveal Himself more fully, and to
> honor His divine name yet again. Oh, that we could all learn this lesson and put it into
> practice![208]

Spurgeon's preface to his encounter with Müller does not maintain the objectifying distance that

he initially proclaimed. His summary of Müller's person and spiritual stature inculcated the

"hero-worship" that he abhorred. A. T. Pierson, editor of *The Missionary Review of the World*,

exclaimed, "Above perhaps any man of modern times, George Müller was to his generation the

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Sunday Magazine 12, no. 5 (November 1882): 553; J. M. Thoburn, *Missionary Addresses* (New
York: Phillips & Hunt, 1888), 58; "Here and There," *The Sunday School Journal* 31, no. 9
(September 1899): 563.

[208] George C. Needham, ed., *The Life and Labors of Charles H. Spurgeon, The Faithful
Preacher, The Devoted Pastor, The Noble Philanthropist, The Beloved College President, and
the Voluminous Writer, Author, etc., etc.* (Boston: D. L. Guernsey, 1883), 307-308.

prophet of God and the apostle of prayer."[209] Spurgeon and Pierson's high praise of Müller

corresponded with the influence that Müller wielded through his exemplary piety. Although

evangelicals voiced doubts about how to apply the term saint to Christians including Müller,[210]

he was referred to as an "eminent saint" after his death.[211] The fact that Müller's name and work

on Ashley Down achieved such widespread acclaim resulted in the physical space of the

orphanage becoming an important landmark in the evangelical mind.

"Trophies of Grace"

In Müller's own lifetime the orphan homes became a pilgrimage destination for

evangelicals, the curious, and those who were interested in seeing if the reports were true.[212]

There are accounts by travelers, ministers, journalists, and tourists that proclaimed the

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[209] "Death of Rev. George Müller, of Bristol," *The Missionary Review of the World* 21, no. 4 (May 1898): 377.

[210] Andover Theological Seminary professor, Austin Phelps, refuted the fear of such language when he wrote, "Why should our modern speech have dropped the title of 'saint' in designating a converted man? Why should it sound eccentric to our ears that a quaint Christian like George Muller should speak of ministering to the 'saints of Bristol'? That conception of a holy thing, of a sacred being, of a soul set apart by a godlike initiation to godlike uses, is the Scriptural idea of the humblest friend of Christ. No fear of an affected sanctimony should repel us from this ideal of a soul's hallowed affinity with God. No deference to an earthly dialect should forbid us to honour this ideal as a reality in our speech. The dignity of a soul culminates in this conception. The diction of the Scriptures is full of it. We are kings; we are priests; we are the elect of God; we are saints of the Most High; we are judges of angels; we are joint-heirs with Christ." Austin Phelps, *The New Birth: Or, The Work of the Holy Spirit* (London: R. D. Dickinson, 1874), 207.

[211] "George Müller's Orphan Homes," *Record of Christian Work* 27, no. 9 (September 1908): 650.

[212] Like D. L. Moody who traveled to Bristol in the late-1860s to see Müller, Rev. E. Payson Hammond indicated that after reading Wayland's *The Life of Trust* he "had a great desire to see his [Müller's] face." Hammond traveled to Bristol in 1867 and was even allowed to preach to the orphans over several days. E. Payson Hammond, "Children's Meeting at George Muller's, England," *Frank Leslie's Sunday Magazine* 3, no. 1 (January 1878): 106.

overwhelming success of the work.[213] As early as 1836, when the Orphan Homes were located

on Wilson Street in Bristol, Müller opened the homes to visitors.[214] The orphan homes stood as

a landmark of evangelical zeal, determination, administration, and prayer that attracted

"Christian tourists" to Bristol.[215] One article proclaimed that Christians should "personally

inspect the trophies of grace won by this man of God."[216] Apparently, curious onlookers and

fans of the orphanage assembled in large crowds, sometimes in the hundreds, to tour the

homes.[217] The Ashley Down Orphan Homes were a living shrine that illustrated the ability of

God to take a degenerate youth and transform his labor to another end. One visitor proclaimed,

"Then, as we glanced up at Ashley Down, and saw the extensive orphan houses which are such

wonderful and visible proofs of the power of prayer and of the reality of God's existence, we

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[213] In a detailed account of a visit to Ashley Down, Pearl Fisher noted that a "large party" that included an American bishop and his wife were part of a two-hour tour of the orphan homes. Pearl Fisher, "On Ashley Down: Pencil Sketches of Practical Effort," *Word and Work* 8 (February 16, 1882): 111-112.

[214] Visitors could tour the homes between two and five in the afternoon on Wednesdays. George Müller, *Further Account of the Orphan House, for Female Orphans Above Seven Years of Age; and Opening of the Infant Orphan House, for Destitute Male and Female Orphans under Seven Years of Age* (Bristol: Fuller, 1836), 4.

[215] As early as 1850, only fourteen years after the orphan work began, ministers were encouraging ordinary Christians to visit Müller's orphanage in Bristol as an aide to their faith. A. H. [ewlett], "The New Orphan Houses," *The Christian Cottagers' Magazine* 6 (December 1850): 427. In 1878-1879 Hussey and Emily Macartney traveled from Australia to England and met with Müller along with other religious leaders. Darrell Paproth, "Hussey Burgh Macartney Jr.: Mission Enthusiast," unpublished paper.

[216] "George Müller," *The Christian Pioneer* 29 (London: Simpkin, Marshall, & Co., 1875): 109.

[217] In 1852, an unnamed reporter for *Fraser's Magazine* visited the New Orphan Home and noted, "When we reached the waiting-room, we were surprised to find a part of at least two hundred collected to be conducted over the establishment. With this curious crowd we proceeded, under the guidance of one of the sisters, through the house." "The New Orphan House at Ashley Down, Bristol," *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* (September 1852): 344.

soliloquized,—'The race of saints still survives.'"[218] The homes remained a site of pilgrimage to

see the work of the "saintly George Muller" even into the twentieth century.[219]

Conclusion

In 1897, a year before Müller's death, an acrostic poem celebrating his piety was printed

on small pocket-size cards. Attempting to capture the attributes of Müller's life of faith the

poem also emphasized aspects of evangelical piety that made him so attractive to evangelicals

around the world. The poem reads,

> **G** ive me, Lord, a gentle mind,
> **E** ver true and ever kind,
> **O** n Thy grace may I depend,
> **R** esting in Thee to the end.
> **G** rant me, Father, day by day,
> **E** qual to my need, I pray,
>
> **M** ighty grace on me bestow,
> **U** se me in Thy cause below.
> **L** et me peace and joy impart,
> **L** ight Divine dwell in my heart,
> **E** ver trusting in Thy love,
> **R** eady for Thy call above.[220]

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[218] "Robert Charleton," *The Herald of Peace* 13 (December 1873): 358.

[219] In 1905, A. R. Falconer's traveled from New Zealand to Bristol and reported back, "my greatest joy in any work for God came from my week's visit to Ashley Down Orphan Houses, Bristol, founded by the late saintly George Muller, and now conducted by his son-in-law (Mr James Wright) and Mr G. Fred Bergin on the same principles of entire trust and faith in God to supply all the need of 2000 orphans in answer to prayer, and I felt it worth going to the Homeland had I seen nought but Muller's Orphan Houses." Falconer was born and raised in Edinburgh, Scotland. "The New Zealander Abroad: Mr A. R. Falconer's Experiences," *Otago Witness* [New Zealand], January 25, 1905, 13.

[220] "Jno. W. Gardner, [Acrostic card] George Müller," George Müller and Family, Letters and Papers, Muller House, 7 Cotham Park, Bristol, England. Acrostics usually involved the name of an individual from the Bible who was used to teach a practical lesson about Christian theology. F. E. M., "Acrostics," *Footsteps of Truth* 2 (November 1884): 599.

The poem presents a particular perception of Müller that was crucial for his rise to global recognition and emulation by evangelicals. The poem reinforced his simple approach to Christian practice, while emphasizing his dependence on God for the necessities of everyday life. Evangelicals found in this sort of depiction of Müller's piety an individual worth celebrating and imitating.

The May 1898 issue of *The Missionary Review of the World* published an article entitled, "Death of Rev. George Müller, Bristol," that opened with the following statement: "March 10, 1898, is a memorable day. It was the day of Mr. Müller's entrance into the more abundant life beyond. He was in some respects the most conspicuous man of his generation; it may be doubted whether any man since Paul, or even since Enoch, has more truly walkt with God."[221] A. T. Pierson, the editor of *The Missionary Review of the World*, recognized Müller's obvious prominence among his contemporaries on a global scale.[222] His name needed little explanation. Comparisons were made between Müller and biblical characters who were presented as his peers in matters of faith.[223] The article goes on to explain his significance in both global and apologetic terms,

> Besides all this [establishing the orphanage, running schools, and publishing religious literature], he himself traveled into 42 countries, delivering his personal message, and witnessing to the God who hears and answers prayer. His whole life is a modern miracle, more than an answer to all current doubts, and a demonstration of the fact that the God of

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[221] "Death of Rev. George Müller, of Bristol," *The Missionary Review of the World* 21, no. 4 (May 1898): 377.

[222] "Philanthropist Muller Dead," *The New York Times*, March 11, 1898, 7.

[223] Müller's death was also a front page story for the founder and editor of *The Christian and Missionary Alliance*, A. B. Simpson, who made similarly grand remarks in his reflection on Müller's death when he wrote, "The death of George Muller, of Bristol England, removes from the fellowship of the church on earth one of the most apostolic figures, not only of the age, but of the whole Christian age." A. B. Simpson, "Memories of George Muller," *The Christian Missionary and Missionary Alliance* 20, no. 12 (March 23, 1898): 265.

Elijah still lives, and that the keys which unlock Heaven's gates are in the hands of the disciple who prays in faith, nothing doubting.[224]

What Pierson attempts to make clear to readers is that Müller represented something greater than his own life story. He, in fact, serves as an apologetic tool to counter the rise of doubt and the loss of faith that appeared to be a defining aspect of Western culture at the end of the nineteenth century. Consequently, he represented a particular type of piety that ordinary lay people and clergy found inspiring.[225] He fostered a new vigor in missionary work by evangelicals that did not require massive ecclesiastical institutions or even a sound theological education, but a willing desire to serve God.[226] His story was also one of opposition to the forces of modernity, particularly scientific skepticism. At the same time he was a product of the developments in communications technologies that altered the space between geographic places in the nineteenth century. In January 1878, *The Christian Monitor* noted that orphan homes were established

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[224] "Death of Rev. George Müller, of Bristol," 377.

[225] Speaking at the Missouri State Christian Convention in February of 1868, Dwight L. Moody, the most highly regarded American evangelical layman shared with attendees "what the laymen could do, by showing what laymen had done." Moody went on to explain, "George Müller, another layman, has a church of nine hundred members and a congregation of fifteen hundred, sends out forty of them each Sabbath to preach the gospel, supports two thousand orphans, has erected magnificent buildings for them, but has never asked a man for a cent, and has no money except as God sends it to him." "The Missouri State Christian Convention," *The Advance* (February 13, 1868): 6.

[226] William Svelmoe observed, "Müller's orphanages and Taylor's China Inland Mission were very high profile ministries within the evangelical world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is quite possible that if you read through 100 sermons on the life of faith preached by a subset of evangelical ministers in the United States or Great Britain in the first half of this century, the names of Hudson Taylor and George Müller would be in almost every one." William Lawrence Svelmoe, "A New Vision for Missions: William Cameron Townsend in Guatemala and Mexico, 1917-1945" (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 2001), 200. For a thoughtful critique of Müller's method see Norman Anderson, *An Adopted Son: The Story of My Life* (Leicester, U.K.: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 74-78.

around the world based on his methods and model found in Bristol.[227] Just over twenty years

later on March 25, 1898, *The Australian Christian World* announced that "cablegrams have told

us of the death of this venerable and devoted Christian man, and most of us will feel that the

Church on earth is poorer to-day."[228] The transportation and communication network that

rapidly developed over the course of the last half of the nineteenth century first notified the

world about Müller's orphan work in Bristol and would be the same tool to notify the world that

he had died.

The written testimony of Müller's work was widely distributed in newspapers and

periodicals around the world by observant evangelicals. Furthermore, his sermons, annual

reports, tracts, and his *Narrative* formed a corpus of literature that circulated widely in cheap

tracts, periodicals, and scores and scores of books that inculcated Müller's story into the memory

of evangelicals.[229] Evangelicals were intimately involved in ensuring that Müller was "the most

conspicuous man of his generation." They translated his story into Japanese, Chinese, and

various Indian dialects. Evangelicals proclaimed him as being known worldwide for his

philanthropic work and they made sure, ultimately, that his name was known around the

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[227] "George Muller's Life of Trust," *The Christian Monitor* 17, no. 1 (January 1878): 48.

[228] "George Müller," *The Australian Christian World* 13, no. 626 (March 25, 1898): 3. *The Homiletic Review* also reported in April 1898 that Müller's "death has just been announced by cable . . . . The intelligent public is familiar with the history of his work, narratives of which have been publisht [*sic*] from time to time." "Bradlaugh and Muller," *The Homiletic Review* 35, no. 4 (April 1898): 383.

[229] After Müller's death, the proliferation of cheap tracts with statements from his sermons or his writings continued to be produced. Few of these tracts have survived primarily because of their small size and the cheap paper on which they were printed. In short, they were as disposable as their price, 100 tracts for 6 pence, indicated. For an example see George Müller, *Peace in Affliction* (Bristol: G. E. Ginder, n.d.).

world.[230] Evangelicals made Müller into a world evangelical hero of the faith through

publications, word of mouth, and their own devotion to his story. The result was that the

venerable saint still spoke to the world through publications.[231] In the twentieth century, notices

of the orphan work's continuation were published by evangelical periodicals as a sign that God

remained faithful to Müller's original mission as counter to those who believed the orphanage

would fail when he died.[232]

　　　After his death, an effort was made in Bristol to memorialize Müller in a traditional

manner by erecting a statue in his honor. James Wright, son-in-law and successor to Müller,

foiled the idea. Wright questioned the entire project of a physical memorial in a letter that

reflected on his father-in-law's possible response when he wrote,

> And if he could come back to us for an hour, and listen to an account of what his
> sincerely admiring, but mistaken friends are proposing to do to *perpetuate* his memory, I
> can hear him, with a sigh, exclaiming, "Ah! These *dear* friends are entirely missing the
> lesson that I tried for seventy years to teach them," viz., "*That a man can receive nothing
> except it be given him from above*," and that therefore, it is the Blessed *Giver*, and not the
> poor receiver, that is to be glorified.[233]

　Wright, like Müller, assumed that physical monuments were the space where memory was

stored. However, the literary monument that had already been constructed would be far more

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[230] "George Müller: A Tribute," *Record of Christian Work* 17, no. 6 (June 1898): 299.

[231] George Müller, *The Secret of Effectual Service to God* (St. Paul, MN: Asher
Publishing Co./The Union Gospel Mission, n.d.); George Müller, *Faith* (Los Angeles: The Bible
House of Los Angeles, n.d.). In his own lifetime, Müller made available to the public scores of
cheap tracts through the Scriptural Knowledge Institution and his Bristol publisher, W. Mack.
Most of these tracts have not survived, but advertisements listing the titles published are easily
located in many nineteenth-century religious periodicals and advertisement pages in books. For
an example of the title list see, "By Mr. George Müller [Advertisement]," in James F. B. Tinling,
Early Roman-Catholic Missions to India (London: S. W. Partridge & Co., 1871), 106.

[232] "Müller's Faith Still Lives," *The Missionary Review of the World* 24, no. 9
(September 1901): 708-709.

[233] Müller, *Autobiography*, 719.

durable than the brick orphan homes or a bronze statue. The next chapter will examine in detail how Müller became part of the collective memory of evangelicals through the twentieth century and into the present. It will focus on North America where Müller's canonization as a hero of the faith was most thoroughly achieved by evangelicals who continued to embrace his story in an effort to write their own story.

CHAPTER 8

EVANGELICAL ICONOGRAPHY:

REMEMBERING A HERO OF THE FAITH

Introduction

In Great Britain, Europe, North America, and countries around the world in the last half of the nineteenth century, Müller was celebrated as a distinguished Christian philanthropist. Evangelicals, in particular, saw in his example the possibility of what they could accomplish if they truly committed themselves to trusting in God.[1] The belief that Müller had housed, fed, clothed, and educated over two thousand orphans without asking anyone for a single penny since 1836 conferred an eminence upon him.[2] By the time of his death on March 10, 1898, at the age of 92, the claim that he was "the most conspicuous man of his generation" could be legitimately asserted.[3] Müller's major achievement in the nineteenth century was obtaining worldwide

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[1] Müller, along with individuals like J. Hudson Taylor and D. L. Moody, was depicted as having access to the "full experiences" of being Christian. John B. Wood, "Christ's Teaching to the World in the New Testament," in *Proceedings of the Universal Peace Congress, Held in the Westminister Town Hall, London, From 14th to 19th July, 1890* (London: Office of the Congress, 1890), 80.

[2] The irony here is that at different times in the history of SKI and the Orphan Homes there were subscribers, individuals who left inheritances to the homes, and wealthy benefactors (see chapter 4).

recognition for his method of living by faith to support the orphan homes. Evangelicals relished

the material evidence that the buildings and their residents offered for proving that God could act

in history. Evangelicals believed that the continued operation and existence of the orphan homes

made the claim for the supernatural hand of God acting in the physical world difficult to refute.

This chapter will analyze the continued celebration of Müller from the nineteenth century

to his informal canonization as a hero of the faith in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Müller defined how he would be remembered during the nineteenth century by the way he

represented himself in his writings. He also consciously crafted his own visual image for

posterity in a few photographs that he authorized for publication and circulation. In addition to

the visual images that Müller endorsed, a written tradition was constructed by evangelicals who

drew upon his writings, thoughts, and stories about him that often had a legendary quality. The

result was that evangelicals who lived into the first few decades of the twentieth century

continued to build upon his reputation and inculcated his story among evangelical subgroups,

including Fundamentalists, Holiness adherents, and Pentecostals.[4]

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[3] Often articles in the late nineteen century and early twentieth century began with an affirmation of a collective knowledge by asking, who, if anyone, had not heard of George Müller? Such questions indicate that he was perceived to be part of popular cultural knowledge. "Death of Rev. George Müller, of Bristol," *The Missionary Review of the World* 21, no. 4 (May 1898): 377.

[4] Fundamentalists, Holiness adherents, and Pentecostals fit under the broad umbrella of evangelicalism. Proto-Fundamentalists and Holiness advocates were closely aligned, but after the key unifying personalities in nineteenth-century evangelicalism passed from the scene, most notably D. L. Moody, the common bonds disappeared and fragmentation resulted. The definitive break occurred after 1906 when Pentecostalism erupted as a new experiential form of Christian practice that was highly controversial. Many denominations and para-church organizations dismissed those from their ranks who embraced the Pentecostal message that there was a subsequent experience to salvation where one could experience a baptism in the Holy Spirit that was evidenced by speaking in other tongues or languages. As historian George Marsden points out, much of the early critical writing of Fundamentalists was not simply targeted at "modernism," but was also intended to squelch the burgeoning army of Pentecostal preachers.

The individuals and groups that preserved Müller's memory were those who most

identified with his practices and hoped to promote them among their adherents. University of

London historian Donald Sasson points out that "When a tradition is created, it is essential to

make clear what is actually being celebrated: not only a past event, but a contemporary reality in

search of legitimation."[5] Evangelicals embraced a loose notion of "tradition" framed by

"models" and "examples" that were intended to inspire and inform practice.[6] In the case of

Müller, what was being remembered is extremely important for understanding Fundamentalists,

Holiness adherents, Pentecostals, and most broadly evangelicals. Therefore, this chapter will

analyze Müller's importance to North American evangelicals over the course of the twentieth

century and through the dawn of the twenty-first. Individuals in each of these groups employed

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George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press), 93. For further explanation on the expansion and tensions within early Pentecostalism see, Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997); for an examination of early Pentecostalism in Great Britain see, Darin D. Lenz, "'Visions on the Battlefields': Alexander A. Boddy, Early British Pentecostalism, and the First World War, 1914-1918," *The Journal of Religious History* 32, no. 3 (September 2008): 281-302.

[5] Donald Sasson, *One Hundred Years of Socialism: The West European Left in the Twentieth Century* (New York: The New Press, 1996), xix.

[6] Evangelicals have assumed that they are void of the influence of tradition. Although they love heroic stories about evangelical preachers and missionaries from the past, they imagine themselves living in the present with a complete reliance on the biblical text as the only source for their practice and thought. Evangelicals understand the history of Christianity to be useful when confined to studying heroes of the faith and dangerous if used to challenge their beliefs. This approach to history has certainly impacted modern evangelicalism. Historian D. H. Williams, argues that contemporary evangelicals focus almost completely on the future when he explains, "In Star Trek-like fashion, the future is what holds the hope of the present, symbolizing the discovery of new horizons and the inexorable march of technological progress which promises to usher in limitless benefits." D. H. Williams, *Retrieving the Tradition and Renewing Evangelicalism: A Primer for Suspicious Protestants* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 12.

Müller's story in the collective memory of their subculture to legitimize a particular aspect of their identity.[7] Thanks to the efforts of missionaries and evangelists from these subgroups, Müller's story continued to reach a global audience. Images of him became entrenched in the collective memory of evangelicals, while his story prompted imitation and emulation.

Being Seen—An Authorized Image

Before the mid-1870s Müller and his co-workers in Bristol were very aware of the status associated with his name in the broader evangelical world. Recognition of this fact compelled Müller to assert control over his image. Part of this may have been to protect a carefully crafted literary legacy, but it seems that Müller was more aware of the tendency of evangelicals to possess and venerate images of their heroes.[8] The determined effort by Müller to control his

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[7] Maurice Halbwachs, who established the field of collective memory, defined the concept as follows, "While the collective memory endures and draws strength from its base in a coherent body of people, it is individuals as group members who remember." Maurice Halbwachs quoted in "Introduction," in Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed., trans., and intro. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 22. Most of the subsequent work on collective memory after Halbwachs has shifted from the role of individuals in groups to the notion that collective memory is something that exists outside the mind of the individual in sites of memory, such as monuments, statues, or in objects, pictures, and books. This "New Structural Memory," as Kerwin Klein has labeled it, also reflects some aspects of how evangelicals remember. Evangelicals primarily use books and other mementos in their memory making. In some instances, books are intended to be literary monuments. However, evangelicals pass along stories, either through publications or orally, outside of a common experience or material object, such as a parade or statue. Rather, evangelicals remember as individuals, but share their memories within the context of the group. The distinction I am making is important for clarifying that evangelicalism does not have a collective memory but evangelicals do. For further discussion on the field of collective memory, see Kerwin Lee Klein, "On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse," *Representations* 69 (Winter 2000): 127-150; Wulf Kansteiner, "Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies," *History and Theory* 41, no. 3 (May 2002): 179-197; Michael Kammen, "Review Essay of *Frames of Remembrance: The Dynamics of Collective Memory*," *History and Theory* 34, no. 3 (1995): 245-261.

representation with the new technology of photography contrasted to the proliferation of

biographical publications that poured from presses in Great Britain, Europe, and the United

States. Written accounts of his life and his work do not seem to have concerned Müller and he

even appeared pleased that others had furthered his cause through independent publications. The

way in which a photograph permanently captured Müller's likeness for posterity seems to have

provoked him. Many of the tourists who made the pilgrimage to Ashley Down wanted to return

with a likeness of his image as a memento.[9] However, Müller actively worked to prohibit the

selling of his photograph to Christian tourists who flocked to Bristol to see the Ashley Down

Orphan Houses.

Evangelicals cultivated particular images and memories of people and events.[10] Müller

was not an exception on this point. He wrote in the introduction to his second wife's book,

Preaching Tours and Missionary Labours of George Müller (of Bristol), that he was reluctant to

have his portrait published because he thought that it might undermine his witness to God by

redirecting attention to himself. He claimed that hundreds of times he had been asked for a

photograph of himself by letter and in conversations.[11] Apparently, he was hounded by an early

version of the paparazzi and, according to him, even offered enormous sums, in 1863 £500, to sit

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[8] *The Christian Pioneer* reported that Müller "has refused to have his likeness taken, though assured that millions of copies would be sold for the benefit of his Mission." "Muller's Success," *The Christian Pioneer* 29 (London: Simpkin, Marshall, & Co., 1875): 82.

[9] "George Müller," *The Christian Pioneer* 29 (London: Simpkin, Marshall, & Co., 1875): 111.

[10] "George Muller and His Orphanage," *The Bristol Mercury*, September 2, 1882, 6. Robert Shindler, "George Müller and His Orphanages (Answers to Prayer for Christian Work)," *The Quiver* 17 (London: Cassell, Petter, Galpin & Co., 1882): 685-688.

[11] Susannah Grace Müller, *Preaching Tours and Missionary Labours of George Müller (of Bristol)* (London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1883), x.

for a photograph.[12] Müller refused to acquiesce to his adoring fans and rebuffed the idea of

sitting for a photograph with the statement, "As I do not wish to direct attention to myself, but to

my Lord and Master, I must decline to comply with your request."[13] However, when confronted

with the circulation of bad "likenesses" tarnished by "a *most doleful* expression of countenance"

Müller finally felt a compulsion to remedy the situation.[14] He wrote,

> In the fear of God, therefore, I have come to this conclusion: Since the public *insist* upon
> having a portrait of me (whether I like to give it or whether I do not), let my beloved
> Christian friends at least have a photograph that is a *real* and not a false representation of
> their unworthy brother in Christ; and, especially, let it be one with a pleasant, cheerful
> expression of countenance, that will glorify and not dishonor the Lord I love; for our very
> *faces* even should show forth His praise.[15]

Müller's yielding to the demand for a photograph, however, allowed him to control the type of

image presented to the public. Like Dr. Thomas Barnardo who also struggled to present his

public image, Müller knew photographs mattered.[16] In the first edition of *Preaching Tours and

Missionary Labours of George Müller (of Bristol)*, published in 1883, Müller included a portrait

that is striking (see Appendix A). The picture is framed to show his torso from the waist up. His

seventy-eight year old face revealed a man who appeared fit and stately. Even a hint of a smile

appeared on a face not overly wrinkled by age. His grey hair had receded in a dignified manner

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[12] Müller records that "an enterprising photographer tried once to secure my likeness too,
by an instantaneous process, as I was driving in an open carriage up a hill, but was foiled in the
attempt." Ibid., xi-xii.

[13] Ibid., xi.

[14] Ibid., xii.

[15] Ibid., xii-xiii.

[16] Müller was not the only evangelical philanthropist in Great Britain who fretted over his
photograph. Dr. Thomas J. Barnardo went to great lengths to ensure that a public photograph of
him would be both serious and manly enough to answer critics' questions about his sexual-
orientation and work among poor boys in London. Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social
Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 104-105.

to match his perfectly trimmed long sideburns that reached down to the corners of his mouth. His clothing, however, pointed to his vocation as a career pastor and role as the director of an institution supporting vulnerable orphan children. A white cravat and a creaseless black coat define the shape of Müller's body. This perfect form is broken only by his right arm perfectly bent and his right hand grasping his coat at the third button. The image was an idealized image of a Nonconformist minister—serious, respectable, and devout. The second edition of the book, published in 1889, offered viewers another picture of Müller. No longer is the focus primarily upon his upper torso. It rather is a full-body portrait of Müller in a parlor. Wallpapered walls, an ornate parlor chair, matched by two books stacked on a table with a decorative table cloth, an oriental rug, and the bottom frame of a painting, all indicate middle-class respectability. Although there is no date given for the second portrait, the image presented is much different. Müller is physically farther away from the camera lens. Consequently, his shoulders look narrower, he appears thin, and his head seems slightly too large for his narrow body. His face appears gaunt by the way the shadows of his own body envelope him. The knee-length black frock coat and white cravat remain, but the coat appears baggy around the waist where his right hand grasps the coat between the fourth and final button. In Müller's left hand he clutches a book, possibly a Bible. His trousers are a dark grey and his black boots shine spotless in the photographer's flash. In this photograph he is no longer a simple devout pastor, but instead the physical surroundings note social dignity and success. Every material item in the room appeals to Victorian sensibility, including Müller in his black, white, and grey ensemble.

What is remarkable about these two portraits of Müller is that he consciously selected them as his best likeness. The fact that these were photographs Müller endorsed created a distinction between his visual image and his writings. From his viewpoint, his writings clearly

directed readers to the God who answered prayer as the source of his success, whereas his photograph was staged to create a religious aura. The photography was void of obvious Christian symbolism, such as a cross or even, for certain, a Bible. Instead the photographs were intended to provide an objective and accurate likeness. The photographs do not appear triumphal or narcissistic. Rather, they are conscious attempts to perfectly capture the expectations of his audience.

In 1895, to celebrate his ninetieth-year of life, more photographs of him were made. The more interesting of these later photographs is quite different from the two photographs that Müller endorsed earlier (see Appendix B).[17] In the 1895 photograph, he is standing while holding an open book, presumably a Bible. Behind him is an ornately carved table and chair. His attire is similar to the first two photographs in that he is wearing a knee-length black frock coat and the white cravat. His head is defined by his elderly distinction and a trimmed white beard. His expression is that of a kindly grandfather. Here the emphasis is clearly on the book he holds, even though he is looking directly back at the camera. His physical body, as may be inferred, preached the word of God through his actions.[18] Why did this photograph vary so significantly from the other two?

Viewers certainly influenced his appearance in the photographs more than Müller acknowledged. After all, a vast public audience desired to see the great man of faith who prayed

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[17] Another photograph taken in his ninetieth year is a simple portrait framed in a close-up. He has the same half smile, trimmed beard, and silver-white hair. He is not holding a Bible and is wearing his traditional suit. Stanley Hutton attributed the lack of photographs of Müller to modesty. Stanley Hutton, *Bristol and Its Famous Associations* (Bristol: J. W. Arrowsmith, 1907), 396-400. For the same portrait see, "The Last Portrait Taken on His 90th Birthday," *Footsteps of Truth* 16 (London: John F. Shaw & Co., 1898): 97.

[18] Frederick G. Warne, *George Müller: The Modern Apostle of Faith* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1898), front piece.

daily to God to meet the needs of poor orphans. Those who hoped to see God's hand on him could not be disappointed by shabby clothes or a room void of the markings of social status. Müller recognized that the portraits were an attempt to capture an image that had already been imagined in the collective memory of his admirers. The first two portraits presented for public consumption displayed respectability, while other pictures near the end of his life emphasized the preaching of the Gospel.[19] In the final photograph, questions could not be raised about the place of the Bible in Müller's life because it was front and center.

Müller's visual public image mattered to his fellow evangelicals. C. Rusell Hurditch, also a member of the Christian Brethren, took up the fight against unauthorized photographs and sketches of Müller in his periodical, *Footsteps of Truth*, when he complained,

> In a weekly religious journal of October 9th there appeared what was stated as a portrait of Mr. George Müller, of Bristol, which was largely advertised as a special attraction in that number. But we feel bound to protest against any such caricature of that devoted servant of Christ. It looks more like the portrait of some negro preacher, instead of a true portrait of that happy-looking servant of God whom it attempts to represent. Mr. Müller has only once in his life been photographed, and the likeness appears in the volume of 'Preaching Tours and Missionary Labours of George Müller,' by Mrs. Müller; and this was published chiefly with a view of taking the place of the many *mis*-representations of him that had appeared.[20]

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[19] Another photograph that is also undated shows Müller in his standard dress with a bushy white beard leaning against what appears to be a fireplace mantle. This was also reproduced in various periodicals. A. T. Pierson, "George Müller, Patriarch and Prophet of Bristol," *The Missionary Review of the World* 19, no. 8 (August 1896): 560; Samuel Macauley Jackson, "George Müller of Bristol," *Charities Review* 10 (August 1900): 254; A. T. Pierson, "The Centenary of George Müller's Birth," *Record of Christian Work* 24, no. 11 (November 1905): 907.

[20] "Notes," *Footsteps of Truth* 2 (November 1884): 656.

Although the statement by Hurditch is technically inaccurate about Müller having sat for only one photograph in his entire life,[21] Hurditch's attack on the rival periodical exposed a desire for a particular type of image of Müller.[22] An awareness of his public religious persona defined how Müller presented himself in words and images. Hurditch railed against a likeness that did not appear godly enough in his mind. He also aimed to thwart further attempts to undermine the sanctity of the authorized image.

The proper image of himself, according to Müller, would "be one with a pleasant, cheerful expression of countenance, that will glorify and not dishonor the Lord I love; for our very *faces* even should show forth His praise."[23] Müller assumed a visual image of himself could be a conduit of God's work in the world that, like the words of a sacred text, would direct people toward God. Müller controlled his visual image because he recognized the power that such an image could wield in the present and the future.[24] He knew the possibility existed for a

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[21] Müller did sit for at least one photograph prior to his authorized version. A small image of him sitting in a chair, probably sometime in the late 1860s, was made. He is wearing clothing almost identical to that in his authorized photograph. This small photograph is framed and was obviously intended for family viewing only, either for his first wife, Mary, or his daughter, Lydia. "[George Müller Photograph, n.d.]," George Müller and Family Papers, Müller House, Cotham Park, Bristol, England.

[22] The frontpiece of Harding's biography reproduces an oil portrait that Müller may have sat for as a younger man, although it is unclear as to when it was painted. William Henry Harding, *The Life of George Müller: A Record of Triumphant Faith* (Edinburgh: Oliphants Ltd., n.d.).

[23] Mrs. Müller, *Preaching Tours*, xii-xiii.

[24] J. Pressley Barrett wrote an article about Thomas Barnardo and George Müller and included photographs of both men. Barrett reprinted the second authorized photograph of Müller from the 1889 edition of his wife's book. Barrett also noted, in reference to Barnardo and especially Müller, that, "Among earth's great men few have ever gained, and fewer still have held, the love of Christendom, as have the men who have been so pre-eminent in their service in behalf of the orphanage element in human society." J. Pressley Barrett, "Their Works Do Follow Them: Casting Bread Upon the Waters," *The Herald of Gospel Liberty* (October 14, 1909): 8-9.

photograph to serve as an object of adoration—an icon—that would, in his mind, subvert his goal of promoting only God.

The desire to possess an image of Müller reflected an excitement with the new technological medium of photography.[25] The intention was not to raise Müller up to the status of deity, but rather to possess a likeness of a person who had led a life of uncommon Christian devotion. A photograph could serve as an object of veneration, but was primarily intended for personal viewing.[26] Nineteenth-century evangelicals participated in a visual culture that was detached from the physical space of the sanctuary and the liturgical activities of the clergy. Evangelicals embraced a liturgy oriented around devotional practices in everyday life.[27] Müller's photograph could inspire others to focus on what God had done through him in order to support the orphans. Therefore, the image would operate as a photographic icon.[28] The

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[25] H. George Anderson, J. Francis Stafford, and Joseph A. Burgess, *The One Mediator, the Saints, and Mary: Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue VIII* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1992), 92-93.

[26] Visual imagery was also a component in promoting education and affinity with those who were missionaries. In evangelical periodicals from the era, advertisements often promote the use of illustrated cards emblazoned with Bible verses or in some cases pictures of missionaries and other religious leaders. Photographs played an intimate, but often forgotten, part in the devotional piety of evangelicals. For example, in one advertisement, the sale of pictures of women missionaries was marketed to other women in the following manner, "A BEAUTIFUL SET OF PICTURES of twenty-five of our young women missionaries for fifteen cents. These are invaluable for studying the fields. They may be cut out and mounted on gray board, or may be used in your missionary scrapbook." "A Beautiful Set of Pictures [Advertisement]," *Around the World: A Missionary Newspaper for the Family* 3, no. 4 (April 1902): 4.

[27] David Morgan, "Seeing Protestant Icons: The Popular Reception of Visual Media in Nineteenth-and Twentieth-Century America," in *Elite and Popular Religion*, ed. Kate Cooper and Jeremy Gregory (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2006): 406-410.

[28] Jennifer Tucker and Tina Campt, "Entwined Practices: Engagements with Photography in Historical Inquiry," *History and Theory* 48, no. 4 (December 2009): 1-8.

photograph was meant to inspire action in the world and was also assurance that God would help

the viewer much as Müller was helped. In context of daily devotional practice,[29] such an image

was evidence of things heard that could now be displayed in homes for further edification.[30] The

desire to possess a visual reminder of Müller and even the Ashley Down Orphan Houses resulted

in a number of sketches, photographs, and even half-penny postcards (see Appendix C) being

produced that were widely available in periodicals, in books, and from publishing houses.[31]

As important as photographs were becoming to Western societies, publications created

the monument to Müller's legacy. Books were the edifice that raised Müller, like a pillar saint,

above ordinary evangelicals as a model of what could be accomplished through faith and trust in

God. As text-centered people, evangelicals created an iconography of printed words that he

could not control. Books and magazine articles became far more important in making him a hero

of the faith than any photograph. Well-meaning evangelicals consciously constructed a written

shrine to his memory that enabled readers to make a personal pilgrimage in their mind that

acknowledged Müller as the archetype for piety in everyday life.

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[29]Morgan labels this type of use of visual imagery "the liturgy of everyday life." Morgan, "Seeing Protestant Icons," 409.

[30] C. Russell Hurditch, editor of *Footsteps of Truth*, recommended Susannah Müller's 1883 book *Preaching Tours and Missionary Labours of George Müller* for the superb photograph it contained for display. "Notice of Books," *Footsteps of Truth* 1 (October 1883): 518.

[31] Sketches of the orphan homes were commonly published in the nineteenth century. These images were important for those who needed to see to believe. For examples see, "New Orphan House, Ashley Down," *The Illustrated London News* 17 (October 12, 1850): 296; J. Milner, "New Orphan Houses, Bristol," *The Christian Messenger* 2 (London: W. Lister, 1866): 177; W. Elfe Taylor, *The Bristol Orphan Houses, Ashley Down*, 3rd ed. (London: Morgan and Scott, n.d.); when the half-penny postcard came into existence in the last quarter of the nineteenth century they were also used to promote the orphan homes. "No. 1, Ashley Down Orphan Houses, Bristol [Half-penny postcard]," (Bristol: William P. Mack, n.d.).

Being Read: Authorized Versions

As mentioned in chapter 6, Rev. Arthur T. Pierson played a major role in publicizing

Müller to American evangelicals. Pierson was deeply influenced by Müller's example of piety,

philanthropy, and friendship.[32] Pierson also became close friends with Müller and his son-in-

law, James Wright. Besides befriending the two men and spending a significant amount of time

in Bristol observing their work firsthand, Pierson constructed a monument to each man by

writing his biography.[33] Pierson's biography of Müller was motivated by a desire to see the

patron of the Ashley Down Orphan Homes memorialized in a manner that would continue to

inspire others.[34] Pierson stated in his book entitled, *George Müller of Bristol*,[35] that "It is the

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[32] Müller considered Pierson a close personal friend and wrote about the details of his personal struggles in their correspondence until his death on March 10, 1898. For examples, see George Müller to Arthur T. Pierson, August 7, 1894, The Arthur Tappan and Delavan Leonard Pierson Manuscript Collection, Archives and Special Collections, Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries, Princeton, New Jersey; George Müller to Arthur T. Pierson, November 8, 1895, The Arthur Tappan and Delavan Leonard Pierson Manuscript Collection, Archives and Special Collections, Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries, Princeton, New Jersey; George Müller to Arthur T. Pierson, July 20, 1897, Letters of George Müller, Billy Graham Center Archives, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois; George Müller to Arthur T. Pierson, January 21, 1898, Letters of George Müller, Billy Graham Center Archives, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois.

[33] Arthur T. Pierson, *James Wright of Bristol: A Memorial of a Fragrant Life* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1906).

[34] Church historian Gerald L. Sittser has argued that missionary biographies should be seen as similar to icons in the Eastern Orthodox Church. First, missionary biographies are intended to be spiritual in nature. Second, missionary biographies aspire to describe the transformation process of Christian belief and practice in the life of an individual. Third,

hope and the prayer of him who writes this memoir that the reading of these pages may prove to be an interview with the man whose memorial they are, and that the witness borne by George Müller may be to many readers a source of untold and lifelong blessing."[36] The importance Pierson placed on his biographical account of Müller as a memorial illuminates the place of the written word for evangelicals.

Rooted in the Reformation mantra *sola scriptura*, evangelicals placed supreme importance on the biblical text and literacy as essential elements in their faith formation. Published words mattered most to evangelicals, which contributed to their viewing books, periodicals, and even tracts as logical places to honor those who had distinguished themselves for work as pastors, missionaries, and philanthropists.[37] Evangelicals embraced hagiographical literature as a means to inspire devotion, sacrifice, and service, and also to honor those distinguished by their pious lives.[38] Pierson's biography, therefore, serves as more than an

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missionary biographies emphasize the peculiar individual rather than the normative to refocus the reader on the spiritual above the earthly. Sittser concludes, "Spiritual biographies of this kind invite readers, as icons do beholders, to ask a question—'What kind of life do I want to lead?' They beckon readers to consider entering a world that is infused with the light of the incarnate Son of God, founded upon the principles of the kingdom of God, and animated by a call to radical service, and they provide examples—as strange and even offensive as they might be—of how one can begin the journey." Gerald L. Sittser, "Protestant Missionary Biography as Written Icon," *Christian Scholar's Review* 36, no. 3 (Spring 2007): 303-321.

[35] It should be noted that this title was modified in subsequent printings to *George Müller of Bristol and His Witness to a Prayer Hearing God*. Arthur T. Pierson, *George Müller of Bristol and His Witness to a Prayer Hearing God*, intro. James Wright (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., n.d.).

[36] Ibid., 262.

[37] Historian Candy Gunther Brown points out that the publishing of books, tracts, and periodicals was a way to exercise "spiritual influence." Candy Gunther Brown, "Salt to the World: A Cultural History of Evangelical Reading, Writing, and Publishing Practices in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2000), 22.

introduction to the life and times of one evangelical who happened to be set apart because of his

piety and philanthropic activities. Rather, the book was constructed not only to celebrate

Müller's life, but also to encourage readers with practical lessons and applicable wisdom.

Pierson's biography promoted Müller as an archetype that others could benefit from through the

application of his virtues and behaviors in their personal lives.[39]

Pierson intended the book to be a memorial to his friend. Pierson explained his motive

and aspiration for the volume when he wrote, "It is the hope and the prayer of him who writes

this memoir that the reading of these pages may prove to be an interview with the man whose

memorial they are, and that the witness borne by George Müller may be to many readers a source

of untold and lifelong blessing."[40] The claim that the volume was a memorial to Müller was not

lost on other evangelicals. In 1900, the *Methodist Magazine and Review*, published in Canada,

included an article by John Lathern who endorsed Pierson's literary memorial when he wrote,

> According to Robert Hall, it is a homage due to departed worth, whenever it has become
> so conspicuous as to render its possessor worthy of attention, that an attempt should be
> made to perpetuate some reflection of it living lustre. Then, surely, George Müller, of
> Bristol, founder of the Ashley Down Orphan Homes, ought to have some fitting

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[38] Esteem for evangelicals who had lived lives of celebrated piety usually resulted in canonization by those who were influenced by their example. An example of this is seen in the endorsement of a M'Cheyne biography by Rev. Dinsdale T. Young, minister at Wesley Chapel, London, when he wrote the following: "I hail any appreciation of Robert Murray M'Cheyne. My dear father, a devoted Christian physician, taught me to love M'Cheyne, and my debt to him is continuous and increasing. His sanctity, his prayerfulness, his love of the Word of God, his passion for souls, his felicity of phrase, his rich spiritual insight, make him a Prince in Israel. Honour to his great memory! And may abounding blessing attend all attempts to spread his gracious influence." J. C. Smith, *Robert Murray M'Cheyne* (London: Elliot Stock, 1900), viii.

[39] J. T. Gracey wrote, "No saint ever acknowledged himself a saint; that would unmake him if he were one. There were virtues that modesty would not allow Mr. Müller to speak of, even if he can be conceived of as realizing them to exist in himself, and there were results of his life and work which it were impossible should be known to him. Dr. Pierson had exceptional furnishing for his task." J. T. Gracey, "George Müller of Bristol," *The Missionary Review of the World* 12, no. 7 (July 1899): 529.

[40] Pierson, *George Müller*, 262.

memorial, and an adequate record of his witness to a prayer-hearing God. Dr. Pierson's volume is, therefore, a welcome and valuable contribution to the literature to which it belongs.[41]

Lathern recognized that evangelicals wrote commemorative and hagiographical literature to honor heroes of the faith, and he affirmed that Pierson's book matched the ideal of such literature. In a similar manner, Müller's son-in-law and successor, James Wright, also recognized that Pierson's biography could be an enormously important tool for evangelicals. He recommended the book to "readers on both sides of the Atlantic" but had greater aspirations than merely seeing his father-in-law esteemed. Wright indicated that he hoped this literary account would "be identical with that produced by the account of the Apostle Paul's 'manner of life' upon the churches of Judea which were in Christ (Gal. i. 24), viz., 'They glorified GOD' in him."[42] Wright's spiritual desires for the book also coincided with Pierson's goal for the book. Wright, likewise, anticipated a response from readers, while Pierson believed that Müller's story offered practical knowledge that illustrated, as he wrote, "grand spiritual principles and precepts."[43]

Pierson's biography, consequently, matched the ideal of a sacred biography. According to Thomas J. Heffernan in his study of medieval hagiography, "The lives of the saints were sacred stories designed to teach the faithful to imitate actions which the community had decided were paradigmatic."[44] Consequently, Pierson's claim that he wanted to, "perpetuate George

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[41] John Lathern, "George Müller: A Life of Trust," *Methodist Magazine and Review* 51, no. 5 (May 1900): 428.

[42] James Wright, "Introduction," in Pierson, *George Müller*, 7.

[43] Ibid., 9.

[44] Thomas J. Heffernan, *Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 5.

Müller's witness to a prayer-hearing God," actually offered Müller's life as a proper model from

which to conceptualize Christian practice.[45] Müller was more than a pious person, rather his

[45] Ibid., 10.

experiences pointed toward his being a conduit for supernatural power.[46] Pierson organized the whole of Müller's life into a form that followed the chronological narrative, while including selections of his wise sayings, favorite scripture verses, and other practical advice.[47] The text operated as a handbook on how to walk in the steps of Jesus while following Müller's example.[48] Pierson also included his own ideas on Müller's methods and made many observations about his life of faith and prayer.[49]

Based on his intimate access to Müller and Wright, Pierson had a very personal understanding of the Ashley Down Orphan Houses and the Scriptural Knowledge Institution. Pierson's biography became the most widely-read biography of Müller. The popularity of Pierson's biography among evangelicals is difficult to ascertain since they did not keep bestseller lists.[50] However, the first of the literary periodicals to develop a bestseller list was *The*

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[46] Historian Aviad M. Kleinberg points out that in the medieval context "The most important 'symptom' of sainthood, one that the historian can use, is the treatment of the saint as a source of supernatural spiritual power." The notion that Müller would pray for the miraculous was certainly present from the 1850s, but within the thinking of evangelicals it was not Müller who operated as a "source of supernatural power." Rather, as Pierson noted, Müller was an agent who witnessed the work of God through his chronicle of answered prayer. Aviad M. Kleinberg, *Prophets in Their Own Country: Living Saints and the Making of Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 8.

[47] Evangelicals noticed the usefulness of the book to direct personal prayer and as a model for how to use the Bible in everyday life. George Wharton Pepper, *A Voice From the Crowd: The Forty-First Series of Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching Delivered at Yale University in 1915* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1915), 201.

[48] Müller's thoughts on everything from church conduct to child rearing are covered in the appendix of the volume. Pierson, *George Müller*, 377-462.

[49] Pierson's account of Müller's writing style is noteworthy. He highlighted that it lacked the prose qualities of literature or poetry, but instead functioned as factual history that was difficult to refute. Ibid., 363.

Bookman: A Journal of Literature and Life that was published in New York.[51] By June of 1899,

The Bookman was reporting that Pierson's biography, *George Müller of Bristol*, was attracting

the attention of book buyers and, in particular, those interested in religious literature.[52]

Advertisements to promote the sale of the book ran in the religious periodicals, at the end of

other books, and even in leading popular periodicals like *The Atlantic Monthly*.[53] Pierson's text,

thanks to the accolades by reviewers,[54] became the definitive study of Müller's life and the main

text that evangelicals have relied on to comprehend the importance of his life.[55]

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[50] Pierson's biography was also popular among evangelicals in Great Britain. "Books of the Month," *The Irish Presbyterian* (July 1, 1899): 111.

[51] The first bestseller list was developed by *The Bookman* and published in 1895. Alice Payne Hackett and James Henry Burke, *80 Years of Best Sellers, 1895-1975* (New York: R. R. Bowker Company, 1977), 3. However, categorization of the books sold as non-fiction, fiction, or even religious bestsellers was not evident in the early lists that simply recorded overall sales without noting the type of book sold. The issue has created challenges for other researchers who have tried to analyze the sales of religious books in America. Louis Schneider and Sanford M. Dornbusch, *Popular Religion: Inspirational Books in America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), 160.

[52] Advertisements for the book quoted statements in periodicals that praised the volume. For example, in an advertisement for "Ashley Down Literature," statements from the *The Spectator*, *The Christian*, *Scotsman*, *Western Morning News*, and the *Leeds Mercury* were included to emphasize the importance of Pierson's biography. "Ashley Down Literature [Advertisement]," A. E. G. Brookes, ed., *How God Answers Prayer as Set Forth in the Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller of the Ashley Down Orphanage, Bristol* (Glasgow: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.), end page. Also see "Eastern Letter," *The Bookman: A Journal of Literature and Life* 9, no. 4 (June 1899): 380.

[53] "The Baker & Taylor Company, Publishers [Advertisement]," *The Atlantic Monthly* 83, no. 500 (June 1899): 8.

[54] "Biography," *The Outlook* 62 (May 27, 1899): 218; "George Müller, of Bristol," *The Literary News* 20, no. 8 (August 1899): 226; "George Müller's Witness to a Prayer-hearing God," *Public Opinion* 26, no. 22 (June 1, 1899): 691-692. Not everyone, however, was completely impressed with the triumphal tone of Pierson's biography. *The Nation* reported, "The book is written in the dialect of that vulgar piety whose slang expressions are the current coin of camp-meetings and revivals." "George Müller of Bristol and His Witness to a Prayer-Hearing God," *The Nation* 69 (September 14, 1899): 213.

Pierson was not the only writer who desired to memorialize Müller in words within a year of his death. Frederick G. Warne also fashioned a particular memory of Müller for evangelicals to draw upon. Warne's "authorized edition" was published in 1898, the same year that Müller died.[56] Like Pierson's biography, Warne's also pointed out essential qualities of Müller's life that would be useful for fellow Christians. This work also possessed a hagiographic quality that was captured in the subtitle of the book, "The Modern Apostle of Faith." Warne's sacred biography asserted that,

> The life of this great and good man altogether reads like a chapter from the records of the Early Church. Amidst all the conflicting beliefs, the skepticism, and the indifferentism of the nineteenth century, the quiet, dignified, and unassuming form of George Müller is seen towering like a beacon over a stormy sea, pointing the way to the habour of safety by bearing witness to the truth of a living Christ.[57]

Warne's biography was a compilation of reports from Müller, firsthand observations of the orphan houses, and summaries of Müller's ideas, sermons, and actions over the course of his life. Similar to Pierson, Warne included Müller's advice on all aspects of the Christian life, such as staying out of debt, conducting a business as a Christian, and getting up early.[58] Pierson and Warne laid the foundation in their hagiographical accounts for subsequent evangelical literature

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[55] The book, consequently, has remained in print throughout the twentieth century and served as essential reading on Müller for books and devotionals that present Müller as an example. For an example, see Becky Tirabassi, *The One Year Sacred Obsession Devotional* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2007), 129. Pierson's book is still used by church reading groups. Salem United Methodist Church in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, used the Pierson text for a lunchtime reading group entitled, "Books Between Bites." "January 2008 Church Calendar," Salem United Methodist Church of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

[56] It should be noted that the claim "authorized edition" did not appear in the earliest volume printed in Great Britain, but was added by the American publisher Fleming H. Revell. Frederick G. Warne, *George Müller: The Modern Apostle of Faith* (Bristol: Burleigh Ltd., 1898).

[57] Ibid., 2-3.

[58] Ibid., 214, 218, 243-244. Also see, chapter 16 entitled, "Hints on the Christian Life," Ibid., 225-236.

that was aimed at popular audiences and ensured that the literary legacy of Müller's life

maintained his place as a model of piety in action.

"The crassest petitional order"

In contrast to the hagiographical function of Pierson's and Warne's authorized

biographies, William James, the renowned Harvard University professor, directed his keen mind

toward understanding Müller's conception of God. James wrote a scathing critique of Müller's

approach to religion in his profoundly influential 1901-1902 Gifford Lectures given at the

University of Edinburgh and latter published as *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.[59]

Drawing on the 1878 edition of The *Life of Trust* and Warne's biography of Müller, James

analyzed Müller as an example of someone who embraced a religious practice that limited God

to a mere partner in business.[60] James wrote, ". . . [A]s a concrete example of an extreme sort, of

the way in which the prayerful life may still be led, let me take a case with which most of you

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[59] James' Gifford Lectures were published in 1902 and have remained in print. The book has the distinction of being ranked number two on the Board of the Modern Library's list of 100 Best Nonfiction titles, and continues to have a profound influence on the field of psychology. "100 Best Nonfiction," The Modern Library. http://www.randomhouse.com/ modernlibrary/100bestnonfiction.html (accessed May 13, 2009). Also see Wayne Proudfoot, ed., *William James and a Science of Religions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 1; David M. Wulff, "Reintroducing The Varieties: A Centennial Undertaking," *Journal of Moral Education* 32, no. 4 (2003): 423-428; Carol Zaleski, "A Letter to William James," *The Christian Century* 119, no. 2 (January 16-23, 2002): 32.

[60] James was not the only American intellectual to be repulsed by Müller. Ralph Waldo Emerson was sent a copy of Müller's autobiography by an admirer who thought he would enjoy the book. Unimpressed by Müller's story he returned the book with a letter explaining, "There is piety here, but't is pulled down steadily into the pantry and the shoe-closet, till we are distressed for a breath of fresh air. Who would dare to be shut up with such as these from year to year? Certainly there is a philosophic interest and question here that well deserves attention,— the success, namely, to which he challenges scrutiny, through all these years; God coming precisely in the mode he is called for, and to the hour and minute. But this narrative would not quite stand cross-examination." Quoted in James Elliot Cabot, *A Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Vol. 2* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1887), 418.

must be acquainted, that of George Müller of Bristol, who died in 1898. Muller's prayers were of the crassest petitional order."[61] James' analysis of Müller's prayer life depicted Müller as a negative example of how to approach prayer. Although James does not explain how he happened upon *The Life of Trust*, James assumed that his audience would be familiar with the Bristol philanthropist's life story. As the initial statement from James implied, he was not impressed by Müller. James went on to explain that,

> George Müller's is a case extreme in every respect, and in no respect more so than in the extraordinary narrowness of the man's intellectual horizon. His God was, as he often said, his business partner. He seems to have been for Müller little more than a sort of supernatural clergyman interested in the congregation of tradesmen and others in Bristol who were his saints, and in the orphanages and other enterprises, but unpossessed of any of those vaster and wilder and more ideal attributes with which the human imagination elsewhere has invested him. Müller, in short, was absolutely unphilosophical. His intensely private and practical conception of his relations with the Deity continued the traditions of the most primitive human thought.[62]

For James, the most acclaimed philosophical and psychological thinker of his day, Müller espoused an elementary form of religious belief in terms of philosophical nuance. From James' perspective Müller was a pious simpleton whose conception of God was based simply on an economic transaction. Although James does not make any reference to William Huntington S.S., he would have, most likely, condemned both men. James believed that Müller did not engage reason, but offered a simplistic understanding of religious faith.[63]

What James failed to explore in his critique of Müller was his attractiveness to the masses of ordinary evangelicals, those who were uncertain about their own spiritual prowess in the

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[61] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, intro. Reinhold Niebuhr (New York: Collier Books, 1961), 364.

[62] Ibid., 366.

[63] Similar claims were made against Christians in the first two centuries of Christianity's existence. Robert Louis Wilken, *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought: Seeking the Face of God* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 162.

circumstances of everyday life. Müller's *Narrative* was written in order to convince those who

questioned the effectiveness of their prayers, especially the most mundane kind, that God would

hear and respond. What James envisioned as Müller's greatest weaknesses, such as his lack of

philosophical complexity and his "practical conception of his relations with the Deity," were the

areas where ordinary evangelicals identified with a model they could follow. Consequently,

James' critique did not impact Müller's popularity among evangelical audiences. Those who

were drawn to Müller focused more on his Christian practice than his adherence to dogma. The

testimony, chronicle, and celebration of Müller's life over several decades leading up to James'

critique outweighed any theological or philosophical problem James voiced. By the time James'

lectures were published, the literary memorials written to pay homage to and informally canonize

Müller made any academic critique irrelevant.

An Apology for Faith

The arbitrary end of centuries does little to help explain the movement of thought over

time. As the twentieth century dawned, theological liberalism,[64] scientific skepticism, and doubt

about the truth of the biblical text continued to trouble evangelicals.[65] One response to the

cultural and theological malaise was the publication of *The Fundamentals*. These pamphlets

were first printed in 1910 in an effort to combat the problems of the modern world by asserting

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[64] Gerald Bray of Beeson Divinity School of Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama, explains that nineteenth-century theological liberals "were convinced that the Old Testament was largely fiction, and that many of the people and places described in it had never existed. The New Testament had more credibility, but its picture of Jesus was historically inaccurate. The victorious party, which came to the fore about AD 200, simply anathematized the rest and suppressed their writings." Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 273.

[65] George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 6-7.

the validity of "the fundamentals of the Christian faith."[66] *The Fundamentals* represented the

various issues that evangelicals found important and were an affirmation of nineteenth-century

evangelical thought that supported a traditional and fixed form of Christian theology.[67] *The*

Fundamentals were, as historian George M. Marsden argued, "focused on a broad defense of the

faith."[68] A. T. Pierson, who memorialized Müller in his authorized biography, was also a

contributor to *The Fundamentals*. Pierson wrote an article that affirmed Müller's piety and

rebutted those who criticized the idea that God still worked in the world.[69] Pierson argued that,

"he [Müller] was one of God's ripest saints, and himself a living proof that a life of faith is

possible; that God may be known, communed with, found, and become a conscious companion

in the daily life."[70] Pierson cited the material evidence of Müller's orphan homes, his focus on

serving God, and his faithfulness to God over the course of a long life. He also emphasized that

Müller had a secret to his success, "daily and frequent communion with God."[71] According to

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[66] R. A. Torrey, "Preface," in *The Fundamentals: A Testimony of Truth, Vol. 4,* ed. R. A. Torrey, A. C. Dixon, et. al (Los Angeles: Bible Institute of Los Angeles, 1917; repr. Grand Rapids, MI: Book House, 1970), 5.

[67] The pamphlets formed a compilation of both British and American conservative evangelical thought in response to fears about the direction of the modern world. They were widely acknowledged, but over the course of the twentieth century served more as a reference work than as books that were widely read. Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 119.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Arthur T. Pierson, "The Proof of the Living God, as Found in the Prayer Life of George Müller, of Bristol," in *The Fundamentals: A Testimony of Truth, Vol. 4*, 238-254.

[70] Ibid., 240.

[71] Ibid., 245.

Pierson, it was through prayers of faith that Müller was able to see the "*supernatural power of God*" and challenge cynics that dismissed the reality of God.[72]

Pierson's account created a definitive type of historical legacy that relied on the active selection of certain aspects of Müller's personality and practice. Although the modern thinker, according to Pierson, may have arrived at the simple conclusion that Müller's publication of various forms of the *Narrative* was responsible for the massive fundraising effort that he was engaged in, there was still the detailed recording of gifts and funds that always arrived just in the nick of time. As Pierson envisioned events, the factual evidence seemed to undermine circumstantial conditions.[73] It was one thing to get a sum of money just as food ran out and desperation set in, but to do so year after year and decade after decade appeared to indicate something quite different to those who saw Müller as a hero. Müller's story was not, therefore, an accident but, instead, a dramatic proof text aimed at convincing others that God exists. In summary, Pierson ended his argument for the triumph of Müller's life by asking for a scientific experiment that could refute the claims of the supernatural. He asked for institutions to be established that made no direct appeal for funds through solicitation, though annual reports and advertisements could be widely used. The main point was that prayer would not be allowed and no reference to God could be made. Pierson then claimed that for such an experiment to prove Müller wrong it would need to last sixty years, result in the construction of an enormous orphanage to house 2,000 children, and always meet the physical needs of the orphans.

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[72] Ibid., 247.

[73] Ibid., 249-253.

The Fundamentals forwarded those ideas and individuals whom evangelicals could embrace.[74] Müller was part of a living memory of recent spiritual heroes who relied on God to preserve them. His inclusion was not for novelty. Rather, his experience offered a rebuttal to the modernist mindset that had replaced theological dogma with the dogma of doubt. Rev. George H. Hubbard, D.D., wrote in 1913,

> The miracle stories of the Gospels are a sort of divine promise to all succeeding ages. We have just as good reason to expect these immediate manifestations of divine power or spiritual energy in America or Europe today as had the people of Palestine to believe in them in the days of Jesus of Nazareth. More than this, their promise has been and is daily being fulfilled; and witnesses to this fulfillment are numberless. The records of George Muller's work in Bristol or of the Fulton Street prayer-meeting in New York are just as reliable as are those of the Gospels.[75]

Asserting that Müller's *Narrative* was a witness to the miraculous akin to the four Gospels drew on Müller's informally canonized status as an evangelical hero.[76] In a similar manner Pierson used Müller in his article in *The Fundamentals* as a respected and known example of the miraculous. Although *The Fundamentals* did not accomplish everything that the editors and writers may have hoped, they were an important reference for Fundamentalists, Holiness adherents, and Pentecostals who waged independent wars against the broader culture and, often,

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[74] A. C. Dixon, one of the editors of *The Fundamentals*, published a book in 1905 that also drew together various heroes of the faith over many centuries to promote Christian evangelism. Besides the persons drawn from the Bible, Müller was included along with Peter Waldo, Luther, Wesley, Finney, Moody, and others. A. C. Dixon, *Evangelism Old and New: God's Search for Man in All Ages* (New York: American Tract Society, 1905), 192.

[75] George Henry Hubbard, "The Message of the Miracles to Modern Minds," *The Biblical World* 42, no. 4 (October 1913): 212.

[76] Ironically Hubbard blasted individuals, such as Dr. Charles Cullis of Boston and A. B. Simpson, who were heavily influenced by Müller as practicing "folly and nonsense galore." Ibid., 210.

against each other.[77] Holiness churches, much like Pietists, focused on individual sanctification and personal piety, while Pentecostals emphasized the role of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life.[78] Fundamentalists, who were concerned about the literal authority of the Bible, embraced a dogmatic approach to the text in order to protect themselves from readings that deviated from the literal words on the page. All three groups would utilize similar sources of inspiration for their practice of the Christian faith, but often apply them with their own needs in mind.   It is within this framework that *The Fundamentals* and Müller served evangelicals who needed heroic examples to follow.

The Heroic Fundamentalist

Fundamentalism came into its own after 1910, and those who identified with the movement looked for heroic models that could encourage adherents to save the lost and herald the Second Coming of Jesus.   Müller's impact on Fundamentalism, therefore, would not be limited to serving as proof for God's existence in *The Fundamentals*. Müller's reputation as a man of faith, who took the promises of the Bible literally, inspired Fundamentalists to imagine that they too could accomplish similar feats. Fundamentalists wanted heroes and the heroes they chose were those who matched the practical piety they esteemed with a commitment to preach

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[77] Historian Vinson Synan noted this antipathy when he explained, "By the time the fundamentalist movement hit its crest in the 1920s, it had already effectively barred the door to fellowship with the Pentecostals. In a 1928 convention of the 'World's Christian Fundamentals Association,' a group organized in 1919 to be the major voice of the movement, the Pentecostals were soundly condemned." Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 208.

[78] Although Pentecostals read *The Fundamentals*, they were never accepted as part of American Fundamentalism. Synan explained that "Although most Pentecostals thought of themselves as fundamentalists, the feeling was not reciprocated by the leaders of organized fundamentalism." Ibid. Also see, Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 94.

the Gospel.[79]   As a result, Fundamentalists looked back to those in their own lives who inspired

them to live out the Christian faith to the utmost. For most evangelicals in the first half of the

twentieth century, such reference points were those whom they had heard about as children or

admired as young adults and then promoted among the next generation in the movement.

One early Fundamentalist leader who embraced Müller was also a transitional figure who

factored in the shift from nineteenth-century evangelicalism to twentieth-century

Fundamentalism. Charles A. Blanchard, who became president of Wheaton College in 1882,

saw himself in a line of continuity that reached from the New England Puritans through Charles

Finney into his own lifetime.[80]   Influenced by one of D. L. Moody's co-workers, Miss Emma

Dyer, he embraced dispensational premillennialism,[81] which argued that Jesus would return

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[79] Historian Joel A. Carpenter explains this element in Fundamentalism succinctly when he argues, "The movement's remembrance of revivals highlighted the role of the singular spiritual hero, the prophet-evangelist who became the Lord's trumpet to sound the message of warning, repentance, and salvation." Joel A. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 218-219.

[80] His father, Jonathan Blanchard (1811-1892), who fought for the abolition of slavery, partnered with Charles Finney against Freemasonry, and attacked the emerging liberalism among Congregationalists that began to appear after the Civil War. The elder Blanchard believed that the revivalist message of sin, salvation, and living a holy life was essential for the church and the redemption of America as a Christian nation. In 1860, Blanchard assumed the presidency of The Illinois Institute, later Wheaton College. He and his son, Charles, would maintain their adherence to the revivalist tradition in American evangelicalism when they aligned themselves with D. L. Moody and his ministries in Chicago. Both Blanchards fought against the prevailing cultural mood of America during their lives. The elder Blanchard was a postmillennialist who believed such efforts would lead to a thousand years of peace followed by the return of Jesus of Nazareth. Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 27-30.

[81] Pierson was brought into the premillennialist camp by Müller in 1878. Fundamentalists also looked to Müller as a proponent of a premillennialism. Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism 1800-1930* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), 143.

before the millennium to a world corrupted by sin and lawlessness to remove Christians.[82]

Blanchard and scores of late nineteenth-century evangelicals, from Presbyterians to Baptists, embraced premillennialist eschatology as an answer to the godlessness of the modern world.[83] An essential quality of premillennialism was the assumption that Christendom was apostate and that true Christians must separate from the corrupted churches. According to premillennialists, the apostasy of the churches was a sign that they were living close to the time of the Second Coming.[84] As president of Wheaton College, Blanchard led the way forward by attempting to hold off the evil he associated with modern society until the Second Coming of Jesus. Blanchard drafted the doctrinal statement for the World Christian Fundamentals Association in 1919 and affirmed Wheaton College's place as a leading educational center for Fundamentalism.[85] However, Blanchard was interested in more than forwarding conservative evangelicalism, he was also interested to see ordinary people put their faith into practice.

Blanchard employed Müller as a source of inspiration in his book entitled, *Getting Things from God: A Study of the Prayer Life*, which was published in 1915. Like William James, Blanchard was first introduced to Müller through *The Life of Trust*. Blanchard became familiar with Müller's story as a boy and assumed his readers would be familiar with the work of the

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[82] Ibid., 31.

[83] Marsden argues that most of the promoters of premillennialism in the United States were Calvinists. Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 46.

[84] Timothy P. Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming: American Premillennialism 1875-1982*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Academie Books, 1983), 170-171.

[85] Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 31.

Bristol philanthropist.[86] In fact, Blanchard was so impressed by Müller's story that he wished

the book could be distributed to tens of millions of people because he believed the content could

transform individual lives by its emphasis on prayer.[87] Blanchard not only read about Müller; he

also heard him preach and considered him to be among the rarest examples of piety and

"triumphant faith" in the history of Christianity.[88]

Blanchard believed that Müller carried on a conversation with God as one might talk with

a neighbor or a friend on the street.[89] Müller's method of prayer and trust in God, Blanchard

argued, was better than other methods Christians used because it developed faith and honored

God.[90] Blanchard emphasized personal experience and the biblical text as the two key sources

for the Christian life. Consequently, he was convinced that Müller's testimony[91] and the

continued work of orphan homes distinguished his piety.[92] Blanchard affirmed that those, like

Müller, who allowed the Holy Spirit to lead them in the work that God had for them would see

their needs supplied.[93] Blanchard's high esteem for Müller ensured that Fundamentalists who

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[86] Charles A. Blanchard, *Getting Things from God: A Study of the Prayer Life* (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1915), 121-122.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid., 121.

[89] Ibid., 64.

[90] Ibid., 186.

[91] Ibid., 253.

[92] Ibid., 206.

[93] Ibid., 122.

followed in his path continued to use Müller as a model of the preferred method for heroic

Christian living.

Another Fundamentalist leader who identified with Müller was the evangelist John R.

Rice. Rice was a powerful force in the shaping of Fundamentalism in the twentieth century and

was celebrated as a stalwart of orthodoxy by the end of his life. A native of Texas, Rice, under

the influence of J. Frank Norris, left the Southern Baptist Convention and went on to establish

The Sword of the Lord in 1934, the most important Fundamentalist periodical through the

1960s.[94] In 1942, Rice published a book entitled, *Prayer: Asking and Receiving*.[95] Rice

intended for the book to educate readers about "*Bible teaching* on prayer" and goes on to explain

in his preface, "The Bible teaches that God delights to answer prayer. The Bible gives us many

great and exceedingly precious promises about what God will do for those who come to him in

prayer, and the Bible clearly gives the conditions for getting things from God."[96]

Rice's goal in writing was to show ordinary Christians how to pray. Rice wanted

Müller's story to influence all Christians, because Rice believed Müller was an ideal spiritual

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[94] Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 237-238.

[95] Rice dedicated the volume to the former Brethren chronicler, H. A. Ironside, who was serving as pastor of Moody Memorial Church of Chicago. Henry Allen Ironside (1876-1951) was also a member of the Salvation Army and then the Christian Brethren prior to his appointment in 1930 to Moody Memorial Church in Chicago. He served as pastor of the Chicago church until 1948 and became one of the most influential Fundamentalist preachers in the mid-twentieth century. Ironside wrote forty-six books and thirty-one pamphlets, including a key historical study of the Brethren entitled, *A Historical Sketch of the Brethren Movement*. J. A. Carpenter, "Ironside, Henry ("Harry") Allen," in *Dictionary of Christianity in America*, ed. Daniel G. Reid, Robert D. Linder, Bruce L. Shelley, Harry S. Stout (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 582.

[96] John R. Rice, *Prayer: Asking and Receiving*, intro. Oswald J. Smith (Wheaton, IL: Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1942), 11.

role model.[97] Rice encouraged readers to focus on reading books by and about Müller.[98]

Furthermore, Rice noted that he too had embraced Müller's method of living by faith as his

primary means for supporting his itinerant ministry.[99] Consequently, Rice emphasized, in his

interpretation of Müller, the possibility for anyone who applied Müller's methods to see similar

answers to prayer.[100] Although the full scope of Müller's influence through Rice's endorsement

cannot be measured, by 1970, he had printed 500,000 copies of the book and claimed that the

book was a bestseller.[101]

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[97] Ibid., 68.

[98] Rice placed, opposite the table of contents at the beginning of the book, a list of twelve books under the title "Books That Have Helped Me To Pray." The first two books on Rice's list are about George Müller. Arthur T. Pierson's *George Muller of Bristol* tops the list followed by *Answers to Prayer From the Narratives of George Muller*. Rice then includes Müller in a list of famous evangelical ministers, such as Charles G. Finney and D. L. Moody, and less well-known supporters of faith missions like Mrs. Jonathan Goforth. Goforth or more accurately Rosalind Goforth, a Canadian missionary to China, also wrote a book on prayer. The Goforths were Canadian Presbyterians who worked in China alongside faith missionaries and the China Inland Mission. Rosalind started her initial foray into faith missions with the Toronto Mission Union in 1885 when it established a faith mission in the East End of Toronto. Rosalind Goforth, *How I Know God Answers Prayer: The Personal Testimony of One Life-Time* (1921; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, n.d.), 11, 76, 119-120.

[99] Ibid., 72, 174.

[100] For example, Rice explained how one of his own answered prayer stories influenced a listener when it was broadcast over the radio in Nebraska. A young man attending Kansas State Agricultural College (Kansas State University) happened to hear the story of God answering Rice's prayer and was inspired to act. The student was, as Rice explained, "heartsick because of all the wickedness on the campus and the atheism and deliberate godlessness in the classrooms." The young man prayed to go to Wheaton College, but "he had no money." Inspired by Rice's example, the student left Kansas State for Wheaton certain that God would support his act of faith, which according to Rice, happened when he moved thanks to a variety of providential circumstances. Rice, *Prayer*, 71-72.

[101] The original 1942 hardback text went through numerous reprints. The claim for the book being a "bestseller" was made on the cover of the 1970 mass-market paperback.

Blanchard and Rice promoted Müller's life of faith and prayer as a model that others should follow.   Likewise, Jerry Falwell, the founder of Liberty University and the Moral Majority, believed that Müller had something to offer his followers.[102]   For the twenty-fifth anniversary of his Old-Time Gospel Hour television ministry in 1981 a special edition of Basil Miller's biography of Müller was printed for those who donated to the ministry.[103]   Falwell's reason for making the biography available to his audience had to do with his own reading of what Falwell labeled, "the spiritual giants of yesteryear."[104]   The "spiritual giants" that had helped him develop his ideas about the Christian faith were the proper individuals to promote among his followers.

Falwell's effort to connect his audience to Müller was also supported by a descendent of the famous Fundamentalist Bob Jones. His great-great grandson Bob Jones IV not only endorsed Müller but wrote a musical about him entitled, *Father's Prayer: A Story of George Mueller*, which was published in 1990. Not content to allow this story of answered prayer to fade from the memory of Fundamentalists, Bob Jones University Press published in 2002 a play entitled, *So Many Miracles: The Story of George Mueller*, that was written by J. Douglas Schaedel. These musicals were intended for use by Fundamentalist churches, but were also staged by churches outside of Fundamentalist circles.[105]

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[102] B. J. Leonard, "Falwell, Jerry," in *Dictionary of Christianity in America*, 427-428.

[103] Basil Miller, *George Muller, Man of Faith & Miracles: A Biography of One of the Greatest Prayer-Warriors of the Past Century, Silver Anniversary Classics* (Lynchburg, VA: Old-Time Gospel Hour, 1981).

[104] Jerry Falwell, *Strength for the Journey: An Autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 231.

[105] For example, in the 1990s First Assembly of God, Phoenix, Arizona, a large church of several thousand members, led by Pastor Tommy Barnett, staged a modified version of the

Both the musical and the play contain a legend that has become one of the most famous miracle stories associated with Müller. The plot is very simple. Müller's orphanage ran out of food for breakfast. Müller, not overly disconcerted about the situation, prayed that God would provide breakfast for the orphans who would soon go hungry. As the orphans sat down to the breakfast table with nothing to eat, Müller prayed for the meal they were about to receive even though there was no food at hand. His prayer is followed shortly by a knock at the door. Müller opened the door to find the baker standing there with fresh bread. The baker said he felt impressed by God in the middle of the night to get up and bake fresh bread for the children. After the baker delivered the bread, another knock was heard at the door. Müller opened the door to find the milkman. The milkman's horse-drawn wagon had lost a wheel and he asked Müller if they could use the milk he was hauling before it spoiled. Breakfast was served. The orphans did not go hungry.

Nancy Garton, an author of a biography on Müller, attributed the legend to a tract entitled, *The Adventures of Sister Abigail*, which was written by Abigail Townsend Luffe.[106] According to Clara S. Feidler, Luffe's father and mother were closely associated with Müller's

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musical as part of an annual Christmas production. Other musicals have been written about Müller's life. In the 1990s Stained Glass Theatre in Springfield, Missouri, and in 2000 Stained Glass Theatre West in Joplin, Missouri, also staged musicals of Müller's life entitled, *Unto the Least of These: The George Mueller Story*. This musical was written by Joseph Ransom, pastor of Shady Grove Baptist Church in Spata, Missouri, who operates a number of ministries in southwest Missouri under the auspices of Joseph's Closet Ministries, including Serenity View Lodge and Mid-America Bible Institute.

[106] As far as can be determined, the tract is not held by any library in North America or the United Kingdom. Nancy Garton, *George Müller and His Orphans* (n.p.: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1963), 65-66. The story was printed in other tracts about Luffe, see, Grace K. Swanger, *Adventuring with Sister Abigail: A Series of Remarkable Answers to Prayer* (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, n.d.), 10-11.

work distributing Christian literature, especially tracts, and running a Sunday school.[107] Through

this association with Müller, Luffe came to hear about the event first hand from Müller when she

was a child.[108] However, Luffe's account was contained only in the tract and apparently

circulated via word of mouth to become the most widely known legend about Müller in the early

twentieth century. The oral tradition, ironically, was revived by Garton's own retelling of the

story in her 1963 biography that ensured that the legend remained part of Müller's memory.

The legend is remarkable because it points to the immediacy of God's acting in the

instant of need, while Müller held steadfast to his faith that breakfast would be provided despite

evidence to the contrary. No other legend has been as widely circulated as this miraculous story

of timely provision.[109] Evangelicals, like Fundamentalists, have also utilized the legend most

often as part of devotional literature aimed at providing spiritual encouragement in everyday

circumstances.[110] The legend fits quite clearly in the tradition of saints' legends where a

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[107] Clara S. Feidler, *Sister Abigail: The Story of Abigail Townsend Luffe* (Grand Rapids, MI: Gospel Folio Press, 1937), 8, 20.

[108] Swanger, *Adventuring*, 10-11.

[109] Seventh-Day Adventists have used the same story in a recent youth devotional. Helen Lee Robinson, *Where in the World? Stories From Everywhere: Daily Devotionals for Juniors* (n.p.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2006), 204

[110] For a sample of contemporary evangelical books that use the story as an illustration see David C. Cook, *David C. Cook's KJV Bible Lesson Commentary 2009-2010* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2009), 38-39; Ann Dunagan, *The Mission-Minded Family: Releasing Your Family to God's Destiny* (Colorado Springs, CO: Authentic, 2007), 68; Leslie B. Flynn, *Thanks! Seeing God's World With a Grateful Heart* (Carlsbad, CA: Magnus Press, 2005), 142; Patrick M. Morley, *Discipleship for the Man in the Mirror: A Complete Handbook for Spiritual Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), 209-210; Herb Miller, *Jesus' Twenty Megatruths* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1998), 66.

historical fact is distorted in the popular retelling of the event.[111] An account exactly fitting the

description of events is not relayed in this manner in the *Narratives*.[112] Rather, gifts of bread

were sometimes given by local Bristol bakers, and funds were received in the moment of need to

purchase bread, but the popular version of the story relied on the second-hand account of Luffe

and later Garton.[113] The closest account to Luffe's appeared in the *The Christian Miscellany and*

Family Visiter entitled, "God's Orphan House."[114] That periodical stated, similar to the

Narrative, that the "baker calls, and leaves a present of bread; while he and his helpers are

earnestly pleading with God for the supply needed for the little ones, a letter is found lying on

the table, brought in as they were asking of God, with sufficient money both for milk for the

babes, and raiment for the elders."[115] This legend served to highlight the heroic life of faith that

Müller lived. Fundamentalists used the legend in the musical and the play to encourage heroic

action despite a world that doubts. Fundamentalists over the course of the twentieth century

employed Müller as a heroic example and an apologetic against the prevailing skepticism of

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[111] Hippolyte Delehaye, *The Legends of the Saints*, trans. Donald Attwater (New York: Fordham University Press, 1962). 8.

[112] For a variation on the story, see "Is Prayer Really Answered?" *The Herald of Gospel Liberty* 107, no. 26 (July 1, 1915): 806.

[113] There, of course, could be a tract or some other writing by Müller that relates the story, which has not been discovered by the author to date. The mass of cheap tracts and pamphlets that are no longer available are enormous. Therefore, the argument is based on the surviving evidence.

[114] "God's Orphan House," *The Christian Miscellany and Family Visiter* 9 (November 1863): 345-347.

[115] Ibid., 346.

modern culture.[116] The heroic model that Müller provided was not lost on those among the

Holiness adherents and Pentecostals who also identified with that legacy.

The Triumph of Purity

Although the Holiness tradition was independent from Fundamentalism, Holiness

adherents held to many of the same ideas as Fundamentalists about the authority of Scripture and

fear that Christians could be contaminated by modern liberal society.[117]   Early Holiness

advocates, like Thomas Upham, a professor at Bowdoin College, saw continuity among Holiness

practices that reached back to Wesley, the Pietists who preceded him, the Reformation period

and even Roman Catholic mystics.[118] Highlighting traits for which Müller would later be

praised, Upham's *The Life of Faith* emphasized piety, prayer, godly action, and "the blessed

simplicity of holy living."[119] Following the establishment of the National Camp Meeting

Association for the Promotion of Holiness in 1867, the Holiness Movement emerged out of the

Methodist church and made a significant interdenominational influence on Presbyterians,

Lutherans, Moravians, Baptists, Dutch Reformed, Congregationalists, Quakers, and

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[116] He has also been employed as an authority of premillennialist ideas about the Second Coming. Harriet Beecher Stowe, et al, *The Second Coming of Christ* (Chicago: Moody Press, n.d.), 59-73.

[117] The Holiness tradition was deeply shaped by John Wesley's ideas of Christian perfectionism, as well as William E. Boardman's book *The Higher Christian Life* published in 1858. Boardman's influence was "widespread in the second half of the nineteenth century" among Anglo-American evangelicals who sought a deeper "Spirit-filled" Christianity, especially within the context of the Keswick movement. Charles W. Nienkirchen, *A. B. Simpson and the Pentecostal Movement* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1992), 7.

[118] Melvin Easterday Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: The Scrarecrow Press, Inc., 1996), 46-49.

[119] Thomas C. Upham, *The Life of Faith in Three Parts* (Boston: Waite, Pierce, 1845; repr., New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1984), 242.

Mennonites.[120] The late nineteenth-century Holiness Movement was diverse and dynamic and was defined by transatlantic exchanges, which literally extended Holiness teachings around the English-speaking world through the efforts of pastors, missionaries, and evangelists.[121]

Müller's connection with the Holiness Movement was firmly established in his own lifetime. Müller spoke frequently at the Mildmay Conferences in London[122] that were, in fact, the basis for the later development of the Keswick Conference[123] that formed the basis for non-Wesleyan Holiness advocates and influenced Holiness adherents on both sides of the Atlantic.[124] Müller would appeal to those who were part of the non-Wesleyan and the Wesleyan Holiness movements.[125] He provided a model for how to achieve the goals associated with their

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[120] Dieter, *The Holiness Revival*, 89-101.

[121] For an example of how Holiness teachings were transatlantic in nature, see Ian Randall, "A Christian Cosmopolitan: F. B. Meyer in Britain and America," in *Amazing Grace: Evangelicalism in Australia, Britain, Canada, and the United States*, ed. George A. Rawlyk and Mark A. Noll (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1993), 157-182.

[122] Kenneth Hylson-Smith, *Evangelicals in the Church of England, 1734-1984* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 150-152.

[123] The Keswick meetings began in 1875 at St. John's Vicarage, Keswick, England, and were a transatlantic phenomenon that brought together Anglo-American evangelicals to explore teachings on the "higher" or "deeper" Christian life. The focus of the meetings was on personal holiness and sanctification. Keswick claimed to be a product of the 1859 Revival, as well as a byproduct of writings by evangelicals, such as William E. Boardman and Hannah Whitall Smith. Herbert F. Stevenson, ed., *Keswick's Authentic Voice: Sixty-Five Dynamic Addresses Delivered at the Keswick Convention 1875-1957* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959), 13-14; also see, W. H. Aldis and Wilbur M. Smith, *The Message of Keswick and Its Meaning* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott Ltd., 1957), xii-xiii. For an analysis of the difference between the British Keswick teachings and the American Holiness teachings, see Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century*, 2nd ed.(Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 144-145.

[124] Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*, 248-250.

[125] Wesleyan Holiness adherents were part of the revival movement that gained momentum in the antebellum period in the United States. In the tradition of German Pietism,

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individualistic devotional piety that saw perfection as key for seeing God influence all aspects of every life.

A key Holiness leader who was influenced by Müller was Albert B. Simpson (1843-1919). Formerly a Canadian Presbyterian, Simpson embraced Holiness teachings and faith healing and went on to found the Christian and Missionary Alliance in 1897. Simpson believed that Müller's death in 1898 removed "from the fellowship of the church on earth one of the most apostolic figures, not only of the age, but of the whole Christian age."[126] Simpson described Müller as the "patriarch of faith" and promoted him and his writings in the periodical he edited.[127] Simpson's promotion of Müller was also followed by Simpson's former followers.[128] Martin Wells Knapp, who in 1897 founded the Apostolic Holiness Prayer Union in Cincinnati, Ohio,[129] published a biography of Müller by Abbie C. Morrow.[130] Morrow's biography explained Müller's promotion of prayer as similar to Luther's emphasis on justification and Wesley's endorsement of holiness. Like Luther and Wesley, Müller was an apostle, "the apostle

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they emphasized personal piety but with a twist. Drawing on John Wesley's teaching of Christian perfection, Holiness adherents held that Christians could experience a "second blessing" after conversion that resulted in devotion solely to God, which freed individuals from a desire to sin and filled them with God's love. Ibid., 3-4.

[126] Editor [A. B. Simpson], "Memories of George Muller," *The Christian and Missionary Alliance* 20, no. 12 (March 23, 1898): 1.

[127] "Editorial," *The Christian Alliance and Missionary Weekly* 6, no. 23 (June 5, 1891): 1.

[128] Ibid., 254.

[129] Dieter, *The Holiness Revival*, 38.

[130] Abbie C. Morrow, ed., *The Work of Faith Through George Müller* (Cincinnati, OH: M. W. Knapp, 1899).

of prayer."[131] Knapp observed in his Publisher's Note, "There is no book in the whole realm of spiritual literature which has proven such a faith tonic to the writer as the 'Life of George Müller,' which he read early in his ministry. . . . May it stimulate multitudes to 'do exploits' for God, and prove the verity of the promise which declares that all things are possible 'to him that believeth!'"[132] The goal Knapp had for Morrow was to produce a much thinner volume than the costly *The Life of Trust* and make it available to even more Christians who could not afford the much more expensive volume.[133] This volume became another popular source for ideas about how to apply Müller's method to everyday life that drew on the writings of Pierson, Warne, and others to give a concise understanding of the life of faith.

A number of Holiness believers were also transitional figures between the nineteenth century Holiness movement and the advent of Pentecostalism in the twentieth century. For example, Essek William Kenyon (1867-1948), a Higher Life adherent, evangelist, and pastor whose writings influenced Pentecostals, claimed, "George Müller did more for the Church than will be known this side of the Judgment; thousands have been helped to trust in the Unseen Father God by his victories of faith. The writer [Kenyon] received his first inspiration to Trust by reading the life of Müller."[134] Kenyon, inspired by Müller's example, did not take offerings at his evangelistic services but lived by faith and relied on unsolicited donations to support his

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[131] Ibid., 9.

[132] M. W. Knapp, "Publisher's Note," in Morrow, *The Work of Faith*, 2.

[133] Ibid.

[134] Quoted in Dale Hawthorne Simmons, "The Postbellum Pursuit of Peace, Power, and Plenty: As Seen in the Writings of Essek William Kenyon" (Ph.D. diss., Drew University, 1990), 5.

religious enterprises.[135] Another Holiness believer and, later in his life, a Pentecostal leader,

Ambrose Jessup Tomlinson (1865-1943), was also thoroughly impressed by Müller's piety and

his ideas about God's financial provision.[136] Tomlinson, founder of the Church of God

(Cleveland, Tennessee), a Pentecostal denomination, embraced Müller's life of faith as the form

of true Christian practice.[137] In his diary entry for Sunday, April 14, 1901, Tomlimson wrote,

> The responsibilities are great, the pressure is heavy, but my soul is happy as I lean hard
> upon the everlasting arm. I believe He will see us through some way as He did Joseph, as
> He did Mueller, as He has us in time past.
>   My heart still cries out for the farm, where we can make a Garden of Eden, where
> God can come and talk with us in the cool of the day, and we will not be ashamed and
> hide as Adam did, but only be too glad to meet Him. O God, give me the $5000 for
> Jesus' sake.[138]

Despite the desperation Tomlinson expressed for a $5,000 donation for the purchase of a farm,

he used Müller as a reference point for the faithfulness of God to meet the material needs he

faced.[139] Tomlinson, however, went a step further than simply adopting Müller's life of faith;

he also chronicled his own life of faith in the same manner as Müller. Tomlinson's biographer,

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[135] Ibid., 290.

[136] Robins argues, "Inspired by George Mueller (renowned German pietist and revered architect of 'life on faith lines'), many holiness believers kept their financial needs scrupulously hidden, certain that the God who alone knew their needs would move on the hearts of the well-heeled to supply them. And if the well-heeled proved recalcitrant, God had other ways to provide. Radical saints inhabited a world where greenbacks mysteriously appeared in one's pocket lining, perfect strangers arrived unannounced with cash, and rent money materialized in the nick of time. It was a world where, should God so will, money would grow on trees." R. G. Robins, *A. J. Tomlinson: Plainfolk Modernist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 61.

[137] Robins, *A. J. Tomlinson*, 131.

[138] *Diary of A. J. Tomlinson, Vol. 3: Founder of The Church of God, General Overseer, 1903-1943—Outstanding Leader of the Pentecostal and Holiness Movement*, ed. Homer A. Tomlinson (Queens Village, NY: The Church of God, World Headquarters, 1955), 19.

[139] Ibid., 17.

Roger G. Robins, argues that Müller "had pointed him [Tomlinson] to the literary genre best suited to record such a life—the personal diary as spiritual chronicle and as holiness lectionary. The everyday melodramas found in Tomlinson's diary mimicked those he had read in Mueller's." [140] Robins goes on to explain that "Tomlinson reproduced, in form and in substance, Mueller's painstaking iteration of daily crises, mundane victories, spiritual temptations, and lessons gleaned along the way."[141] According to Robins, Tomlinson employed Abbie C. Morrow's edited version of Wayland's *The Life of Trust* as his source on Müller.[142] This cheap edition, produced specifically for Holiness adherents, was an example of another text presenting Müller's life of faith according to the ideas of an editor matching the expectations of readers.

Elizabeth V. Baker, another transitional figure between the Holiness movement and early Pentecostalism, founded the Elim Faith Home in Rochester, New York, in 1895.[143] First acquainted with Müller's methods of living by faith through *The Life of Trust*, Baker feared being directed by the Holy Spirit to live a life of faith.[144] Soon she was convinced that Müller's methods were the Christian ideal. She wrote, "I had read the 'Life of Trust,' by Geo. Muller, and

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[140] Robins, *A. J. Tomlinson*, 140.

[141] Ibid.

[142] Ibid., 271.

[143] Baker was raised in a Methodist home, but later came under the influence of A. J. Gordon and others in the non-Wesleyan side of the Holiness movement. Besides living by faith she was also an advocate of faith healing and faith missions. Elizabeth V. Baker, *Chronicles of a Faith Life* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1984), 11, 34.

[144] Ibid., 20.

took him to be the pattern of the way God would work for all time."[145] What Baker meant was

that she would avoid debt and try to follow his example explicitly. She also followed the work

of other faith missions and actually traveled to Mukti Mission in India in 1898 to see Pandita

Ramabai's faith mission[146] firsthand.[147] Baker accepted Pentecostal teachings in the first decade

of the twentieth century after learning about them through those influenced by the Azusa Street

Revival in Los Angeles.[148] Holiness adherents drew together evangelicals who emphasized the

role of the Holy Spirit in the ordinary life of the Christian. They hoped that believers would be

empowered with gifts of the Spirit to witness Christ to the world and live out their faith in all

circumstances. Müller's piety displayed clear evidence of how the Holy Spirit worked through

him to proclaim the gospel and fulfill the calling God had placed on his life. Furthermore,

Müller appealed to Holiness adherents because his answered prayers indicated that he had

triumphed over his own internal sin, which gave him spiritual power in the material world.[149]

Müller's record of answered prayers was evidence that Christian perfection resulted in the

restoration of the primitive power found in early Christianity. In a similar manner, Pentecostals

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[145] Ibid., 52.

[146] Early Pentecostals, such as Stanley H. Frodsham, praised Ramabai following the example of Müller at Mukti and giving "the world another example of mountain-moving faith." Stanley H. Frodsham, *Wholly for God* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, n.d.), 44.

[147] Ibid., 109.

[148] Gary B. McGee, "Three Notable Women in Pentecostal Ministry," *Assemblies of God Heritage* (Spring 1985-1986): 5.

[149] Historian Marvin Dieter observed that, "This was a crusade against the last vestiges of evil itself in the hearts of men. Holiness revivalists sought to redeem them [Holiness adherents] from that inner evil and bring them the possibilities of the grace of Christian perfection. This would restore the power of primitive Christianity to the churches and through them the Holy Spirit would redeem the whole of mankind." Dieter, *The Holiness Revival*, 85.

also praised Müller's piety and his work in the world, but they extended his example of piety to a lifestyle of material dependence on God's provision in everyday life that every Spirit-filled Christian should follow.

The Spirit-Filled Life

Pentecostals also followed Holiness advocates and Fundamentalists in praising Müller's heroic piety. The Pentecostal Movement joined together a number of facets of nineteenth-century Anglo-American evangelical beliefs, such as the Holiness belief in subsequent works of the Holy Spirit. To the dismay of Holiness advocates Pentecostals surmised that baptism in the Holy Spirit was not simply entire sanctification but was evidenced with speaking in tongues.[150] Pentecostals also embraced the dispensational premillennialism of many late nineteenth-century evangelicals.[151] Over the course of the twentieth century Pentecostalism became one of the most influential movements in world Christianity.[152] First and second-generation Pentecostals expanded Müller's role in their conception of Holy Spirit-directed piety. Pentecostals believed that God was a God of signs and wonders who manifested supernatural works in ordinary events and in ordinary people. They believed that signs and wonders were evidence that they had recaptured the essence of the New Testament church. Pentecostals were radical restorationists who believed that they could return to the practices of the early church void of any subsequent

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[150] Edith L. Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith: The Assemblies of God, Pentecostalism, and American Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 100.

[151] Ibid., 15-19.

[152] Noel Davies and Martin Conway, *World Christianity in the Twentieth Century* (London: SCM Press, 2008), 76-77; Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 128-129; Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

influence resulting from the passage of time or human traditions.[153] They also believed that,

through the Holy Spirit, all problems could be solved and all needs could be met just as in the

New Testament literature.

Pentecostals envisioned Müller's example as a model of Holy Spirit-directed piety that

matched the New Testament ideal. Müller, as Pentecostals noted, was an ordinary man that God

blessed in the ordinary moments of life to help meet the needs of those he was ministering.[154]

Müller's witness to answered prayer ensured Pentecostals that he was filled with the Holy Spirit

just as they were.[155] His use of prayer to meet his material needs was the ideal they saw

witnessed in the New Testament. Consequently, his use of prayer for financial support became

the model for Pentecostal practice, especially among ministers and missionaries.[156]

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[153] Historian Edith Blumhofer observes, "Restorationists, then, advocated purifying religious forms and testing practices and beliefs against the New Testament. Bennett F. Lawrence, the first historian of Pentecostalism, aptly conveyed this conviction when in 1916 he wrote of Pentecostalism: 'This movement has no history. It leaps the intervening years, crying 'back to Pentecost.'' Historylessness was a badge of honor." Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*, 12-15.

[154] Charles S. Price, "Conquering Your Foes," *Golden Grain* 12, no. 3 (June 1942): 4.

[155] Other evangelicals also made this point with Müller and his being filled with the Holy Spirit. William B. Riley, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota, asserted, "Men commonly believe that George Müller was Spirit-filled, and ground that opinion, in part surely, upon his splendid liberality." Riley asserted that John Wesley and Lady Huntington also evidenced being Spirit-filled because they all gave liberally to those in need. William B. Riley, *The Perennial Revival: A Plea for Evangelism*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1916), 180.

[156] In the British setting the first Pentecostal missionary society, the Pentecostal Missionary Union (PMU), organized by Rev. Alexander A. Boddy, was a faith mission modeled on the China Inland Mission. In 1909, the PMU elected Cecil Polhill, one of the "Cambridge Seven," as president. The PMU focused on frontier missions in China, Tibet, northwest India, and Afghanistan. L. Grant McClung, Jr., "Introduction—Explosion, Motivation, and Consolidation: The Historical Anatomy of a Missionary Movement," in *Azusa Street and Beyond: Pentecostal Missions and Church Growth in the Twentieth Century*, ed. L. Grant McClung, Jr. (South Plainfield, NJ: Bridge Publishers Inc., 1986), 16-17. According to Gary B.

The apologetic purpose of Müller's life of faith was lost on Pentecostals as they saw in

him a model of devotion that they should literally pattern their lives upon.[157] Müller also offered

them access to the continuum of the evangelical tradition that began with Luther and continued

through Wesley and the Holiness Movement that influenced Pentecostal piety.[158] As heirs of the

Mildmay, Keswick, and the Holiness camp meetings, Pentecostals placed significant emphasis

on personal holiness. Müller's story provided Pentecostals with a model of piety that would

support their missionary and preaching efforts despite their lack of wealth. Pentecostals founded

orphanages, homeless shelters, and "faith homes" where they relied on God in prayer to meet

their everyday needs. Using Müller as an example they found that no need or problem was too

small to take to God in prayer. Consequently, they were able to show through answered prayer

that they were not on the radical fringe of Protestant Christianity, but practiced a restored New

Testament faith.

North American Pentecostals established all sorts of social ministries using Müller's life

of faith as a model. Laura B. S. Crouch, who embraced the life of faith and became a

Pentecostal, moved from Louisville, Kansas, to Winnipeg, Manitoba, and established the Home

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McGee, early Pentecostals in North America debated how "faith missions" should operate by
employing the counter argument that "everyone does not receive a 'George Mueller call.'" Gary
B. McGee, *The Gospel Shall Be Preached : A History and Theology of Assemblies of God
Foreign Missions to 1959, Vol. 1* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1986), 78. Grant
Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard
University Press, 2001), 130.

[157] Even notations in Müller's Bible would be cited by Pentecostals as evidence to further
theological claims. J. D. Saunders, "Making Anew," *The Pentecostal Testimony* 8, no. 12
(December 1927): 8.

[158] George D. Watson, "Seeming Failure," *The Pentecostal Testimony* 14, no. 6 (July
1933): 2.

of the Friendless in order rescue young women from prostitution.[159] Crouch relied only on

prayer and faith to support the daily needs of her rescue work. In St. Louis, Missouri, to save

young girls from prostitution Mary Moise also established a home, which she claimed was

funded by prayer and faith. Moise, an adherent of Oneness Pentecostalism,[160] embraced the life

of faith as simply the best representation of how God expected devout Christians to live.[161]

Early Pentecostals made Müller's notion of living by faith so completely their own that

they soon saw it as simply the most proper way to live as Christians. Rev. C. M. Ward, an

Assemblies of God pastor who gained national acclaim for his ABC radio program *Revivaltime*

that ran from 1953 to 1978, explained how embedded the idea of faith living had become among

Pentecostals when he delivered in a radio broadcast the following story about his father,

> My dear father, Elder A. G. Ward, now in glory, lived the pilgrim life. He liked to say that he lived a hand-to-mouth existence—*from God's hand to his mouth*. Long after he had retired from the pulpit and could no longer earn a living, he proved his faith. The time came when he needed and secured expensive dental work. The moment for paying the dentist faced him. And his Heavenly Father had provided. From sources as far apart as Florida and California came letters with gifts for certain amounts inside. None of these friends were aware of his dental work or the cost. Yet when the gifts from letters received were added, they amounted—*to a penny*—to the sum the dentist had mailed in

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[159] Zelma E. Argue, *What Meaneth This? The Story of our Personal Experiences and Evangelistic Campaigns: The Argue Evangelistic Party* (Winnipeg: n.p., n.d.), 17. Also see, Amelia Yeomans, "A Home for the Friendless—Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada: Operated Through a Life of Trust—Mrs. L. B. Crouch, Superintendent," *The Latter Rain Evangel* 2, no. 1 (October 1909): 10-14.

[160] Oneness Pentecostals deny the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit of historic Christianity and embrace a modalistic view of God. Likewise, they use a baptismal formula that recognizes Jesus only. Oneness Pentecostalism divided the early Assemblies of God in 1914. D. A. Reed, "Oneness Pentecostalism," in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley M. Burgess, Gary B. McGee, and Patrick H. Alexander (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 644-651; Talmadge L. French, *Our God is One: The Story of the Oneness Pentecostals* (Indianapolis, IN: Voice & Vision, 1999), 56-58.

[161] Wayne Warner, "Mother Mary Moise of St. Louis: A Pioneer in Pentecostal Social Ministry," *Assemblies of God Heritage* (Spring 1985-1986): 6-7, 13.

the statement. It was beautiful assurance to him that his Heavenly Father *knew* exactly what things he had need of.[162]

Ward's father was an early Pentecostal who had first been a Methodist circuit riding minster, then a pastor with A. B. Simpson's Christian and Missionary Alliance, and finally an Assemblies of God pastor in both the United States and Canada.[163] Ward's emphasis in this account is on his father's needs being met without even an appeal being made. Instead the funds arrived just in time to meet the expenses. This account, though not explicit in its stating that Müller was the example for proving faith, reveals how essential the life of faith had become to Pentecostal practice.

In addition to embracing the life of faith, Pentecostals also told a miracle story famously credited to Müller. In the official periodical of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, *The Pentecostal Testimony*, published a well-known legend regarding Müller's travel to Quebec for a meeting that he needed to attend.[164] According to the legend, off the coast of Newfoundland a severe fog delayed the ship's arrival and Müller was told by the captain that he would miss his meeting. The captain's doubt provoked Müller to allegedly respond, "if your ship cannot take me, God will find some other way—I have never broken an engagement in fifty-seven

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[162] C. M. Ward, *Revivaltime Pulpit: Sermon Book Number Nineteen* (Springfield, MO: Assemblies of God National Radio, 1975), 218.

[163] Douglas Wead, *The C. M. Ward Story* (Harrison, AR: New Leaf Press, 1976), 12-22. Also see, B. M. Stout, "Ward, Alfred George," in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 878.

[164] A version of this story as told by a "well-known evangelist," a Mr. Inglis, was included as a section of a tract that focused on Müller's thoughts on prayer. The subsection of the tract with the miraculous fog story was entitled, "God Did It." George Müller, *Five Reasons Why Prayer Must Be Answered* (Bristol: Bible and Tract Depot, n.d.), 3-4.

years—let us go down into the Chart Room, and pray."[165] According to the captain, Müller "knelt down, and he prayed one of the most simple prayers, and when he had finished, I was going to pray, but he put his hand on my shoulder, and told me not to." [166] After explaining to the captain why his prayer would not be as effective as his own, Müller supposedly said, "Captain, I have known my Lord for fifty-seven years, and there has never been a single day that I have failed to get an audience with the King—get up Captain, and open the door, and you will find the fog is gone."[167] To the amazement of the ship's captain, when he opened the door the fog was gone and Müller made it on time to his engagement. This legend affirmed that God would miraculously change the weather for Müller.[168] Pentecostals found the miraculous element in this legend encouraging for their own brand of radical piety.[169] They too sought to

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[165] "Faith and Fog," *The Pentecostal Testimony* 16, no. 5 (May 1935): 7. The story also appeared in other evangelical periodicals throughout the twentieth century. "A Most Remarkable Incident: George Muller's Faith," *The Herald of Gospel Liberty* 102, no. 34 (August 25, 1910): 1060.

[166] Ibid.

[167] Ibid.

[168] Susannah Müller recorded in her account of the voyage the following, "Off the Island of Newfoundland, the weather became cold, and the progress of the vessel was retarded considerably by fogs; but on August 30th, the welcome cry of 'land!' from the steerage passengers was heard, and when the fog lifted, Belle Island on our right was in full view, at a short distance only from the ship. On the evening of that day Mr. Müller held a meeting in the forecastle for the sailors and steerage passengers, and spoke afterwards in the Chart Room to as many of the cabin passengers as were able to attend." References to the prayer to lift the fog and the conversation with the captain of the vessel are not recorded. Susannah Grace Müller, *Preaching Tours and Missionary Labours of George Müller (of Bristol)* (London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1883), 27.

[169] There were other supernatural stories Pentecostals told about Müller. One of these involved a mother with a crying baby disrupting one of Müller's religious services in the city of Edinburgh, Scotland. The crowd in the building was too dense and the woman could not excuse herself with the disruptive baby. Müller asked the mother to take her seat and prayed that the infant would fall asleep, which the baby promptly did. An unbeliever in the crowd who came to

challenge unbelief by seeing the supernatural enter history in response to prayer, especially prayers by Spirit-filled people.[170]

In addition to circulating legends about Müller, Pentecostals often used wisdom sayings attributed to Müller as strategically placed words of encouragement, in an effort to support notions about how, when, and why God worked in the material world.[171] His words of wisdom, like those of other evangelicals and Pentecostals whose sayings were employed in such random fashion in Pentecostal periodicals, were meant to inspire and affirm.[172] Pentecostal presses

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see Müller was so moved by what he saw happen that he decided to accept Christ as Savior. A. C. Hoffman, "Don't Take the Last Pear," *The Pentecostal Testimony* 18, no. 6 (June 1937): 21.

[170] Articles by leading evangelicals of the nineteenth century were often reprinted in Pentecostal publications emphasizing the supernatural. For example, in an article written by A. T. Pierson, Müller and Francke were included in a list of "modern workers of miracles" who established institutions where "supernatural power" was displayed as evidence that the supernatural was real. Arthur T. Pierson, "Is Divine Healing for us Now? Or, Have Supernatural Signs Ceased During this Church Age?," *The Pentecostal Testimony* 9, no. 3 (March 1928): 10. Francke and Müller were also included in a list of "godly men" since the dawn of Christianity who were "advocates" of "Divine healing as taught in the Bible." Pentecostals were interested in placing themselves in a tradition of supernatural phenomena. "Advocates of Divine Healing," *The Pentecostal Testimony* 13, no. 9 (September 1932): 10.

[171] A. G. Ward, "Foreign Missions," *The Pentecostal Testimony* 15, no. 8 (September 1934): 11; "Good Reports," *The Pentecostal Testimony* 12, no. 1 (January 1931): 17; "Faith and Feeling," *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony* 2, no. 3 (March 1922): 1; "Five Conditions of Prevailing Prayer," *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony* 4, no. 7 (July 1925): 5; "In the Season of Searth 1846-7," *The Elim Pentecostal Herald* V, no. 32 (October 1935): 11; "Every Act of Obedience," *Elim Pentecostal Herald* (August 1957): 16; "Victory Over Worry," *The Elim Pentecostal Herald* 14, no. 155 (August-September 1944): 14; "Faith Rests on the Word," *Elim Pentecostal Herald* (June-July 1958): 17.

[172] Zelma Argue compiled twelve booklets of quotations from various evangelical and Pentecostals leaders in a series that aimed to promote a high level of piety and spiritual life. Argue used a wide range of writers as sources including: St. Chrysostom, Susannah Wesley, Charles Finney Charles Spurgeon, A. B. Simpson, and Müller. Zelma Argue, ed., *Prevailing Prayer: Choice Thoughts for Daily Mediation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1936), 8.

reprinted sermons, tracts,[173] and books by Müller[174] and promoted biographies of him for their

readers to learn from and apply to their own lives.[175]

In 1920, *The Pentecostal Evangel*, the official denominational periodical of the

Assemblies of God, published a review of A. T. Pierson's biography of Müller with the

following reflection,

> **George Muller of Bristol**, by Arthur T. Pierson, is one of the most faith-inspiring books
> we know of. No romance ever written is half as fascinating as the story of how God
> saved the profligate young Muller and made him a mighty monument of grace. The Lord
> led him into the ministry, and then into providing a home for orphans who had lost both
> their fathers and mothers. At first he had a comparatively small, rented house, but as
> faith grew he built first one and then a second orphanage and finally five spacious,
> substantial stone orphanages, with accommodation for two thousand inmates. Geo.
> Muller took care of over ten thousand orphans in these homes. Not one cent of money
> was ever solicited from any source, nor did he ever go into debt, but at all times the Lord
> alone was looked to for supplies and **He never failed**.[176]

For Pentecostals the triumphal feat was centered on a dramatic work of faith that relied

completely on the supernatural. *The Pentecostal Evangel* continued to promote the story and in a

1924 update on the Ashley Down Orphanages asserted, "In the ninety-one years of this work

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[173] The Gospel Publishing House is the publishing house of the Assemblies of God, the second largest Pentecostal denomination in the United States, and the largest Pentecostal denomination in the world. George Müller, *How to Ascertain the Will of God* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1920).

[174] The Full Gospel Publishing House in London, Ontario, Canada, reprinted Müller's Autobiography. "Christmas Gifts," *The Pentecostal Testimony* 12, no. 1 (November 1931): 11; "Full Gospel Publishing House [Advertisement]," *The Pentecostal Testimony* 18, no. 10 (October 1937): 17; "Our 15¢ Library," *The Pentecostal Testimony* 17, no. 12 (January 1937): 18; "Words of Life," *The Bridal Call* 2, no. 2 (February 1919): 10.

[175] The *Elim Pentecostal Herald* promoted the sale of Basil Miller's biographical account, *George Mueller—The Man of Faith,* with the following claim, "George Muller made a daring venture of faith, which was fully justified and his life story reads like a romance, a case where truth is stronger than fiction." "The Elim Book Room," *The Elim Pentecostal Herald* 14, no. 123 (March 1944): 12.

[176] "Books That Build," *The Pentecostal Evangel*, no. 364-365 (October 30, 1920): 8.

there has been not a single appeal for funds nor one collection taken for this work. God has met

every need in answer to prayer."[177] Pentecostals found Müller's story enthralling because of his

reliance on prayer, his affirmation of the supernatural, and for his approach to money.[178]

Müller's financial model, like the miracle story promoted by Pentecostals, affirmed a biblical

model that they saw as ideal. Historian Grant Wacker argued that for Pentecostals, "Living by

faith functioned as a badge of spiritual status."[179] For those who were outsiders, Müller's

example gave them access to spiritual power and spiritual legitimacy even though the broader

evangelical culture rejected their claim that they spoke in other tongues after experiencing a

baptism in the Holy Ghost. Like Pentecostals who only highlighted particular aspects of

Müller's piety to legitimize their radical view of the Christian life, evangelicals in the twentieth

century also refashioned Müller to suit their own goals.

A Model of Evangelical Faith

Müller's influence on evangelicals over the course of the twentieth century was

significant.[180] Consequently, when evangelicals, like Fundamentalists, Holiness adherents, and

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[177] "George Muller's Orphanages," *The Pentecostal Evangel*, no. 567(October 11, 1924): 9.

[178] *The Elim Pentecostal Herald* (Hornell, New York) stocked and sold copies of A.T. Pierson's biography, *George Müller of Bristol*. The Elim editors promoted the book with the following claim, "In these days when those who want to trust God for their finances are ridiculed, this book should be widely read." "Book Room," *The Elim Pentecostal Herald* 8, no. 58 (February 1938): 12; "Book Room," *The Elim Pentecostal Herald* 6, no. 44 (November 1936): 2.

[179] Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 130.

[180] Historian F. Roy Coad argued, "George Müller's faith, like John Wesley's Aldersgate experience, has become part of the stock in trade of the evangelical tradition. Like Wesley's experience, also, an undiscriminating piety had made of it one of those near-legends which can shift the balance of popular thinking, and in the process obscure their real significance. Müller's

Pentecostals, present and reinterpret the story of Müller according to what they hope to see, they conveniently ignore the role of those who gave money and goods to Müller. The value of Müller's memory for evangelicals centered on his uncanny ability to see his prayers answered. In the nineteenth century, as examined in chapters 4 and 6, this provoked a great deal of criticism and controversy regarding Müller's work. Many evangelicals in the twentieth century continued this tradition of honoring Müller's celebrated legacy in seeing prayers answered without any critical examination of his success. Probably no greater weight was placed on Müller's testimony than by J. G. Hallimond, the superintendent of the famed Bowery Mission in New York City.[181] Hallimond knew many horrible stories of delinquent youth but claimed he never heard of a boy as wicked as Müller. Hallimond recounted Müller's testimony of coming to Christ in a small prayer group in Halle and his establishment of the orphan homes and their support through prayer. Hallimond viewed Müller as the preeminent Christian of the age and wrote, "I regard George Mueller as the most wonderful man of prayer the world has ever seen,

desire to prove by his trust the perpetual faithfulness of God arose from genuine pastoral concern, but popular legend has overlaid its real lesson by a mysticism which is quite foreign to the methodical practicality of his methods. The legend emphasizes one side of the coin: the intensity of Müller's trust. It has often forgotten the other side – that the funds to supply the need came from men and women who were partners in Müller's faith in God." Coad is correct when he asserts that Müller is seen from a single viewpoint by evangelicals who desire a hero who inspires others through their absolute devotion to the task at hand. In one sense, the inability to see the complicity of others in the making of George Müller's "life of faith" points to an endemic element in the very nature of evangelicalism—the supremacy of the individual or the self. F. Roy Coad, *A History of the Brethren Movement: Its Origins, Its Worldwide Development and Its Significance for the Present Day* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1968), 55.

[181] The Bowery Mission was established in 1879 and incorporated under the Christian Herald organization in 1895. The mission garnered attention from all over the world for its philanthropic efforts to help the homeless and jobless in New York. "Opening of New Bowery Mission," *Record of Christian Work* 29, no. 1 (January 1910): 4.

with the single exception of Jesus Christ."[182] This endorsement of Müller by Hallimond was

further supported by other great men of prayer who were his inferiors. The list of those

secondary to Müller included Charles Haddon Spurgeon, D. L. Moody, and Hugh Price Hughes,

the founder of the West London Mission.[183] Hallimond, though he esteemed Müller, Spurgeon,

Moody, and Hughes, does not argue that they were blessed with unique abilities different from

other Christians.[184] Rather, he emphasized the accessibility that all Christians had to God

through prayer. Hallimond offered a continuation of the nineteenth-century view of Müller's life

of prayer that was available to all. In the twentieth century, some writers began to shift attention

from merely stating that Müller represented a prayer life that was available to all by shifting

attention to his unique methods.

E. M. Bounds (1835-1913), a former Confederate chaplain in the Civil War, author, and

Methodist minister, saw in Müller a contemporary worthy of emulation. Bounds' writings on

prayer were published posthumously and made their impact on twentieth-century evangelicals.[185]

In *The Weapon of Prayer*, published in 1931, eighteen years after Bound's death, Müller was

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[182] J. G. Hallimond, *The Miracle of Answered Prayer* (New York: The Christian Herald, 1916), 50-51.

[183] Hallimond worked with Hughes at the West London Mission prior to coming to the United States. Ibid., 57.

[184] Hallimond explained his view in the following statement, "I admit that Mueller, Spurgeon, Moody, and Hughes were exceptionally fine types of Christian character, but I will not admit for one moment that, in their conception and use of prayer, they accomplished anything that is beyond the reach of every Christian believer. 'Every one that asketh, receiveth.' Principles involved here have been applied in the lives of thousands and tens of thousands of ordinary Christian workers, though perhaps not on such an extended scale." Ibid., 60.

[185] T. L. Cooper, "Bounds, Edward McKendree," in *Biographical Dictionary of Evangelicals*, ed. Timothy Larsen, David Bebbington, and Mark Noll (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 71.

presented as an example of "earnestness." Bounds envisioned in Müller a singularly focused man who only approached God for his needs while keeping the entire world ignorant of the challenges he faced. Bounds even asserted that Müller "always excluded money matters, and financial difficulties found no place in it [Müller's autobiography]. Nor would he mention the sums which had been given him, nor the names of those who made contributions."[186] Although Bounds' interpretation of Müller's financial exchanges must not have been based on a reading of the *Narrative*, the point he desired to reinforce was the singular focus of Müller.[187] Bounds attempted to explain Müller's piety in a framework that highlighted an essential quality or aspect that could be copied by others. Bounds' use of Müller is similar to how evangelicals have selectively emphasized particular qualities to suit their needs.

One of the most influential evangelical ministers to reference Müller in his books is Rev. John Piper, senior pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Piper, an accomplished scholar and popular evangelical author, holds annual conferences aimed at inspiring church leaders.[188] The most influential book written by Piper that used Müller as an example was *The Pleasures of God*, published in 1991. Piper employed Müller as an example of "The Goodness of God in George Mueller's Tragedy." Piper discussed how Müller was able to rejoice in God's goodness after his only daughter, Lydia, almost succumbed to typhoid fever in 1853. Piper juxtaposed this positive example against the loss of Müller's first wife Mary in 1870

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[186] E. M. Bounds, *The Complete Works of E. M. Bounds on Prayer* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1990), 442.

[187] Bounds' use of Müller as a model for prayer has influenced evangelical devotional literature regarding prayer. For an example see Stanley J. Grenz, *Prayer: The Cry for the Kingdom*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 65.

[188] Piper holds a D.Theol. from the University of Munich. "Curriumlum Vitae," Desiring God, http://www.desiringgod.org/AboutUs/JohnPiper/CurriculumVitae/ (accessed March 22, 2010).

due to rheumatic fever. In both cases Müller prayed and God answered his prayer—though in the case of Mary not exactly as Müller had hoped. The issue here for Piper, and Müller, was perspective. Müller believed that God "wilt do the very best thing for her and for me, whether life or death."[189] Piper argued that this was a correct understanding of God's sovereignty and wrote, "God never stops doing good to his covenant people."[190] Piper would also note that Müller "has taught me much about patience and perseverance in prayer."[191]

Piper's use of Müller relates directly to Piper's understanding of the significance of biography in the spiritual development of the individual.[192] History, for Piper, is a devotional exercise that inspires and encourages Christians in their life of faith.[193] Consequently, Piper has used Müller's example in personal life and highlighted him in his writings. Müller has appeared in sermons, articles, and books published by Piper. Piper, like Bounds, draws specific attention to Müller's prayer life. Piper asserts that "George Mueller has been a pacesetter for me in prayer. His *Autobiography* is an orchard of faith-building fruit."[194] Besides praising Müller's

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[189] John Piper, *The Pleasures of God* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1991), 190.

[190] Ibid., 191.

[191] Ibid., 212.

[192] Piper explains the devotional function of Müller when he writes, "I have found Müller's way absolutely crucial in my own life: Be with the Lord before I am with anyone else, and let *him* speak to me first. Living theology. Flawed and encouraging saints. Stories of grace. Deep inspiration. The best entertainment. Brothers and sisters, it is worth your precious hours. Remember Hebrews 11. And read Christian biography." John Piper, "Why Read Christian Biography?," *Christian History & Biography* (Fall 2005): 54.

[193] Piper stated, "Biographies have served as much as any other human force in my life to resist the inertia of mediocrity." He also encouraged pastors to give biographical studies of inspirational Christians to their congregations. John Piper, *Brothers, We Are Not Professionals: A Plea to Pastors for Radical Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002), 89, 96.

status as a fount of inspiration, Piper brought to the foreground Müller's devotional life, specifically his practice of his engaging in daily morning Bible meditation followed by prayer.[195] Piper's emphasis on prayer was also coupled with his assertion that Müller understood correctly that daily Bible reading was also the source of joy.[196]

Piper believes that Müller has much to offer the ordinary Christian in their everyday life of piety. As a major contributor to evangelical thought through his conferences, books, and sermons, Piper's reflections on Müller have also influenced others.[197] Piper's referencing of Müller's memory continues a practice that Blanchard, Rice, Bounds, and other writers and ministers have practiced since the nineteenth century.[198] Consequently, Müller continues to be used and marketed by pastors, writers, and leaders who promoted an evangelical piety aimed at a more thoroughly applied form of Christianity in everyday life.[199]

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[194] Ibid., 93.
[195] Ibid.

[196] John Piper, *When I Don't Desire God: How to Fight For Joy* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 117-118.

[197] The most obvious example is in Ben Patterson's book where he finishes a section reflecting on John Piper's ideas followed by a discussion of Müller's reading of the Bible as a source for developing joy. It is obvious that Patterson read Piper's *When I Don't Desire God* as the source of his own ideas. Ben Patterson, *He Has Made Me Glad: Enjoying God's Goodness With Reckless Abandon* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 49.

[198] Often a biography of Müller is provided as recommended reading by authors encouraging readers to embrace his form of piety. C. J. Mahaney and John Loftness, *Disciplines for Life: Steps to Spiritual Strength*, rev. ed. (Gaithersburg, MD: Sovereign Grace Ministries, 1992), 35.

[199] In the last half of the twentieth century evangelicals in North America aggressively adopted business strategies to market religious paraphernalia such as T-shirts, books, music, and other mementos that promote key values, slogans, or persons in popular piety. R. Laurence Moore, *Selling God: American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture* (Oxford: Oxford Univesity Press, 1994), 209, 244.

Evangelicals have, in fact, used Müller as a model of Christian practice, primarily because his story is so easily explained to those who are not familiar with his life and work. Because Müller focused on prayer as the primary means to support his family, ministry, and philanthropic works, modern evangelicals have also focused on his method of prayer as key to his informally canonized status. Colin Whittaker used Müller as the chief example of a great prayer warrior in his book entitled, *Seven Guides to Effective Prayer*. Whittaker opens the chapter with the miraculous story of Müller praying that a heavy fog would lift so that the ship he was traveling on would arrive on time in Quebec. The story is the hook that then allows Whittaker to recap the entire course of Müller's life from his dissolute days in Prussia to his global preaching tours as the celebrated man of faith who supported orphans by prayer. Whittaker ends the chapter by asserting a simple formula for the success of Müller that focused on more prayer, more faith, more patience, which was sure to prompt God to respond with an answer.[200]

W. Bingham Hunter[201] in his book on prayer entitled, *The God Who Hears*, highlighted that Müller believed he could show through his own example what an "*ordinary* Christian" could accomplish by simply trusting God.[202] The key idea that Hunter was concerned with centered on the commonness of Müller and his risk taking. Hunter explained that he has come to see prayer,

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[200] Colin Whittaker, *Seven Guides to Effective Prayer* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1987), 44.

[201] W. Bingham Hunter has taught at several evangelical institutions of higher education and is currently Vice President and Academic Dean at Phoenix Seminary in Phoenix, Arizona. "Phoenix Seminary, Vice President and Academic Dean," http://www.ps.edu/about-us/faculty-staff-board/executive-administration/vice-president-academic-dean/ (accessed November 12, 2009).

[202] W. Bingham Hunter, *The God Who Hears* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 163.

in fact, as growing an individual's faith only when something is at risk. In a similar manner,

Dallas Willard, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Southern California and a Southern

Baptist minister, is a prolific author of Christian books that have earned him acclaim from

evangelical periodicals, like *Christianity Today*.[203] In his popular book, *The Spirit of the*

Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives, Willard examines the nature and purpose

of Christian spiritual disciplines. In a section entitled, "The Disciplines of Abstinence," in the

subsection entitled, "Secrecy," Willard states, "In the discipline of secrecy . . . we abstain from

causing our good deeds and qualities to be known."[204] Willard's primary example of this

spiritual discipline is Müller. Quoting Müller's statement about "strengthening the faith of the

children of God" from Roger Steer's biography *Admiring God*, Willard affirmed Müller as a

model worthy of emulation. Willard made clear through the use of the quotation that Müller's

goal, "was to establish before the world and the church a testimony that God provides faithfully

for those who trust in him."[205] At the conclusion of the section Willard summarizes the

importance of the spiritual discipline that Müller mastered, "If we see needs met because we

have ask [*sic*] God alone, our faith in God's presence and care will be greatly increased. But if

we always tell others of the need, we will have little faith in God, and our entire spiritual life will

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[203] Willard's list of popular evangelical books includes: *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006); *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002); *Hearing God; Developing a Conversational Relationship with God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press,1999); *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998). He has also published several co-authored volumes and formal academic studies in philosophy. For a biographical article of Willard see Christine A. Scheller, "A Divine Conspirator," *Christianity Today* Library.com, http://www.ctlibrary.com/ ct/2006/september/27.45.html (accessed August 12, 2009)

[204] Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990), 172.

[205] Ibid., 174.

suffer because of it."[206] Then in the very next sub-section entitled, "Sacrifice," Willard recounts

a story from his graduate school days at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, when he and his

wife decided to give the remainder of their funds away after they had paid their bills for the

month.   With no money to live on, they told no one of their "sacrifice" and about a week later

they found twenty dollars "pinned to the steering wheel of [their] car."[207] Müller's model of the

spiritual discipline of "secrecy" paid well according to Willard who reflects, "With hamburger at

thirty-nine cents a pound, we lived like royalty until the next month, convinced we were

enjoying the provisions of the King."[208]

Willard's transformation of Müller's practice of the life of faith into a spiritual discipline

based on his own anecdotal experience reveals an ongoing evolution in evangelical thought

regarding the importance of what Müller himself intended to accomplish. Secrecy is deemed an

aspect of abstinence, while sacrificial giving is really about being rewarded thanks to keeping it a

secret. Müller, as a hero of the faith, appeals to Willard because Müller's approach to the life of

faith is historically based. Consequently, Müller's life of faith was part of a tradition that has

proven itself over time.[209] Willard contends that spiritual practices that can be traced, as he

states, "across the centuries will keep us from erring."[210] Whether a practice was intended to be

a spiritual discipline or not, Willard assumes that its operation in the past legitimates the practice

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[206] Ibid.

[207] Ibid., 175.

[208] Ibid.

[209] Ibid., 158.

[210] Ibid.

with a historicity that indicates truth. The importance of Müller's life lessons are also evidenced in stories evangelicals have created for children.

Fit For Children

VeggieTales is a popular animation series developed for children in the early 1990s to promote Christian values and moral lessons through stories involving computer-animated vegetables. VeggieTales produced a short feature on Müller that was included as the introductory story to *Gideon Tuba Warrior*.[211] The story was entitled, "A Man Who Trusted God for Everything!" The fictional animated story depicted Müller as a suit-wearing asparagus with a monocle caring for orphan children in his home. The VeggieTales episode continued the legend that Müller never asked anyone but God for anything. The animated short also relayed one of the most famous miracle stories associated with Müller—the same one used by Bob Jones IV in his musical. VeggieTales recounts the Luffe legend with animated vegetables and humor. As the children sat down for breakfast there was no food, so they prayed to thank God for the food that would soon be provided. At the conclusion of the prayer, someone knocked at the door. Müller opened the door and the baker explained that he was awakened early in the morning to bake fresh bread for the children. Soon after the bread arrived, the milkman's cart broke down and he gave Müller fresh milk for the orphans. The VeggieTales characters emphasized the historical truth of the story and even showed a drawing based on his actual likeness to prove that he was not an animated asparagus.

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[211] *Big Idea's Veggie Tales: Gideon Tuba Warrior*, DVD (New York: Sony BMG Music Entertainment, 2006).

Accounts of Müller written and produced for children[212] have also included audio stories and even books aimed at teaching children how to read by emphasizing biblical characters and themes.[213] *Got Food?*, a book intended to teach children how to read, also tells the Luffe legend. Müller, in the short book, is then quoted as saying, "'God is great, God is good,' said George. 'Let us thank him for our food.'"[214] Like the VeggieTales animated story, the illustrated introductory reading book for children aimed at promoting a particular memory of Müller. Producers and publishers emphasized in their simplified retelling of Müller's life a story that resonates with evangelicals of all ages, but particularly with parents who choose what material will become part of their child's DVD and book library. The use of the legendary story about the baker and the milkman also point to the relationship with God that ordinary evangelicals hope to see in practice. The cooperative dynamic of others knowing about and contributing consciously to the upkeep of the orphans is ignored in order that Müller's faith and trust can be praised as the exemplary model for children of what the Christian life should be like in everyday life.

A number of books have been written for children that tell the story of Müller and the orphanages in Bristol. Many of the accounts are historical fiction that tells the story of various

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[212] In the nineteenth century, Müller appeared in some stories aimed at boys, in 1927 the London publishing company of Pickering & Inglis printed a book about Wesley, Müller, and Moody that was marketed to children. The book was probably not purchased by many children but was given as a gift by parents, grandparents, and Sunday School teachers. J. J. Ellis, *Faithful and Fearless: The Life Stories of John Wesley, George Muller, Dwight L. Moody* (London: Pickering & Inglis, Ltd., 1927). By the 1940s, the biographies were modified and Moody was dropped from the book in favor of a biography about J. Hudson Taylor. J. J. Ellis, *Faithful and Fearless: The Life Stories of John Wesley, George Muller, James Hudson Taylor* (London: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.).

[213] *Through Thick & Thin, "When in Doubt . . . Pray!,"* Adventures in Odyssey Audio Series, Focus on the Family (audiocassette), 1998.

[214] Peggy Wilber and Marianne Hering, *Got Food?* illus. Cary Pillo (Colorado Springs, CO: Faith Kidz, 2003), 7.

episodes from Müller's life in dialogue and action.[215] One account even created the fictional

character of Curly, a 12-year old street waif and thief, who is placed under Müller's care.[216]

These accounts are all intended to dramatize for children Müller's life in an accessible manner

that is engaging and continues to promote him as a hero of the faith who began life as a selfish

boy and ended up, through his Christian experiences, saving orphans from a similar fate.[217]

Furthermore, children are encouraged to study Müller's life through curriculum guides that give

emphasis to his piety, humility, and the challenges of his historical context.[218] If evangelicals

have found Müller's story particularly useful for educating children in proper piety, that is

primarily because so many have found his story so important for their own practice of

Christianity.

Müller as a Hero of the Faith

The "Heroes of the Faith," "God's Generals," and other labels are conceptual categories

that evangelicals have used as descriptive terms for evangelical exemplars in articles, sermons,

and book series subtitles. The idea of a hero of the faith, however, dates back to late antiquity

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[215] Faith Coxe Bailey, *George Mueller* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1958); Fern Neal Stocker, *George Mueller: Champion of Orphans* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1986); Janet Benge and Geoff Benge, *George Müller: The Guardian of Bristol's Orphans* (Seattle, WA: YWAM Publishing, 1999); Irene Howat, *The Children's Champion: George Müller* (Tain, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, Ltd., 2002).

[216] Dave Jackson and Neta Jackson, *The Bandit of Ashley Downs*, illus. Julian Jackson (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1993).

[217] Müller has also been included in short biographical accounts for children. Irene Howat, *Ten Boys Who Changed the World* (Tain, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2001).

[218] Janet and Geoff Benge, *George Müller: Unit Study Curriculum Guide* (Seattle, WA: YWAM Publishing, 2002), 22-23. Student guides were also created for private religious schools and for parents of homeschooled children, see Julia Pferdehirt, Dave Jackson, and Neta Jackson, *George Müller: The Bandit of Ashley Downs, Curriculum Guide* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2001), 2.

and was important for making distinctions between those who had lived illustrious lives of faith and those who should follow the example of distinguished Christians. Jaroslav Pelikan, distinguished historian of Christianity, explains that,

> A saint was a hero of the faith and "an athlete of Christ." Such a hero could be described as "utterly pure in thought, helpful and discreet in speech," dedicated wholeheartedly both to the active and to the contemplative life, and again as "angelic in his appearance, steady in his gait, holy in his activity, sound in his body, smart in his mind, circumspect in his work, outstanding in his genius, great in his counsel, catholic in his faith, patient in his hope, and universal in his love." The saint in his virtues was a reflection of the virtues of Christ, as the stars were a reflection of the light of the sun.[219]

Based on his reading of the primary sources, Pelikan summarized the conception of a hero of the faith in the medieval period. The notion of the heroic, of course, did not originate within medieval Christianity, rather the idea of the hero went back to the first three centuries of Christianity when martyrdom distinguished those who were worthy of remembrance because of their "intimacy with God."[220]

Similar to the Christian hagiography of late antiquity and the medieval period, evangelicals chronicled stories that they believed could be important to the devotional life. These sacred biographies were devoid of any difficulties with the personality, work, and relationships that define most life experiences.[221] Instead, evangelicals only recognized troubles

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[219] Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Growth of Medieval Theology (600-1300): The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine, Vol. 3* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1978), 175-176.

[220] Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 6.

[221] Evangelical conceptions of history have been misunderstood by historians, such as Frank Lambert, who viewed evangelicals as holding to three great moments in the history of the church: 1) Day of Pentecost depicted in the Book of Acts, 2) the Protestant Reformations of the sixteenth century, 3) The Great Awakening of the eighteenth century. However, evangelical conceptions of the history of Christianity and their place in that history are far more complicated

prior to salvation and then recorded in a triumphal manner the life the individual led after the

transition to a life centered on Christian faith and practice.[222] Historian Derek Krueger explains

that hagiography in late antiquity sought "the representation in narrative of the pious

performances of holy men and women. Authors offered the saints as models for emulation and

reflection."[223] Much as a Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christians find inspiration for a life of

holiness and service in the records of the saints, so evangelicals remembered individuals who

distinguished themselves by their piety and their service to the cause of the Gospel. Müller's

dependence on faith and prayer to meet his material needs and those of the orphans was also

matched by his simplicity. Furthermore, because Müller's story operated on a number of levels

for readers, it could be reformulated to promote holiness and pious action.[224] Finally, the Ashley

Down Orphan Homes were considered a work aimed at the highest tradition of Christian service

established in the Epistle of James chapter 1, verse 27 that states, "Pure and undefiled religion in

the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep

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than three major benchmarks. Individuals matter to evangelicals, especially those who inspire others by their example of piety and life of devotion to God through active service to humanity. Frank Lambert, *Inventing the "Great Awakening"* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 19. For an analysis of evangelical views of the history of the Christianity see, Darren W. Schmidt, "The Place of Church History in the Rise of Evangelicalism," Historical Papers 2007: Canadian Society of Church History, http://www.augustana.ualberta.ca/csch/Schmidt%20 Article.pdf (accessed August 10, 2009).

[222] Ruth A. Tucker records many examples of such patterned stories in her book *Sacred Stories*. She includes two stories in the devotion on Müller, one of which tells the simple story of a delinquent youth to his orphan work and global preaching tours. Ruth A. Tucker, *Sacred Stories* (Grand Rapids, MI: Daybreak Books, 1989), 203.

[223] Derek Krueger, "Hagiography as an Ascetic Practice in the Early Christian East," *The Journal of Religion* 79, no. 2 (April 1999): 216-217.

[224] Müller indicated that he decided to pursue publication of his *Narrative* after a friend read the book and was spiritually encouraged by the contents.

oneself unstained by the world."[225] Like a Roman Catholic saint, Müller never claimed that he

caused miracles to happen, instead those who wrote his vita, in the form of hagiography,

included stories of miraculous events initiated by Müller's prayers.

Müller's status as an evangelical hero of the faith resulted in his being cataloged as one of

the great examples of piety in the history of Christianity alongside Roman Catholic saints such as

St. Bernard of Clairvaux and St. Francis de Sales.[226] He was regularly presented as a modern-

day equivalent to a biblical character. The most common references to Müller asserted that he

was a modern-day Enoch, Elijah, or Apostle Paul.[227] The final point of contact between Müller

and the past was with the heroes of the Protestant faith. Evangelicals linked him to Luther,

Wesley, and Whitefield, but more often they consciously highlighted the connection to August

H. Francke.[228] Francke was clearly the individual whom Müller credited with his idea for

founding an orphanage by faith, but more importantly Francke was a leading Pietist and a tie to

the great evangelical awakening of the eighteenth century. Francke conveyed an authority that

denied any sort of doctrinal or practical innovation on the part of Müller.[229] The framing of his

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[225] Holy Bible (NASB).

[226] Pepper, *A Voice From the Crowd*, 201.

[227] "The Müller Orphanages," *The Missionary Review of the World* 22, no. 11 (November 1899): 861-863.

[228] Morrow, *George Müller*, 9.

[229] The use of Francke to give credibility and legitimacy to Müller originated in the mid-nineteenth century, based on the *Narrative*, and continues in the twenty-first century. "An Orphan Asylum Founded on Faith," *The Evangelical Respository* 17, no. 8 (January 1859): 461-463; *Fiftieth Annual Report of New York City Mission and Tract Society* (New York: New York City Mission and Tract Society, 1876): 27-28; "Church News," *Lutheran Witness* 4, no. 9 (September 21, 1885): 69; see "November 21" in E. Michael Rusten and Sharon Rusten, *The One Year Book of Christian History: A Daily Glimpse into God's Powerful Work* (Wheaton, IL:

memory along these lines reinforced and elevated him to the vanguard of Christian piety. Therefore, conferring Müller's name as a marker of piety on a fellow evangelical meant that person, too, was part of a great tradition that reached from the early church through Luther's Reformation and the revivals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The issue of saintliness for Müller is important for determining why his story was seen as valid. Müller's life became part of the modern evangelical hagiography that celebrated Christians who were distinguished by their lives of devotion to God.[230] Often these stories were framed within the context of daily devotional readings that were intended to inspire piety.[231] A number of devotionals, a mainstay of evangelical personal piety, included Müller, along with other pious examples such as David Brainerd, Henry Martyn, Robert Murray Mc'Chenyne, J. Hudson Taylor, Amy Carmichael, Pandita Ramabai, and scores of other evangelical heroes.

Tyndale House Publishers, 2003), 652-653; Alvin J. Schmidt, *How Christianity Changed the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 132.

[230] Since Müller's primary contribution to evangelical piety originated with his publications, it is not surprising that publishers continued to see the potential for publishing books about him. These stories, like early Christian hagiography, also celebrate sacrifice by pointing to a time when virtue, selflessness, and absolute devotion were demonstrated by a martyr. In Müller's case, since he is a modern man, he was a martyr who sacrificed his own selfish desires. Philip Rousseau, *The Early Christian Centuries* (London: Longman, 2002), 161-172.

[231] For example of such books see, Basil Miller, *George Muller: The Man of Faith*, 5th ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1941); Nancy Garton, *George Müller and His Orphans* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1963); Roger Steer, *George Müller: Delighted in God*! rev. ed. (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1981); Roger Steer, *A Living Reality: George Müller's Experience of God* (London: Hodder and Stoughton1985); Carol Purves, *From Prussia With Love: The George Müller Story* (Leominister: Day One Publications, 2005); Clive Langmead, *Robber of the Cruel Streets: The Prayerful Life of George Müller*, (Surrey, U.K.: CWR, 2006).

Each of the heroes, like Müller, was celebrated as a modern martyr who sacrificed something significant to serve God.[232]

One of the most well-known devotional authors in the twentieth century was Lettie Burd Cowman, more popularly known as Mrs. Chas. E. Cowman. Cowman, who along with her husband founded the Oriental Missionary Society as a faith mission,[233] was the author of one of the most important devotionals, used primarily by women, in the twentieth century. First published in 1925, *Streams in the Desert*, reached a milestone in 1965 with over two million copies of the book sold, and it has been labeled the best-selling devotional text of all time.[234] Today, the widely-read evangelical devotional is still published by Zondervan Publishing House in a variety of formats from a contemporary language version to a version for children.[235]

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[232] The result was, as D. M. M'Intyre explained, that, "The history of George Müller's Homes at Ashley Down is written vividly on the conscience of Christendom." D. M. M'Intyre, *The Hidden Life of Prayer*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Dimension Books, 1971), 92.

[233] The Cowmans felt led to missionary service in Japan after hearing A. B. Simpson preach at Moody Church in Chicago. Originally intending to serve under the Methodist mission board, they embraced the faith principle and abandoned all official support and ecclesiastical endorsements. The result was the founding the Oriental Missionary Society (OMS), a faith mission, that sent missionaries to Japan and Korea. The OMS continues to operate as a faith mission today. E. N. Hunt, "Cowman, Lettie Burd (1870-1960) and Charles Elmer Cowman (1864-1924)," in *Dictionary of Christianity in America*, 324; Frederick W. Norris, *Christianity: A Short Global History* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2002), 272; Ruth Tucker, *God Talk: Cautions For Those Who Hear God's Voice* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 121.

[234] Cheryl Forbes, "Coffee, Mrs. Cowman, and the Devotional Life of Women Reading in the Desert," in *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice*, ed. David D. Hall (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997): 131.

[235] L. B. Cowman, *Streams in the Desert: An Updated Edition in Today's Language*, ed. James Reimann (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997); L. B. Cowman, *Streams in the Desert for Graduates*, ed. Jim Reimann (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008); L. B. Cowman, *Streams in the Desert for Kids: 366 Devotions to Bring Comfort and Healing*, ed. Gwen Ellis (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009); L. B. Cowman, *Streams for Teens: Thoughts on Seeking God's Will and Direction*, ed. Jim Reimann (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009). There are also

Cowman's devotional met an important need in the lives of women who were struggling, as

Cowman did in her own life, to find meaning and purpose. Devotional books, as writing and

rhetoric professor Cheryl Forbes describes, follow a pattern that involves "a Bible verse, then a

brief meditation, usually a page or less, followed by a prayer, poem, or brief concluding

comment."[236] Forbes continues her analysis by explaining that "Mrs. Cowman's text, though,

does not purport to be a full discourse on the Bible verse quoted; however, the meditations have

the force of popular hermeneutics, and thus her role is analogous to that of a minister."[237]

Cowman was an influential voice in the development of female evangelical piety through

her devotional books. She used Bible verses, quotations, and reflections in her book that gave

purpose and meaning to readers. Forbes reveals Cowman's importance when she states,

> Women's lives and work have long gone unrecognized and ultimately unvalued, as Mrs. Cowman knew. She knew, too, that while most women never expect reward or gratitude, they do expect hardship, sorrow, and sickness. They need to know that their pain matters and that, as deep as the pain may be, there is even deeper comfort. . . . The more burdensome a life, the more God's gift of comfort women experience. A central way to experience this comfort is through a specific practice, that of daily devotional reading.[238]

Bringing comfort to those who needed their faith strengthened, Cowman used several of Müller's

statements to promote piety and action,[239] and even the well-known story about his praying for

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Spanish language versions of the devotional available. L. B. Cowman, *Manantiales en el Desierto* (El Paso, TX: Editorial Mundo Hispano, 1998).

[236] Forbes, "Coffee, Mrs. Cowman," 118.

[237] Ibid.

[238] Ibid., 130.

[239] She included a quotation that emphasized Müller's acceptance of premillennial eschatology in 1829 that prompted him "to rouse a slumbering church." Mrs. Chas. E. Cowman, ed., *Streams in the Desert*, 11th ed. (Los Angeles, CA: The Oriental Missionary Society, 1925), 349. Also see, Ibid., 240, 325.

the fog to lift off the coast of Newfoundland.[240] Cowman included a number of celebrated

individuals from Amy Carmichael and Spurgeon to Müller to lesser known figures in additional

devotionals that she wrote after the success of *Streams in the Desert*.[241] Evangelicals have

followed Cowman's example and Müller continues to be used as a source for inspirational words

of encouragement in daily devotional literature.[242] Müller remains, for many evangelicals, part

of the liturgy of their daily devotions where they reflect on what it means to believe and act in a

Christian manner.

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[240] Ibid., 241-242.

[241] Mrs. Chas. E. Cowman, ed., *Springs in the Valley* (Los Angeles, CA: The Oriental Missionary Society, 1945), 38, 309. Cowman also included quotations from individuals as diverse as Charles Dickens, George Eliot, T. DeWitt Talmage, and William Jennings Bryan. Mrs. Chas. E. Cowman, ed., *Consolation*, 6th ed. (Los Angeles, CA: The Oriental Missionary Society, n.d.), 42, 87, 106, 180.

[242] Nick Harrison included a number of statements and quotations from Müller in his daily devotional book entitled *His Victorious Indwelling*. Harrison also included a statement by Rev. Colin C. Kerr following a quotation from Müller that reads, "There are Christians who are always reflecting on the past, because they are not rejoicing in the present—Christians who are only too ready to tell you of Mueller and Hudson Taylor, but do not attempt to add instances of prayer experience of their own. But when did Hudson Taylor live? When did George Mueller die? With his death, did the Almighty depart?" The statement was meant to spur readers into action rather than simple commemoration. Nick Harrison, ed., *His Victorious Indwelling: Daily Devotions for a Deeper Christian Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), 192. There are a wide range of devotionals that used statements by Müller or aspects of his life story. For examples see Lance Wubbels, ed., *George Müller on Faith: A 30-Day Devotional Treasury* (Lynnwood, WA: Emerald Books, 1998); Becky Tirabassi, *The One Year Sacred Obsession Devotional* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2007), 129; Joseph Prince, *Destined to Reign Devotional: Daily Reflections for Effortless Success, Wholeness and Victorious Living* (Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 2008), 236; Norman Blackaby, Henry Blackaby, and Dana Blackaby, *Called & Accountable, 52-Week Devotional: Discovering Your Place in God's Eternal Purpose* (Birmingham, AL: New Hope Publishers, 2007), 18; Elizabeth George, *Walking With the Women of the Bible: A Devotional Journey Through God's Word* (1999, repr.; Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2008), 173; Bruce Wilkinson, ed., *Closer Walk: 365 Daily Devotions That Nurture a Heart for God, Walk Thru the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 61.

Müller also served as a modern hero of the faith primarily because he was the closest

example of a selfless martyr[243] who thoroughly clothed himself in pious acts and saw, or at least

claimed to see, the hand of God on his life. [244] The only evangelical equivalent to Müller was the

missionary who also engaged in daily selflessness to proclaim the gospel to the world.[245] For

evangelicals, Müller also entered into a philanthropic work to proclaim God's glory to the world

and then, secondly, to assist the orphans who benefited from this effort. His prayers, his acts of

selflessness, and his answer to prayers were, according to Müller, evidence that God used to

show the world that prayer still mattered.

Like the early Christian martyrs, Müller's death to himself and any earthly ambitions he

may have had were linked to a more important meta-narrative of *heilsgeschichte* (salvation

history). The resulting legacy in evangelical hagiography did not center on Müller's grave, the

orphan homes he established, or in the material objects that he touched or owned. Rather,

evangelicals memorialized his life in words—in stories—that reflected on his self-denial, his

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[243] In the nineteenth century, missionaries who died while serving their missions were viewed as martyrs. In the case of Victorian England, martyrdom could include missionaries and those evangelicals who died supporting the British Empire. Julie Roy Jeffrey, *Converting the West: A Biography of Narcissa Whitman* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 221; for an example of the British veneration of martyrs see Elizabeth Rundel Charles, *Three Martyrs of the Nineteenth Century: Studies From the Lives of Livingstone, Gordon, and Patteson* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1891).

[244] Jim Elliff argued that dying to self, like Müller, is necessary for a vibrant evangelical spiritual life. Jim Elliff, "The Believer's Passion for the Glory of Christ," in *The Glory of Christ*, ed. John H. Armstrong (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2002), 161.

[245] The great compliment that could be paid to missionaries, however, was that they lived like Müller while serving as a missionary. "Siam," *The Missionary News* 38 (February 1, 1869): 18.

prayer life, his activism, and the miracles that could be associated with him.[246] Consequently, a

wide variety of popular biographies, movies,[247] radio addresses,[248] tracts, and sermons make

reference to him as a known entity within evangelical culture.[249] Similarly, there remains an

interest in studying his life, in the context of higher education,[250] and schools and colleges were

named in honor of him.[251] In the collective memory of evangelicals these references portrayed

an image that was like a gilded icon of a medieval saint.

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[246] Asceticism and sainthood have been joined together since the early church. Sanctity was linked with self-denial and served as a sign of holiness. André Vauchez explains that in the context of medieval Christianity, "Saints were primarily distinguished by a series of denials which were popularly regarded as both the signs and conditions of perfection: indifference to worldly goods, renunciation of the pleasures of the senses, relinquishment of all personal will in a profound desire for humility. From this perspective, the touchstone of sanctity was neither birth nor function fulfilled in the Church and society, but the degree of penitence attained in practice." Evangelicals also recognized ascetic living as evidence of sanctity, which was essential to Müller's canonization as a hero of the faith. André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 190-191.

[247] *Obstacle to Comfort: The Life of George Muller*, VHS, written and hosted by Dr. Ken Connolly (Santa Ana, CA: International Baptist Missions, 1997); *Robber of the Cruel Streets: The Prayerful Life of George Müller*, DVD, written, directed, and produced by Crawford Telfer (Worchester, PA: Vision Video, 2006).

[248] Richard Foster, "A Debate in Heaven," Program 3403, October 21, 1990, http://www.csec.org/csec/sermon/Foster_3403.htm (accessed June 18, 2008).

[249] John Hagee, "The Lord's Prayer: 'Give Us Our Daily Bread,'" Program #KT-18, Sermon #5, John Hagee Ministries, Dallas, Texas.

[250] Syllabus, "SF 700, Person in Prayer," Instructor Rob Douglass, Fall 2006, Ashland Theological Seminary, Ashland, Ohio.

[251] In Germany there are three Georg Müller primary schools located in the cities of Steinhagen, Senne, and Bielefeld, as well as Georg Müller Gymnasium in Bielefeld. For the website for these schools see, "Georg-Müller-Schule," http://www.gms-net.de/ (accessed February 9, 2010). Australia, a country that gave Müller a rousing welcome in the 1880s, witnessed the establishment in 1990 of the George Mueller College in Rothwell, Queensland, that educates 1,300 children from preschool to Level 12. The school is part of Mueller Community Church, formerly Redcliffe Christian Assembly, which also manages Mueller

Bearing a Likeness

Evidence for the prominence of Müller as an informally canonized evangelical hero appeared when writers and pastors began to refer to him in the nineteenth century as "venerable," "a hero," and "saintly." However, another sign of his heroic status occurred when individuals adopted his method of living by faith and were celebrated for their life of faith, such as Joy Ridderhof who founded Gospel Recordings, Inc.[252] Beginning in the late-nineteenth century, individuals were credited with bearing a likeness to Müller. Usually this labeling involved individuals adopting his method of living by faith and being labeled equivalent to him, like Dr. Charles Cullis who was pronounced "the Müller of America."[253] Sometimes, however, the people were noted for their simplicity or their character being equated to his.[254] Often individuals were depicted as being a successor of Müller.[255] One example was A. B. Simpson

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College of Ministries, a retirement village, an assisted-care facility for the elderly, and holds church services in a performing arts center. All of these ministry ventures were born out of a desire to imitate Müller's model of prayer in faith to meet the needs of the world. According to the website for the multifaceted ministry, "Even our local Redcliffe mayor often referred to our campus as the miracle on Morris Road." "Our History," Mueller Community Church, Rothwell, Queensland, Australia, http://mccqld.org/looking/history.html (accessed February 9, 2010).

[252] Ridderhof founded Gospel Recordings, Inc., in 1939 to make recordings of the Bible available in all languages. Phyllis Thompson, *Faith By Hearing: The Story of Gospel Recordings* (Los Angeles, CA: Gospel Recordings Incorporated, 1960), 10. Books written by or about Müller inspired unknown scores of evangelicals to attempt to live a life of faith as he did. Dawson Trotman, founder of the Navigators, is another evangelical who was deeply influenced by Müller to live by faith. Betty Lee Skinner, *Daws: The Story of Dawson Trotman Founder of the Navigators* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974), 38.

[253] W. E. Boardman, "The Life of God in the Soul," *The Christian* (July 21, 1870): 8.

[254] "Chester D. Hartranft, D.D.," *Historical Notes Relating to the Pennsylvania Reformed Church* 1, no. 4 (August 10, 1899): 51.

[255] Rev. Winfield Ruelke, founder of Camp Hope for disabled children in New York State in the 1950s , also was also likened to George Müller. Leslie B. Flynn, *19 Gifts of the Spirit* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2004), 164.

who was affirmed in his work as "a second George Muller."[256] Similarly, Alvin "Mike" Martin

who founded King's Garden in Seattle, Washington, in the late 1940s, was celebrated as the

"George Mueller of his generation."[257] Likewise, evangelicals outside of North America were

recognized as the George Müller in their region of the world. Jūji Ishii in Japan, for example,

was described as the "Japanese George Müller" and the "George Müller of the Orient."[258] In a

similar manner, Pandita Ramabai, despite her sex, was titled the "Müller of India."[259] Such

labeling indicated that Müller was a reference point for a particular form of piety that ascribed

legitimacy to the individual. Müller remained an inspirational figure whose life of faith reached

across regional, cultural, theological, and national divisions so those who wanted to recognize

this higher form of Christian life could do so in a way that distinguished their own efforts from

ordinary Christian practice.[260] To live "by faith" meant that a person took the biblical promises

seriously and attempted to imitate Müller's biblical example.[261]

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[256] "Editorial," *The Way of Faith* (March 14, 1891) quoted in "Editor and Evangelist," *The Christian Alliance and Missionary Weekly* 6, no. 12 (Friday, March 12, 1891): 188.

[257] Jack Wyrtzen, "Preface," in Alvin B. Martin, *I Live By Faith* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1961), 7. Martin did not explicitly link his approach to living by faith to Müller. However, Martin attended the Christian and Missionary Alliance's Simpson Bible College in Seattle, Washington, where he was exposed to the legacy and teachings of A. B. Simpson who greatly admired Müller.

[258] Robert Hall Glover, *The Progress of World-Wide Missions*, 4th ed. (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1953)169. Also see the following article in the periodical for the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., "The George Muller of the Orient," *The Church at Home and Abroad* 10, no. 58 (October 1891): 329.

[259] "Recent Books on Missions and Mission Lands," *The Missionary Review of the World* 24, no. 4 (April 1901): 303; also see, Edward J. Gitre, "The 1904-05 Welsh Revival: Modernization, Technologies, and Techniques of the Self," *Church History* 73, no. 4 (December 2004): 826.

[260] For example, Eberhard Arnold, as his biographer Markus Baum explained, "found a spiritual role model in another 'father of orphans,' George Müller. . . . Eberhard was too young

Conclusion

Evangelicals over the course of the twentieth century continued to follow Pierson's example and attempted to draw out of Müller's life lessons that they found useful to promote devotional piety. Müller was employed as an archetype because his form of Christian practice, rooted in German Pietism, captured essential elements of evangelical piety that all evangelicals, regardless of their differences, could identify with. Often those who embraced Müller rejected each other. For example, A. T. Pierson, who did so much to promote Müller's legacy, on several occasions railed against Pentecostals in his editorials in the *Missionary Review of the World*. Reflecting on the Pentecostals and their practice of looking for a manifestation of the Holy Spirit in a sign or wonder, like speaking in tongues, Pierson complained,

> The life of specific signs, testimonies and manifestations is evil also by keeping alive and cherishing the selfish principle instead of destroying it. He who seeks to live in this manner instead of by simple faith, and who thus shows a secret preference for specific experiences, modeled after his own imaginations of things, to that pearl of great price which is found in leaving all things with God, necessarily seeks to have things in his own way. The way of faith is the way of self-renunciation; the humbling and despised way of our personal nothingness. The way of signs and manifestations is the way of one's own will; and, therefore, naturally tends to keep alive and nourish the destructive principle of selfishness.[262]

Pierson clearly saw the Pentecostal focus on self as undermining how he believed faith operated in the life of the believer. In a like manner, Fundamentalists, Christian Brethren, and Holiness

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to have met Müller, but he was deeply impressed by this man's faith." Markus Baum, *Against the Wind: Eberhard Arnold and the Bruderhof* (Farmington, PA: The Plough Publishing House, 2002), 66.

[261] Jill Briscoe, a popular evangelical writer and speaker, wrote in an autobiographical account that she imagined herself to be at one point, "a female George Mueller, teaching the poor little lambs that had gone astray." Jill Briscoe, *Thank You For Being a Friend: My Personal Journey*, rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 79.

[262] A. T. Pierson, "Speaking With Tongues," *The Missionary Review of the World* 31, no. 7 (July 1908): 531.

adherents all blasted Pentecostals as radicals.[263] Holiness adherents too found themselves the

target of abuse by other evangelicals, while Fundamentalists became a national example of

religious buffoonery after the Scopes Trial.[264] However, all of these evangelical subgroups

found in Müller a person with whom they could identify regardless of their open disagreements

with each other. This element is particularly noteworthy in how Müller's catholicity enabled all

evangelicals, regardless of their differences, to see in him what was common to all of them—a

desire for a serious biblical piety lived out in everyday life.

After World War II, Holiness adherents, Fundamentalists, and Pentecostals found a

common vision in the "new evangelicalism" or "neo-evangelicalism" that pitted Protestant

America against Catholic America. Although these movements maintained their distinctive

teachings, they embraced their commonalities to fight a common enemy.[265] By the end of the

twentieth century the political, social, and religious goals of the "new evangelicalism" had

returned evangelicals to an openness and tolerance for diversity of practices and opinions that

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[263] Grant A. Wacker, "Travail of a Broken Family: Radical Evangelical Responses to the Emergence of Pentecostalism in America, 1906-1916," in *Pentecostal Currents in American Protestantism*, ed. Edith L. Blumhofer, Russell P. Spittler, and Grant A. Wacker (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 28-41. Also see Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (Reading, MA: Perseus Books, 1995), 74-78.

[264] Edward J. Larson, *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate Over Science and Religion* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 246.

[265] After the establishment of the National Association of Evangelicals in the 1940s and later with the Charismatic Renewal of the 1960s, the different subgroups within evangelicalism embraced more of an inter-denomination identity that is similar to the unity evangelicals embraced in the late nineteenth century. Russell P. Spittler, "Are Pentecostals and Charismatics Fundamentalists?: A Review of American Uses of These Categories," in *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture*, ed. Karla Poewe (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1994), 110; Douglas Jacobsen, "Knowing the Doctrines of Pentecostals: The Scholastic Theology of the Assemblies of God, 1930-1955," in *Pentecostal Currents in American Protestantism*, eds. Edith L. Blumhofer, Russell P. Spittler, and Grant A. Wacker (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 100.

was reminiscent of late nineteenth-century evangelicalism. The result of this new-found unity

was that evangelicals could use the memory of a wide range of individuals whom they could

accept as worthy of respect and promotion.[266] Consequently, evangelicals informally canonized

Müller as a hero of the faith in children's books and animated shows, sermons, and a wide-range

of devotional literature.[267] These devotional texts affirm, according to the authors' use of texts,

the evangelical tradition as biblical, while also inculcating the tradition with new reference points

of piety outside of the biblical texts. Evangelicals who were drawn to his expression of piety

ensured that he remained alive in the collective memory of evangelicals.[268] They esteemed

Müller as someone who was closer to God than the average Christian and who saw the

miraculous happen in everyday life. The result was that evangelicals turned his name into a label

for a particular form of pious practice. To be like Müller meant that one was engaged in a

serious form of Christian practice rooted in prayer, faith, trust, and simplicity. Although

evangelicals have an aversion to commissioning statues and shrines to honor their heroes,[269] they

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[266] Cyril J. Davey, "George Müller," in *Great Leaders of the Christian Church*, ed. John Woodbridge (Chicago: Moody Press, 1988), 320.

[267] Müller's writings were often republished in cheap tracts by various Christian organizations over the course of the twentieth century and distributed often for free or minimal cost, see "Choice Tracts," *The Friend* 90, no. 15 (October 5, 1916): 180.

[268] In her 1957 M.R.E. thesis Gladys Cleveland Steiner makes the following claim about Müller's legacy: "Thousands of persons were challenged and inspired by this man as was seen in the Annual Reports of the Institution. He made Christians realize that their God was a God who was interested in his children's welfare and One who not only heard, but answered prayer as well. It was the unseen service in the lives of thousands of Christians which was George Mueller's greatest service to the world." Gladys Cleveland Steiner, "The Relation of Faith and Service: A Comparison of George Mueller and Thomas Barnardo" (M.R.E. thesis, The Biblical Seminary in New York, 1957), 30.

[269] Pentecostals have ventured down this road by occasionally elevating a person to the point that a church becomes a shrine. For example, in Kolkata, India, the Mark Buntain Memorial Church on Park Street operates as a shrine to a Canadian Pentecostal missionary who

have created literary monuments to celebrate those they have informally canonized as worthy of imitation and emulation.[270]

Since evangelicalism operates as a social network of self-identifying members who show adherence to no single ecclesiastical hierarchy, their heroes of the faith must appear transformed by their acceptance of Christ and in all subsequent action biblical. If their piety meets the rigorous cross-examination of individual conscience of evangelicals they are deemed acceptable and worthy models.[271] Heroes of the faith offered inspiration to engage in a living tradition of devout religious practices and social activism.[272] Over the course of time, the names of these

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started a number of social work projects (a hospital, a nursing college, and schools) in Kolkata and built one of the largest churches in the city. The church houses his personal Bible in a Plexiglas case. Personal items from his life are also on display. All points of reference to him in the church are to his great piety and heroic sacrifice for the kingdom of God.

[270] Rev. H Knee, a Baptist pastor in Bristol, remarked upon the occasion of Müller's death that, "Müller had left behind him a monument of stone on Ashley Down, but a vastly more enduring one in the hearts and minds of countless thousands whom he had influenced for good." *In Memoriam: An Account of the Death & Funeral Services of the Late George Müller* (London: S. W. Partridge, 1898), 29.

[271] One recent book, targeted at evangelicals, used George and Mary Müller as a heroic model for family ministry. The author, Ann Dunagan, notes, "Unfortunately, it doesn't take long to realize that many missionary heroes *with* families were not heroes *of* the family. A few of the 'biggest' names in missions history (such as William Carey, David Livingstone, and C. T. Studd) had severe family problems; yet others (such as William and Catherine Booth, Hudson and Maria Taylor, and George and Mary Müller) found a powerful and harmonious ministry–family balance." Ann Dunagan, *The Mission-Minded Family: Releasing Your Family to God's Destiny* (Colorado Springs, CO: Authentic Publishing, 2007), 47, 67. Dunagan includes a short skit to perform that highlights Müller's household as "A family of faith: caring for orphans and reaching the world." Dunagan also has resources for further study that include a website entitled: "George Müller: English Evangelist and Philanthropist" and two versions of Dave and Neta Jackson's books about Müller, one of which was included in the children's series, *Hero Tales: Volume 1*, published by Bethany House in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

[272] Evangelicals use historical persons as part of their living tradition and as evidence of orthodox practice. These lists, as has been argued, many times included Müller, but often they were lists that appealed to individual evangelical leaders. For example, A. W. Tozer, included in his list of the living tradition of faith Moses, Isaiah, Paul, Stephen, Augustine, Newton, and

485

heroes have become reference points for piety in action. In the case of Müller, evangelicals

could model their life upon his example and find themselves affirmed as Müller did. Models,

like Müller, serve a as reference point within evangelical piety, but one that is often difficult to

match. Philip Yancey, a popular evangelical writer, made a relevant observation on this point

when he wrote,

> We sing hymns that celebrate "O, the pure delight of a single hour, that before Thy throne I spend," and honor saints of Olympian mysticism.
> Evangelicals pass down stories of spiritual ancestors like the Baptist pastor Charles Spurgeon, who claimed that he never passed a single quarter of an hour in his waking moments without a distinct consciousness of the presence of the Lord. The British activist George Müller set as his primary goal each morning to "have my soul happy in the Lord." After one of her husband's revivals, Jonathan Edward's wife swooned for seventeen days, caught in the presence of God, almost unconscious of her surroundings.
> I do not doubt any of these giants of the faith; I merely suggest that comments like these indicate why they gained their reputations as giants of the faith. To hold them as the norm for Christians to emulate may diminish the rest of us to a point of despair, not unlike the sun extinguishing a firefly. Charles Spurgeon felt the presence of God every fifteen minutes; to my shame I can easily go through a day without even thinking about God.[273]

Although Yancey is willing to admit a discrepancy between the esteem paid to "saints of

Olympian mysticism" and the ability of others to follow in their footsteps, Yancey is not willing

to actually cast doubt on the hagiography that surrounded their lives. The stories, though

problematic for promoting an unachievable standard of piety, are too important for evangelicals

to be dismissed as legendary. Yancey realized that he could not question the stories that

evangelicals tell one another about informally canonized saints because heroes are an essential

component of evangelical identity. To question the validity of the stories associated with heroes

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Brainerd. A. W. Tozer, *Keys to the Deeper Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1957), 13.

[273] Philip Yancey, *Reaching for the Invisible God: What Can We Expect to Find?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 198-199.

of the faith risked undermining the faith of those who venerate particular individuals, being

shunned as no longer an evangelical, or being perceived as not believing that God could

accomplish such a work in the life of an individual. Evangelicals do not challenge the stories

associated with heroes of the faith and risk alienation from the community. It is much safer to

admit one is unable to live up to the standard of the exemplar than question whether the saint

actually lived out the level of piety associated with him or her.

This chapter analyzed and critiqued the use of Müller's memory by evangelicals and

offers a new interpretation about how evangelicals re-fashion stories to fit their pedagogical

needs.[274] Müller, like Spurgeon and dozens of other heroes of the faith, was used as an example

to show the next generation that God needed people who joined deep piety with practical

action.[275] Heroes of the faith were spiritual giants and were used by evangelicals as pedagogical

tools. The unintentional result of using Müller's life to support an identity based on pious action

was that evangelicals managed to stay true to Müller's original vision for writing his *Narrative*.

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[274] Evangelicals suffer from historical amnesia and have imposed a break between the history of the Roman Catholic Church and their own tradition. Consequently, evangelicals remain locked in the tyranny of the now and typically only recognize those in their own collective memory who are seen as relevant to practical action in the present. For a further examination of the problems surrounding evangelicalism and tradition, see D. H. Williams, *Retrieving the Tradition and Renewing Evangelicalism: Primer for Suspicious Protestants* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 9-11, 114.

[275] Diana Severance, in a short flyer that could be used as an insert in a church bulletin, wrote in regard to Müller, "His life demonstrated what extraordinary ministry can be accomplished through the combination of tender compassion for hungry and homeless children, unshakeable faith in God, and practical action meet need." Diana Severance, "George Mueller: Man of Faith and Prayer," *Glimpses of People, Events, Life and Faith from the Church Across the Ages, Issue #36* (Worcester, PA: Christian History Institute, 1992). Also see George Müller, *Faith in Action*, ed. and intro. David P. Setran (Wheaton, IL: The Institute of Evangelism Billy Graham Center, 1994).

Evangelicals continued to use him as an illustration of godliness to strengthen their faith.[276]

Although various subgroups of evangelicals gave emphasis to different aspects of Müller's life,

all of the subgroups of evangelicals who used his story did so because his life of devotion and

practical action bolstered the identity of their subgroup.[277] What this commonality among

subgroups of evangelicals, and all evangelicals, reveals in their use of Müller is a shared tradition

rooted in German Pietism—a heartfelt, personal faith that placed pious practice over theological

dogma.[278] Evangelicals remain committed to activism over deep intellectual reflection and

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[276] R. A. Beltz, *George Muller: A Great Obtainer* (Chicago: Van Kampen Press, 1945), 2.

[277] James M. Houston, founding principal of Regent College, Vancouver, Canada, grew up a member of the Christian Brethren in Edinburgh, Scotland. Houston's family was influenced by Müller's example. His father lived by faith and envisioned Müller as following a "Biblical posture." Houston himself lived by faith for the first seven years that he worked to establish Regent College in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Houston recollects, "George Muller we saw as an initiator, but we cannot say it was our own archetype, more likely it was Abraham himself." James M. Houston, email message to author, October 11, 2009.

[278] Bill Hybels, pastor of the 22,500 member Willow Creek Community Church near Chicago, captured the essence of evangelical piety when he wrote, "Authentic Christianity is not learning a set of doctrines and then stepping in cadence with people all marching the same way. It is not simple humanitarian service to the less fortunate. It is a walk—a supernatural walk with a living, dynamic, communicating God. Thus the heart and soul of the Christian life is learning to hear God's voice and developing the courage to do what he tells us to do. Authentic Christians are persons who stand apart from others, even other Christians, as though listening to a different drummer. Their character seems deeper, their ideas fresher, their spirit softer, their courage greater, their leadership stronger, their concerns wider, their compassion more genuine, their convictions more concrete. They are joyful in spite of difficult circumstances and show wisdom beyong their years." Bill Hybels, *Too Busy Not to Pray: Slowing Down to Be with God,* 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 125. "The Outreach 100, 2008: Largest and Fastest Growing Churches in America." Outreach Magazine. http://www.sermoncentral.com /articleb.asp?article=Top-100-Largest-Churches (accessed December 5, 2009).

continue to need models for inspiration.[279] Therefore, the concluding chapter of this dissertation

will review what the legend of a saint has always been about—making imitators.

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[279] Historian Mark A. Noll thoroughly analyzed the lack of intellectual depth among evangelicals and observed, "The scandal of the evangelical mind is that there is not much of an evangelical mind. An extraordinary range of virtues is found among the sprawling throngs of evangelical Protestants in North America, including great sacrifice in spreading the message of salvation in Jesus Christ, open-hearted generosity to the needy, heroic personal exertion on behalf of troubled individuals, and the unheralded sustenance of countless churches and parachurch communities. Notwithstanding all their other virtues, however, American evangelicals are not exemplary for their thinking, and they have not been so for several generations." Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 3.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION: "EAGER TO BE IMITATORS OF HIS WAYS"

Introduction

Siobhan Nash-Marshall, a professor of philosophy at Manhattanville College, in her study of the patron saint of France, Joan of Arc, defined individuals who became noted for a singular aspect of their lives as "questers." Nash-Marshall argues that "questers" can best be understood as,

> . . . an individual who had a powerful sense of purpose, an extraordinary mission. One characteristic common to all questers, is that they become their quests, in some sense. Socrates was the gadfly of Athens, Aristotle her philosopher, St. Francis was God's troubadour, St. Thomas his scientist. Questers live for their quests and see no life outside of their quests. Their spectacular focus is what gives them their strength. It is also what makes their lives so singularly joyful.[1]

Nash-Marshall expanding on this definition goes on to state,

> The fact that questers become their quests is what makes them such controversial figures. They simply defy categorization. Quests are extraordinary missions, and the extraordinary cannot be defined through ordinary means . . . . Since questers have extraordinary missions they often use extraordinary means to accomplish their missions. Their quests often lead them to challenge the status quo, customs, and mores."[2]

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[1] Siobhan Nash-Marshall, *Joan of Arc: A Spiritual Biography* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1999), 24.

[2] Ibid., 25.

The "quester" definition employed by Nash-Marshall is useful for understanding how some individuals are able to obtain a status that sets them apart from their peers at a given moment in time and place. This dissertation has analyzed the life and work of one nineteenth-century evangelical Christian who was able to establish himself in the collective memory of evangelicals. Müller fits within the definition that Nash-Marshall constructed to describe an individual defined by a single message or work. The Ashley Down Orphan Homes, widely celebrated as the "Bristol miracle," founded by Müller made him famous for the claim that he only used prayer to support the homes. Therefore, he served as a reminder that prayer mattered in everyday life for those who wanted or needed money.[3] Consequently, he became an affirmation to millions that God still heard prayer in an age of science and skepticism. These claims, as this dissertation has argued, resulted in Müller's becoming over the course of his life a hero of the faith for evangelical Christians around the world.

This dissertation argues for new interpretations regarding Müller's thought, his rise to prominence, and his influence. Pietism, prayer, philanthropic work, publications, his connection to revivals, and his world preaching tours are all important to consider when evaluating Müller's place in the history of Christianity. In addition to claiming that these new interpretations of Müller, this dissertation has also posited that a *social biography*—an analysis of memory about a single individual constructed over time to suit particular purposes—could reveal the popular thought of a diverse but unified religious community. Evangelicals, as a community of self-identifying individuals, have created a collective memory through their publications, preaching, and devotional practice that promotes exemplars of piety. The thesis of this dissertation is that George Müller was the first world evangelical hero of the faith who, through his piety,

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[3] "Church and Organ," *Melbourne Punch* (March 8, 1900): 229.

491

philanthropy, and written works, became an archetypal example of how evangelicals' believed faith should operate in the modern world. Müller, however, did not make himself into a hero of the faith known around the world. Rather individual evangelicals made him known as a hero of the faith through their continued efforts to acknowledge his work.[4]

Remembering an individual, like Müller, does not happen by accident. Remembering is an act of transference that involves choosing what is worthy of inclusion.[5] Determining how this happens in a religious community where there is no ecclesiastical hierarchy, no commemoration through liturgy, no rites and rituals common to all is, to say the least, difficult. However, evangelicals did remember Müller as a hero of the faith—a Protestant saint. Evangelicals did so because they saw in Müller's example something that was meaningful and essential to their understanding of Christian piety. Müller, however, was not immediately thrust forward as a model of exemplary religious practice. Instead Müller was slowly embedded in the collective memory of evangelicals, as argued in this dissertation, through a six part socio-religious process that included: initiation, testimony, chronicling, legitimization, celebration, and informal canonization. Each of these elements in this socio-religious process played a crucial part in Müller's rise to prominence. Evangelicals remembered him because he appealed to their ideals about how Christian piety should be expressed in everyday life. Even today Müller continues to be praised by evangelicals who hope to imitate their hero of the faith.

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[4] Sometimes this was almost comical as when *The Literary Churchman* acknowledged, "it is impossible not to wish such an institution God speed, not however without a rising regret that it is not in direct connection with the English Church." "The Orphan House at Bristol," *The Literary Churchman* 7, no. 21 (November 1, 1861): 413.

[5] Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 36-39.

Remembering an Evangelical Saint

It is in his continuing appeal to evangelicals that Müller's significance remains. Müller's enduring attractiveness to evangelicals is found in the January 2009 issue of the evangelical news magazine *World*. The author of the article, Andrée Seu, proclaims that the counter-cultural approach of Müller may be the best way to begin the New Year. Seu explains, "Everybody knows the 19th-century Prussian founded homes for poor children in Bristol, England, but I never heard why."[6] She goes on to explain the radical apologetic function of the orphan homes and then highlighted how Müller's trust in God resulted in a dramatic testimony and continued spiritual growth. Seu states at the conclusion of her article, "Well, January's here. What do you say? How about this time around we do something completely different?"[7] The "different" that Seu promotes for the New Year involves imitating "a man living the life I wanted the courage to live."[8] The memory of what Müller accomplished through prayer in the nineteenth century has allowed evangelicals to find a historical likeness that fits their notions of what a serious Christian is capable of achieving when committed to living out the biblical text simply and purposefully. Müller continues to inspire action, instruct others in holy living, affirm a belief in the efficacy of prayer, and serve as an argument against scientific skepticism.

In his assigned role as a hero of the faith Müller's memory has become shrouded in legend. No faults or flaws appear that could undermine his status as a praying saint or "prayer

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[6] Andrée Seu, "Way Out on a Limb," *World* 24, no. 1 (January 17, 2009): 79.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

warrior" who fully trusted in God to meet his and the orphans' needs.[9] In the nineteenth

century, the orphan homes operated as a shrine to living by faith and attracted tourists from

around the world to see the work of faith and prayer firsthand.[10] When Müller died the

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[9] Historian Ruth Tucker, an evangelical, has offered a biting critique of Müller and J. Hudson Taylor's claims for obtaining what they needed from God in prayer. Tucker asserts that Taylor misled the public in his financial reports for the China Inland Mission. She, however, does not make such allegations against Müller, but makes him complicit with Taylor by implying dishonesty in how they represented themselves to the public. Tucker states, "Both he [J. Hudson Taylor] and Müller publicized miraculous answers to their prayers, gripping tales of when family and guests (or in Müller's case, orphans) 'sat down to the table without a scrap of food in the house; always, providentially, someone would appear at the door with a brace of partridges, a hamper of groceries, or a ton of coal, whatever was needed to survive the next day or week.' These were amazing accounts of God's intervention that tugged at the heartstrings of supporters." Tucker goes on to argue, "Those who profess to depend on *prayer alone* carry a particular responsibility to eradicate any air of arrogance relating to their intimacy with God— that God uniquely answers their prayers while bypassing the mother with the dead baby in her arms. They must be brutally honest, not only about their own *unanswered* prayers but also about the colossal collective unanswered prayers that only seem to mock the untold numbers of suffering people around the world." Tucker's interpretation does not seem to recognize the role that evangelicals played in creating tales, like the one she recounts, that may have been fabricated by evangelicals who celebrated and informally canonized Müller as a hero of the faith. And even though Tucker does recognize that these types of "blessing stories," as she refers to them, are important to evangelicals, she does not try to explain why evangelicals need such stories. Instead she removes Müller from any historical context or continuum of thought about the life of faith and implies that he was engaged in deceit without citing any specific evidence from the primary sources. Ruth Tucker, *God Talk: Cautions for Those Who Hear God's Voice* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 120-121.

[10] Müller's son-in-law, James Wright, served as co-director of the orphan homes from 1872 until 1898 and then director from 1898 until his death in 1905. Müller remained involved in the life of the institution and even lived in a room at Orphan House No. 3. After Müller's death in 1898 and Wright's death in 1905, subsequent directors of the orphanage maintained the method of relying on faith and prayer to provide for the financial needs of the institution, which they heralded as a miraculous continuation of the work. The Müller Foundation continued as a vibrant charity caring for the orphans needs by faith, although legacies and other investments created a stable income. Eventually, as child social services shifted the manner in which orphans were cared for, the decision was made to close the orphanage and shift to group homes. The orphanages remained, however, a living legacy of Müller's vision into the mid-twentieth century and shaped the lives of thousands of young children who resided in them. Today the Ashley Down Orphan Homes are the Bristol City College, but the Müller House in Cotham Park has a museum dedicated to its founder that has personal items on display, including a lock of his hair.

orphanage continued to attract evangelicals who made a pilgrimage to Bristol to see firsthand the physical monument he left to answered prayer. He also attracted unknown thousands of followers who put forth his life of faith as a biblical model for following Christ. In this sense, Müller's sacred biography operated in much the same fashion as a saint from late antiquity. In the *Life of Anthony*, Athanasius of Alexandria posits, "For many only beholding his manner of life were eager to be imitators of his ways."[11] In a manner similar to the fourth-century ascetic monk who motivated devotion to Christ, Müller's "manner of life" also inspired evangelicals "to be imitators of his ways."

Evangelical Sainthood

This dissertation has argued that evangelicals engage in saint making similar to the development of popular sainthood in medieval Roman Catholic Church. However, the notion of a saint as someone who intercedes on behalf of the living after their own death is problematic for Protestants and, in particular, evangelicals.[12] Evangelical piety asserts a personal relationship

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Local school children are introduced to the former man of faith through a religious education program, while other visitors are often former orphans, descendants of orphans, or evangelicals who were themselves inspired by Müller's labors in Bristol. For an excellent account of an orphan who lived in the homes in the 1930s see George Collett, *George—A Müller's Boy* (Carlisle, U.K.: Paternoster Lifestyle, 2001).

[11] Athanasius of Alexandria, *Life of Anthony*, trans. John Henry Newman, in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second series, Volume 4, St. Athanasius: Select Works and Letters*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (New York: Christian Literature Publishing Company, 1892), 208-209.

[12] The function of dead saints as intermediaries dates to late antiquity and the early medieval era. According to scholars, the Eastern churches, most notably the Greek Orthodox Church, influenced developments in the Roman Catholic Church and the veneration of saints as models and heroes to be followed for their pious undertakings and devotion to God. H. George Anderson, J. Francis Stafford, and Joseph A. Burgess, *The One Mediator, the Saints, and Mary: Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue 8* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1992), 92-95.

with Jesus is not mediated through a priest, an ecclesiastical hierarchy, or those dead in Christ

who form the community of saints (*sanctorum communio*).[13] The veneration of dead saints and

requests for assistance in the material world are seen by evangelicals as unbiblical. For

evangelicals, "saint" is not a title but rather a description. However, the label "hero of the faith"

operates as an informal title. Evangelicals single out, according to the process involved in

legitimization, those who are esteemed for their piety. Recognition of a hero of the faith happens

publicly in writings, usually those that are devotional in nature, and occasionally in a sermon

illustration. Evangelicals venerate those individuals whose piety and works are deemed to reflect

deep devotion to Christ and service to humanity. They celebrate such individuals and even

create biographies that are intended to inspire imitation. The selection as a hero of the faith

depends on what the person being remembered did in his or her earthly life that brought them

acclaim. The difference for evangelicals from Roman Catholics is not so much in how a saint

functioned as a role model for inspiring others, but rather in the language used to depict such

people and how they conceive of them after death. For evangelicals, a hero of the faith is an

acceptable label for a person who is culturally canonized as a worthy model.

French historian Serge Bonnet has observed that "a saint is first an extraordinary man

inhabited by God. He is also a response to the spiritual needs of a generation. And he is a man

who is the eminent illustration of the ideas of sanctity which are held by the Christians of a

particular period."[14] Although intended as a statement about medieval sainthood, Bonnet's

observation is particularly applicable to individuals who evangelicals choose to celebrate and

canonize. Müller connected with a need evangelicals had to present a verifiable example of

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[13] Ibid., 128-129.

[14] Quoted in André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 7.

prayer influencing the material world. Although Müller avoided claims for the miraculous, evangelicals attested to his ability to see and conduct genuine miracles through simple prayers. Furthermore, he represented the single-minded devotion to Christ that evangelicals wanted to experience in their own lives. Müller became fixed in the collective memory of evangelicals because his expression of Christian piety remained an "eminent illustration" of evangelical sanctity and something for which to strive.

Sanctity and sainthood for evangelicals centers on a number of qualities that are seen as vitally important. Like the list of attributes associated with St. Dominic, founder of the Order of Preachers, Müller possessed qualities that evangelicals esteemed.[15] Müller's life was seen by evangelicals as a testimony of a degenerate redeemed by the grace of Christ. He led a life of personal holiness. He was simple and unpretentious. He was a married man and father. He was a wise steward of his finances. He was an astute businessman. He was a missionary. He was a preacher of the Gospel. He was a successful leader. He dressed modestly. He gave generously. He was filled with the Holy Spirit. He rejoiced in his trials. He practiced daily devotions. He believed the Bible was authoritative and unimpeachable. He was single-minded in his resolve to follow Christ. He cared for orphans. He shunned worldly success. He prayed fervently. He lived a life of faith and trust in God. Although no list would be compiled to determine Müller's sanctity, evangelicals embraced qualities that they thought were important. These qualities were rooted in Müller's lifelong experiences that gave credibility to his ongoing testimony and allowed evangelicals to refashion him to meet their spiritual needs over multiple generations.

What Müller is credited with is essential for understanding evangelicalism as a movement in the modern world. First, the idea of being simple, common, and ordinary is associated with

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[15] Ibid., 506-507.

Müller. He appeared for many as a layperson faced with solving everyday problems and needs

through prayer. Pastors, missionaries, and vocational Christian workers envisioned him as a

successful pastor and ministry director who had applied biblical principles effectively. British

society monitored him as a philanthropist, while critics doubted his claims and viewed him as

having invented the most brilliant anti-advertising advertising scheme in modern history.

Depictions of Müller, in fact, depended on what others hoped to esteem or criticize. Even

though he had a university education, command of multiple languages, exemplary managerial

and organizational skills, Müller maintained and others reinforced the notion that he lacked

anything that would distinguish him from the common person on the street. No matter how

demanding Müller's religious work, he constantly promoted the idea that anyone who prayed in

faith could accomplish the same work. He was, quite simply, like most people who sat in a pew.

Evangelicals, whether laity or clergy, demanded an accessible saint whom they saw as a peer, but

they also desired to be awed by great works of devotion and charity. Ultimately, evangelicals

wanted to believe that they, too, could achieve such success if they followed God with the

devotion of Müller.[16]

In the nineteenth century Müller's name was known in Europe, Asia, Australia, Africa,

and the Americas thanks to individuals who promoted the "Bristol miracle," celebrated him as an

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[16] Lutheran pastor and Pulitzer Prize nominated-writer, Frederick Buechner explained in an interview he gave in 1989 about failing to meet the expectations of a reader who was unhappy with his depiction of heroes of the faith. Buechner reflected, "I picture this one young man; he may not be young at all, but he sounds young. He has written me three or four times, taking me to task for making my saints have feet too much of clay. Why can't I write about a real hero of the faith? I answered one of his letters; then he wrote another wanting to keep the argument going. I just dropped it because I didn't have time. My answer to him the first time was that any saint I write about would always have feet of clay, because they are the only saints I know anything about or that I could imagine. I don't think there is any other kind. I can't imagine a hero of the faith in the sense that he or she did not have shadows and darknesses [*sic*]." W. Dale Brown, *Of Fiction and Faith: Twelve American Writers Talk About Their Vision and Work* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 36.

example of answered prayer, or adopted his method of living by faith. In the twentieth and

twenty-first centuries, his name continued to draw interest around the world thanks to the efforts

of pastors, missionaries, and lay people who are attracted to his method of living by faith.[17]

Müller garnered attention because he was innovative in his approach to the Christian faith, while

also appealing to the broadest spectrum of evangelicals. Lutherans, Presbyterians, Baptists,

Methodists, Friends, Congregationalists, Anglicans, Seventh-Day Baptists, Roman Catholics,[18]

Mormons,[19] and even Herbert W. Armstrong's Worldwide Church of God as it moved toward

becoming thoroughly evangelical in theology noticed and celebrated Müller's piety.[20] He

combined philanthropy with piety and promoted both through his publications. His innovative

approach to living by faith, though a continuation of Pietist practice, contributed to the

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[17] Historian Michael S. Hamilton argues, "After 1890, as more and more evangelicals found themselves without voice in the major denominations, they turned to the patterns Moody and Müller had laid down. Evangelicals became religious entrepreneurs, conceiving new ideas for spreading the gospel and constructing new parachurch organizations to carry out that work. From Moody they learned the possibilities of independent, interdenominational organizations. From Müller they adopted the practice of praying for money instead of asking for it, trusting God to provide the necessary resources. These two principles were the original lodestars for many of today's most important evangelical parachurch agencies." Michael S. Hamilton, "We're in the Money! How Did Evangelicals Get So Wealthy, and What Has It Done to Us?" *Christianity Today* 44, no. 7 (June 12, 2000): 39.

[18] Despite Müller's hostility to the Roman Catholic Church, Bishop Brownlow said of him, "Every saint in the calendar was an example of the practical efficacy of prayer. Even outside the pale of the Church, 'in every nation he that feareth God and worketh justice is acceptable to Him.' They had just lost in Bristol a man whose life and work had for years been a standing proof that God heard and answered prayer. Mr. Müller had, he was told, a strong antipathy to the Catholic religion. Still, in spite of this, he had no hesitation in saying that in his personal life of frequent prayer and child-like confidence in God, he set an example that it would be good for them all to imitate." *In Memoriam: An Account of the Death & Funeral Services of the Late George Müller* (London: S. W. Partridge, 1898), 28.

[19] George Q. Cannon, "Faith and Its Power," *The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star* 60 (June 16, 1898): 375.

[20] Ivor C. Fletcher, "Miracle at Ashley Down," *The Plain Truth* 58, no. 8 (September 1993): 20-22.

widespread interest in his life. His method of living by faith was, in essence, an intensive focus on the present with the aim of proving God in the immediate and momentary circumstances that one faced. To what more lofty good could a Christian aspire? What could be more Christ-like? For evangelicals, Müller epitomized living each and every minute of each day in full reliance on God.

Müller's status as a hero of the faith in the popular mindset of evangelicals also reveals a great deal about how they think about the world. For evangelicals, Müller served as a confirmation that the supernatural is part of human history. His life story, as someone who devoted himself to bringing glory to God, resulted in him and those under his care being uniquely blessed with tangible material and spiritual rewards. The resulting veneration of Müller as a hero of the faith operated in contradiction to the assumption that it is the Bible alone that matters to evangelicals for validating their theology and religious practice.[21] Rather, evangelicals, like most Christians over the past two millennia, use historical persons to inform and give shape to their identity.[22] In Müller's case, the fact that the Christian Brethren were opposed to speaking in tongues, but Pentecostals demanded it, or that Fundamentalists shunned the ecumenism that Müller promoted on his preaching tours are conveniently ignored. Instead a thematic focal point, like trust or faith or the miraculous, is advanced to illustrate qualities deemed most appropriate to imitate.

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[21] G. Fred Bergin included a letter from an individual living in India who stated, "I feel that I have been marvelously helped in my Christian life by this Narrative, that next to the Holy Scriptures I cannot recommend a better book to either old or young, saint or sinner." *Autobiography of George Müller*, ed. G. Fred Bergin (London: J. Nisbet and Co., 1905), x.

[22] Sarah Hinlicky Wilson, a research professor at the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg, France, asserts, "all Christians have their saints. Even those churches without an official canonization process honor their great lights through the acclamation of the *vox populi*." Sarah Hinlicky Wilson, "Ecumenical Saint," *Books and Culture: A Christian Review* 16, no. 3 (May/June 2010): 9.

Although this form of memory construction is not unique to evangelicals, it does highlight their need to locate their religious practices in the past, as well as to focus on those areas that match their concerns in the present and aspirations for the future. French sociologist of religion, Danièle Hervieu-Léger, argues, "Authorized memory develops and is passed on in different ways. It legitimates itself differently in accordance with the type of religious sociality proper to the group in question, and in accordance with the type of domination that prevails."[23] For evangelicals, there is no single authority for memory control. However, evangelicals have used publications as their primary means to develop and promote collective memory. Publications remain an essential component for how they create a legitimate tradition to draw upon for their identity in the present.[24] Müller was made part of this living tradition by evangelicals who saw both devotional piety and Christian works as essential to being Christian. Müller's emphasis on "doing" over "thinking" was used to teach others how best to live a pious Christian life with spectacular results. More importantly, because Müller himself established that his own activism was intended to bring glory to God, his success, and the success of the individuals who followed his example, was really God's success and not his own. Evanglicals hold to a dialectical tension that promotes individual agency while denying the self as the source of individual agency.[25] The dialectical tension in evangelical thought is recognizable in the most recent bestselling book by Rick Warren on evangelical piety.

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[23] Danièle Hervieu-Léger, *Religion as a Chain of Memory*, trans. Simon Lee (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000), 126.

[24] Ibid., 101.

[25] While speaking at the seventeenth anniversary celebration for the China Inland Mission in 1883, Müller articulated a concept that has become almost a dogma for modern evangelicals when he exclaimed, "We must work as if everything depended upon our labour, and yet do so,

Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California, wrote *The Purpose*

Driven Life: What on Earth am I Here For? Saddleback Church claims 20,000 attendees each

week and is seen as one of the leading evangelical churches in America.[26] Warren's book is a

monumental bestseller that sold over 25 million copies and was on the *New York Times* bestseller

list.[27] Key to Warren's thought are five purposes by which believers should define their life.

The fifth purpose is the idea that "You were made for a mission."[28] According to Warren, this

mission is a continuation of what Jesus of Nazareth started in his life on earth, which is telling

others about God.   Followers of Christ, accordingly, have a "Life Message" that is their

"testimony" of how God has worked in their individual circumstances to bring about salvation.

Warren encourages his readers to write out their testimony and then commit it to memory so that

it can be shared with others. Even more in the line of Müller's thought, Warren suggests, "Of

course, you have many other testimonies besides your salvation story. You have a story for

every experience in which God has helped. You should make a list of all the problems,

circumstances, and crises that God has brought you through. Then be sensitive and use the story

that your unbelieving friend will relate to best. Different situations call for different

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not depending in the least upon our work, but upon the LORD'S blessing and help." "Mr. George Müller," *China's Millions* 99 (September 1883): 118.

[26] "The Outreach 100, 2008: Largest and Fastest Growing Churches in America," Outreach Magazine, http://www.sermoncentral.com/articleb.asp?article=Top-100-Largest-Churches (accessed December 5, 2009). It should be noted that during the 2008 presidential election Warren was able to have the leading candidates speak to his congregation. Warren also offered a prayer at the Presidential Inauguration of Barrak Obama.

[27] Seven years after its initial release, *The Purpose Driven Life* is currently ranked #12 on the Paperback Advice list.   "New York Times Online Bestseller List," New York Times http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/13/books/bestseller/bestpaperadvice.html?ref=bestseller (accessed December 5, 2009).

[28] Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life: What On Earth am I Here For?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan 2002), 281.

testimonies."[29] Similar to Müller's tracking of his own answers to prayer, Warren instructs

ordinary believers to construct narratives that tell how God worked in each and every

circumstance that they can discern in their own life. The focus is on the stories of individuals,

but the agent behind all of the events in their life is God.

It was precisely by creating a testimony and chronicling his subsequent experiences as a

Christian that Müller became celebrated globally in the nineteenth century and was informally

canonized as a hero of the faith.   Much like Warren's encouragement to contemporary

evangelicals to write down their experiences with God in order to encourage others to accept the

Christian faith, Müller put into print his initiation into the Christian faith, the testimony of that

experience, and the subsequent "testimonies" of his experiences where "God has helped." This

chronicling, however, was not enough to make Müller famous any more than those who follow

Warren's advice would end up widely known and celebrated for a simple account of events in

which they believed they saw God act. Rather, in Müller's case, newspapers and periodicals,

clergy and critics, as well as ordinary people paid attention because the object of Müller's

chronicling recalled answers to prayer aimed at supporting orphans, missionaries, and other

ministry ventures. However, his chronicling did not ensure acclaim. Public recognition was

garnered through the endorsements of leading churchmen who validated his testimony and

connected it to the revivals of the mid-nineteenth century and the spiritual experiences of

hundreds of thousands of ordinary Christians who wanted to see similar results from their own

prayers.

Legitimization for Müller extended beyond Craik and his attempt to protect their names

from ridicule. Instead legitimization was the result of a collective effort by those who desired

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[29] Ibid., 291.

someone to perform publicly what evangelicals privately hoped to see in their everyday lives. Müller's *Narrative* offered a list of compounding material evidence that something real occurred when appeals were made to God in prayer for even the most trivial needs.[30] While he denied that his efforts and answers to prayer were miraculous,[31] the "Bristol miracle" became over the course of time simply a story of the miraculous hand of God available to all Christians.[32] Such scintillating evidence was eagerly consumed and promoted by evangelical leaders, both laity and clergy, as proof against the claims of modern skepticism and scientific thought. The evidence itself was as legitimizing as a longitudinal experiment that demonstrated God was real and concerned about the mundane needs present in everyday life.

"O Solon of the promises of God!"

As Müller's missionary and preaching tours revealed, evangelicals conceptualized his work and story as having a singular focus that limited the popular conception of him to a simple, uncomplicated story. For Müller, his story was a conscious part of his mission that he set for himself: "strengthening the faith of the children of God" as an example of God's faithfulness in

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[30] George Müller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller, Fifth Part* (London: J. Nisbet, 1874), 124.

[31] Ibid., 298-299.

[32] In 2005, Eung Joon Bae translated into Korean a contemporary edition of Müller's story entitled, *Release the Power of Prayer*. The cover of the book proclaims, "Miracles always happen to those who pray. And God does miracles for you." The back cover goes on to state the book will show you "how to get your prayers answered, how to receive God's promises, how to exchange unhappiness for joy, how to be free from financial problems, how to make Satan flee away from you when Satan says there is no hope, how to connect to God's marvelous power, how to participate in miraculous events, [and] you will obtain God's ways of changing impossibility to possibility." The author appreciates the assistance of Professor D. J. Jin who provided the translation. George Müller, *Release the Power of Prayer*, trans. Eung Joon Bae (Korea: Kyujang Publishing Company, 2005).

everyday life.[33] Inspired by Francke's Orphan Home in Halle and Francke's own written account, Müller recognized how such a story could transcend the limits of culturally bound conceptions of what was perceived as possible for Christians to achieve. Regardless of what people thought about Müller's method of living by faith, the fact that they actually pondered the notion that God may have responded to his prayers was, from his point of view, the accomplishment. Therefore, the recognition accorded to him meant that he had become the embodiment of his quest.

Müller was made into a hero of the faith by evangelicals because he was perceived as ordinary. He plodded on day-to-day enmeshed in the ordinary duties of caring for his family, for orphans, and the ministry enterprises he operated in Bristol. He embodied a form of Christian practice that was available to all believers. He represented the epitome of the sixteenth-century Reformation mantra the "priesthood of all believers." He was the embodiment of the modern quest for the empowerment and enfranchisement of the individual with political, social, and religious equality. In 1898, Amos R. Wells captured this democratic element of Müller's example in a poem he wrote to commemorate of Müller's death,

> While others through the maze of seen and heard.
> Conjectures, fancies, all unsteady trod,
> Thou hadst one lore: that God would keep his word,
> O Solon of the promises of God![34]

Müller, like the great advocate of Athenian democracy, democratized piety so that ordinary Christians could envision God answering the prayers dealing with the mundane circumstances of their lives. Emphasizing the singular nature of Müller's story that established his legacy, Wells

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[33] George Müller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller: First Part*, 9th ed. (London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1895), 146.

[34] Amos R. Wells, "George Müller," *Methodist Magazine and Review* 47 (May 1898): 441.

also embraced the notion of "lore," that is, knowledge passed on through stories and anecdotes, as essential to his memory. His triumphs of living by faith were legendary. The author of the lore, however, was always Müller. He chose to make himself responsible for proving that God responds to prayer. The result, ironically, was Müller's own canonization as a hero of the faith by evangelicals who made the stories associated with his name a permanent part of their own collective memory. Like Solon, Müller's name still resonates with meaning. In the case of Müller, his name still matters to evangelicals in all parts of the world who find in him a saint to follow, an icon worthy of imitation.[35]

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[35] Thangboi Haokip, an Indian evangelical who lives near New Delhi, India, established "The Last Resort," a ministry intended to help drug addicts and alcoholics. Haokip "modeled" both his life and ministry on the work of Müller and conducts the entire venture on Müller's method of living by faith. Haokip first learned about Müller from an Indian pastor and then read a biography about Müller published in India. Thangboi Haokip, email message to author, February 28, 2009.

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Appendix A - 1883 Photograph of George Müller
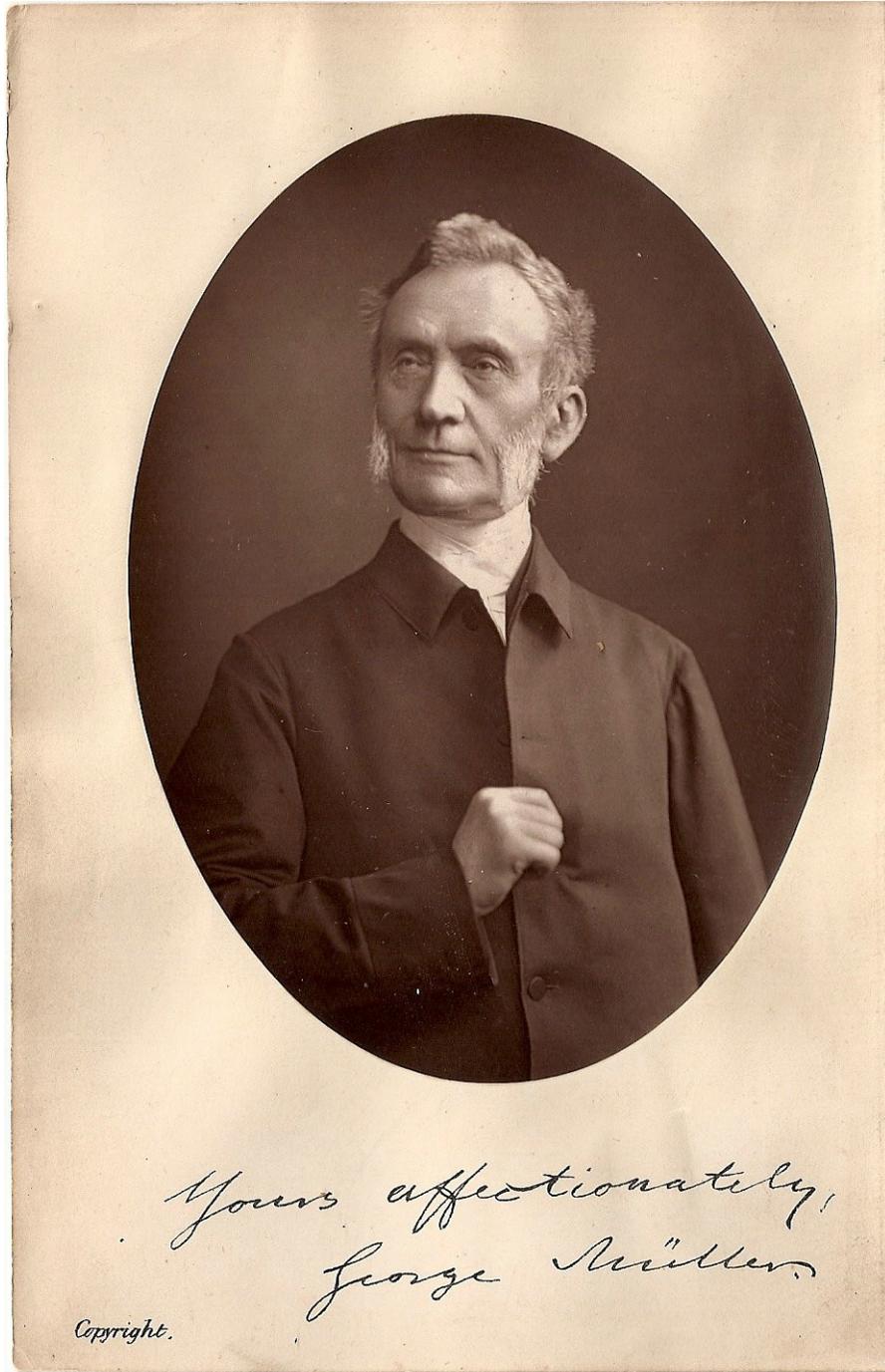
Appendix B - 1895 Photograph of George Müller
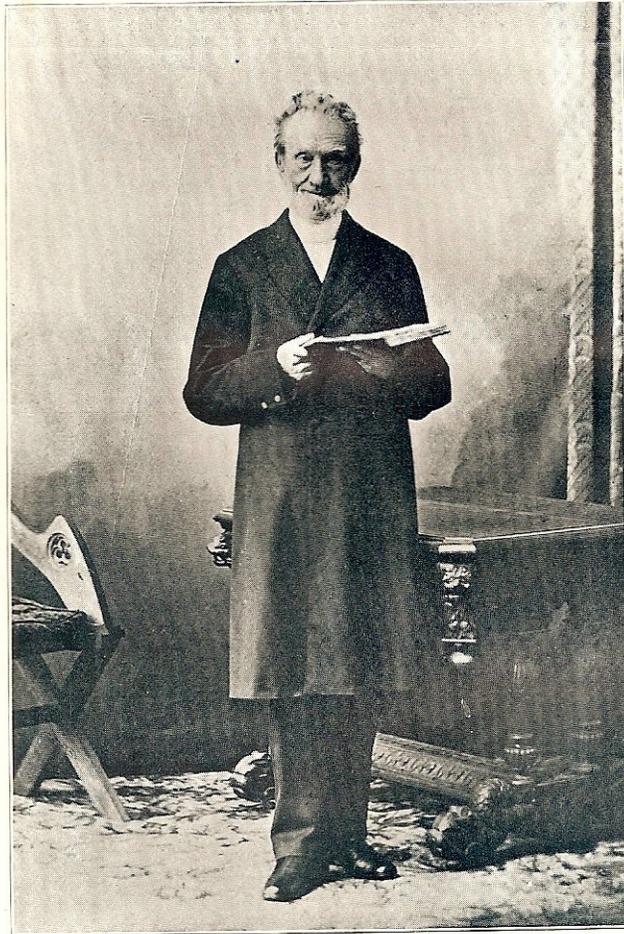
GEORGE MÜLLER.

Photo. by]

[Frank Holmes, Brist

Appendix C - Half-penny Postcard of Ashley Down Orphan Home No. 1

No. 1.
Ashley Down Orphan Houses, Bristol.