

200,000 MILES OF TRAVEL

In 1875, at the age of 70, the remarkable George Müller decided to devote the next period of his life to a world-wide ministry of preaching and teaching. Long before George Müller came to this decision, through much prayer, God had been preparing the way for this work. In February 1870 his wife Mary died in their fortieth year of marriage. Though Mary Müller had devoted her life to supporting George in the work at the Homes, she would not have had the physical strength for the vast amount of travel which lay ahead. George Müller's health had been robust for many years despite his earlier ill health.

Their daughter, Lydia, married James Wright, George Müller's assistant, in 1871. Together they became more involved in the work of the Homes which relieved him from much of the pressure and responsibility.

In 1872 George Müller married Miss Susannah Sanger - a 'consistent' Christian - as he once described her, whom he had known for twenty five years. Susannah loved travel and made an ideal companion on the tours ahead.

From 1875 to 1892 George Müller was almost constantly engaged on missionary preaching journeys. Throughout his Christian life he always set out his aims and objectives before embarking upon God's work and this new area was no exception. George Müller wanted to share with a wider audience the truths he had discovered about God. Further, he desired to encourage Christians to become lovers of the Bible and test everything by the Word of God. Another of his aims was to break down the barriers of denominationalism and to promote, as he put it, 'brotherly love amongst Christians.'

During his seventeen years of missionary travel he toured the United States of America three times, India twice and on three occasions toured Australia and the Colonies. In addition, George Müller preached in forty-two countries including China and Japan. By land and sea he travelled 200,000 miles, an extraordinary feat in the nineteenth century.

George Müller addressed meetings of up to 5,000 people at a time and was able to speak in English, French or German. In addition, his sermons were interpreted into as many as eighteen other languages. He estimated that during this seventeen year period he had addressed more than three million people.

George Müller still trusted God entirely for his every financial need. Often he had to pay sums of up to £240 for his long voyages yet no-one ever knew his needs. God provided for all of them.

Prayer was George Müller's answer to every problem, even when it came to influencing the forces of nature. In 1877 when the Müllers were aboard the ship 'Sardinian' bound for the United States, they ran into dense fog off the coast of Newfoundland, which severely slowed down their progress. George Müller told the Captain of his need to be in Quebec the following Saturday afternoon to which the Captain replied, "That is impossible." The

Captain thought George Müller was mad when he suggested they should go to the chart-room and pray. When the Captain pointed out the density of the fog, George Müller replied, 'My eye is not on the density of the fog, but on the living God, who controls every circumstance of my life.' George Müller restrained the Captain from praying because he was not a believer but after he himself had prayed, invited the Captain to open the door. The fog had lifted. This story was subsequently re-told by the Captain himself, who had since become a Christian.

It was on that same trip the Müllers were invited to the White House to meet President and Mrs Hayes. During his 200,000 miles, spanning seventeen years, George Müller met many of the world's leaders and influential politicians.

George Müller ended his travels in 1892 in his eighty eighth year. It had now become apparent to him the importance of his second wife, Susannah. She had greatly assisted in the circulation of thousands of tracts in many different languages and had spoken privately to thousands of people about the Christian gospel. Within two years of the conclusion of the tours she died and George Müller was again a widower. Another four years and George Müller himself had died. His funeral procession brought much of Bristol to a standstill. Here was a great man of faith whose influence had been so evident in his adopted city of Bristol, but also a man whose work and life had been a challenge to countless people worldwide.