



# Address on Psalm 119 v68

“The Lord is good and doeth good”

A sermon preached at Bethesda Chapel, Great George Street, Bristol by Mr George Müller, founder of the Orphan Asylum, Horfield, upon the recent death of his wife.

This sermon was taken on Thursday evening, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1870, but was first preached on the previous Sunday when upwards of 800 persons were unable to obtain admission.

Before commencing his sermon, Mr Müller made the following remarks:

*“I was truly sorry to hear that last Lord’s day evening such numerous crowds, so many hundreds, were unable to obtain admission into this church. I had foreseen that, and therefore I intended to take the largest place that could be had in the city for the purpose of preaching this funeral sermon, but I felt that my strength was unequal to it, and upon that account I had to give it up. Moreover, and most strongly of all, my beloved wife, having herself attended this place of worship for 37 years and six months, and never been absent except when out of Bristol or kept from illness, I felt it due to her memory to preach here instead of elsewhere; as it occurred to me, in order that those who were disappointed last Lord’s day evening may have an opportunity of also attending, to give notice that I would again go through the subject this evening; but it also occurred to me how inconvenient a work evening would be for very many in comparison with the Lord’s day, and especially the early hour compared with the Lord’s day, still it was the best I could do under the circumstances. There is only one more thing I have to say: it is now nearly 44 years that I have been in the habit of ministering the Word. Many thousands of times I have preached during this time, and I have never read a sermon; but in this case I felt that as what I am going to say is full of dates, full of incidents, and a number of things which at the moment my memory might not serve me to recall, I thought it best to write down the circumstances to bring them before you, knowing that by so doing I should be better guided by calm and collected judgement in what I am now going to say to you regarding my beloved wife.*”

## THE SERMON

119<sup>th</sup> Psalm, 68 verse

“Thou are good, and doest good”

The reason why I purpose to preach this funeral sermon is not because the late Mrs Müller was my own beloved wife; nor that I might have an opportunity of speaking highly of her, most worthy though she is of it; but that I may magnify the Lord in giving her to me, in leaving her to me so long, and in taking her from me to Himself. At the same time it appeared to me well that as she because the first member of the church assembling at Bethesda, when it was formed in August, 1832; and as her whole life ever since then has been of the most blameless character; and as her life was full of most remarkable and instructive events, that at the departure of such a Christian we should ponder the lessons which her life is calculated to teach. She had lived to see 2,700 believers received into communion in that church, of which she was the first; and when she fell asleep there were 920 in communion in that church, about 1,500 having, during the 37 years and a half, either fallen asleep or left Bristol, about 200 united with other churches in Bristol, and 90 having been excluded from fellowship. During the six days that my beloved wife was on her deathbed, my soul was sustained by the truth contained in the words of our text. Whether she was more easy from pain, or in severe pain, whether there was a little prospect that she might yet be given back to me, or whether all hope was gone; my soul was sustained by these words. They were ever present with me, and I rested my soul on them. When it pleased God to take my darling wife to Himself, my soul was so sustained by these words that if I had gone out that evening to preach, I should have preached from this text. I desire now, as God may help me, for the benefit of my younger fellow-believers in Christ particularly, to dwell on the truth contained in these words, with reference to my beloved departed wife:

1<sup>st</sup> – The Lord was good and did good in giving her to me.

2<sup>nd</sup> – He was good and did good in so long leaving her to me.

3<sup>rd</sup> – He was good and did good in taking her from me.

1<sup>st</sup> – In giving her to me, I own the hand of God; nay, His hand was most marked; and my soul says, “Thou art good and doest good.” I refer to a few particulars for the instruction of others. When at the end of the year 1829 I left London to labour in Devonshire in the Gospel, a brother in the Lord gave to me a card, containing the address of a well-known Christian lady, Miss Paget, who then resided at Exeter, in order that I should call on her, as she was an excellent Christian. I took this address and put it into my pocket, but thought little of calling on her. Three weeks I carried this card in my pocket, without making an effort to see this lady; but at last I was led to do so. This was God’s way of giving me my excellent wife. Miss Paget asked me to preach the last Tuesday in the month of January, 1830, at the room she had fitted up at Poltimore, a village near Exeter, and where Mr AN Groves, afterwards my brother-in-law, had preached once a month before he went out as a missionary to Bagdad [sic]. I accepted readily the invitation as I longed everywhere to set forth the precious truth of the Lord’s return, and other deeply important truths, which not long before my own soul had been filled with. On leaving Miss Paget she gave me the address of a Christian brother, Mr Hake, who had an infant boarding school for young ladies and gentlemen, at Northernhay House, the former residence of Mr AN Groves, in order that I might stay there on my arrival at Exeter from Teignmouth. To this place I went at the appointed time. Miss Groves, afterwards my beloved wife, was there, for Mrs Hake had been a great invalid for a long time, and Miss Groves helped Mr Hake in his great affliction by superintending his household matters. My first visit led to my going again to preach at Poltimore, after the lapse of a month, and I stayed again at Mr Hake’s house; and this second visit led to my preaching once a week in a chapel at Exeter; and thus I went week after week from Teignmouth to Exeter, each time staying at the house of Mr Hake. All this time my purpose had been not to marry at all, but to remain free for travelling about in the service of the Gospel; but after some months I saw for many reasons that it was better for me, as a young pastor, under 25 years of age, to be married. The question now was – to whom shall I be united? Miss Groves was before my mind; but the prayerful conflict was long before I came to a decision; for I could not bear the thought that I should take away from Mr Hake this valued helper, as Mrs Hake continued still unable to take the responsibility of so large a household. But I prayed again and again. At last this decided me. I had reason to believe that I had begotten an affection in the heart of Miss Groves for me, and that therefore I ought to make a proposal of marriage to her, however unkindly I might appear to act to my dear friend and brother Mr Hake, and to ask God to give him a suitable helper to succeed Miss Groves. On August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1830, I therefore wrote to her proposing to her to become my wife, and on August 19<sup>th</sup>, when I went over as usual to Exeter for preaching she accepted me. The first thing we did after I was accepted was to fall on our knees and to ask the blessing of the Lord on our intended union.

In about two or three weeks the Lord, in answer to prayer, found an individual who seemed suitable to act as housekeeper, whilst Mrs Hake continued ill; and on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1830, we were united in marriage. Our marriage was of the most simple character. We walked to church, had no wedding breakfast, but in the afternoon had a meeting of Christian friends in Mr Hake’s house and commemorated the Lord’s death; and then I drove off in the stage coach with my beloved bride to Teignmouth, and the next day we went to work for the Lord. Simple as our beginning was, and unlike the habits of the world, for Christ’s sake, so our Godly aim has been to continue ever since. Now see the hand of God in giving me my dearest wife:- 1<sup>st</sup>, that address of Miss Paget’s was given to me under the ordering of God, 2<sup>nd</sup>, I must at last be made to call on her, though I had long delayed it. 3<sup>rd</sup>, she might have provided a resting place with some other Christian friends, where I should not have seen Miss Groves. 4<sup>th</sup>, my mind might have at last, after all, decided not to make a proposal to her; but God settled the matter thus in speaking to me through my conscience – “You know you have begotten affection in the heart of this Christian sister, by the way you have acted towards her, and therefore, painful though it may be, to appear to act unkindly towards your friend and brother, you ought to make her a proposal.” I obeyed. I wrote the letter in which I made the proposal, and nothing but one even stream of blessing has been the result. Let me here add a word of Christian counsel. To enter upon the marriage union is one of the most deeply important events of life. It cannot be too prayerfully treated. Our happiness, our usefulness, our living for God or for ourselves afterwards, are often most intimately connected with our choice. Therefore, in the more prayerful manner, this choice should be made. Neither beauty, nor age, nor money, nor mental powers, should be that which prompt the decision; but first – much waiting upon God for guidance should be used; second – a hearty purpose, to be willing to be guided by Him should be aimed after; third – true godliness, godliness without a shadow of doubt, should be the first and absolutely needful qualification to a Christian, with regard to a companion for life. In addition to this, however, it ought to be at the same time calmly and patiently weighed whether in other respects there is a

suitableness. For instance, for an educated man to choose an entirely uneducated woman is unwise; for however much on his part love might be willing to cover the defect, it will work very unhappily with regard to the children.

From what has been stated, I think it is plain that “He who is good and doeth good” had given me Miss Groves for a wife.

Let us now see for a few moments what I had received in her as God’s gift. I mention here, as her chief excellence, that she was a truly devoted Christian. She had for her one object in life, to live for God; and during the 39 years and 4 months that I was united to her by conjugal bonds, her steady purpose to live for God increased more and more. She was also, as a Christian, of a meek and quiet spirit. I speak to those who knew her, and not a few of whom knew her for thirty years and upwards, and who know what a very excellent Christian she was. If all Christians were like her, the joys of heaven would be found on earth far more abundantly than they are now. In her, God had been pleased to give me a Christian wife, who never at any time hindered me in the ways of God, but sought to strengthen my hands in God, and this, too, in the deepest trials, under the greatest difficulties, and when the service in which she helped me brought on her the greatest personal sacrifices. When during the years from September 1838, to the end of 1846, we had the greatest trials of faith in the Orphan Work; and when hundreds of times the necessities of the orphans could only be met by our own means, and when often all our own money had to be expended; that precious wife never found fault with me, but heartily joined me in prayer for help from God, and with me looked out for help and help came, and then we rejoiced together, and often wept for joy together. But the precious wife who was God’s own gift to me, was exquisitely suited to me, even naturally, by her temperament. Thousands of times I said to her “My darling, God himself singled you out for me, as the most suitable wife I could possibly wish to have had.” Then as to her education, she was just all I could have wished. She had had a very good and sound education, and she knew besides the accomplishments of a lady. She played nicely, and painted beautifully, though not five minutes were spent at the piano or in drawing or painting after our marriage. She possessed a superior knowledge of astronomy, was exceedingly well grounded in English grammar and geography, had a fair knowledge of history and French, had also begun Latin and Hebrew and learned German, when, in 1843 and 1845, she accompanied me in my service to Germany.

All this cultivation of mind became not only helpful in the education of our daughter, but was more or less used by the Lord in His service to the praise of His name. She was a very good arithmetician, which for 34 years was a great help to me; for she habitually examined month by month all the account books, and the hundreds of bills of the matrons of the various Orphan Houses; and should any tradesman or one of the matrons at any time have made the least mistake it would be surely found out by her. But in addition to the good education of a lady, she possessed – what in our days is so rare among ladies – a thorough knowledge of useful needlework of every kind, and an excellent knowledge of the quality of material for clothes, linen etc, and thus became so eminently useful as the wife of the director of the five Orphan Houses on Ashley Down, where hundreds of thousands of yards of material of all kinds had to be ordered by her, and to be approved of, or to be rejected. My beloved wife could do fancy needlework as other ladies, and had done it when young; but she did not thus occupy her time, except she would with her own dear hands now and then knit a purse for her husband while she was in the country for a change of air. Her occupation had habitually a useful end. It was to get ready the many hundreds of neat little beds for the dear orphans, most of whom never had seen such beds, far less slept in them, that she laboured. It was to get good blanketing or good blankets that she was busied, thus to serve the Lord Jesus, in caring for these dear bereaved children, who had not a mother or father to care for them. It was to provide numberless other useful things in the Orphan Houses, and especially for the sick rooms of the Orphans that day by day, except on the Lord’s days, she was seen in the Orphan Houses. The knowledge which is useful to help the needy, to alleviate suffering, to make a useful wife, a useful mother, how far above the value of doing fancy work! Mrs Müller pre-eminently possessed and value useful knowledge. She and her dear sisters had been brought up by a wise as well as loving mother, who saw to it, that while there was nothing spared with regard to a good school, and the attendance of good masters etc, her daughters should also be eminent in useful knowledge. May Christian mothers who hear me now take heed that their daughters have an education which will make them useful wives and useful mothers. We have seen now that God himself had given me my beloved

wife; we have also seen how suitable she was to me; and in the gift of such a wife a good foundation for real conjugal happiness was laid.

And were we happy? Verily we were. With every year our happiness increased more and more. I never saw my beloved wife at any time, when I met her unexpectedly anywhere in Bristol, without being delighted so to do. Day by day as we met in our dressing room at the Orphan Houses to wash our hands before dinner and tea, I was delighted to meet her, and she was equally pleased to see me. Thousands of times I told her – “My darling, I never saw you at any time since you became my wife without my being delighted to see you.” This was not only our way in the first year of our marriage union, nor in the tenth, in the twentieth and in the thirtieth year of our conjugal life. Thus I spoke to her many times since the seventh of October, 1869. Further day after day, if anyhow it could be done, I spent after dinner twenty minutes or half an hour with her in her room at the Orphan Houses, seated on her couch, which the love of a Christian brother, together with an easy chair, had sent her in the year 1860, when she was, for about nine months, so ill in rheumatism. I knew that it was good for her, that her dear active mind and hands should have rest, and I knew well that this would not be, except her husband was by her side; moreover, I also needed a little rest after dinner, on account of my weak digestive powers; and therefore I spent these precious moments with my darling wife. There we sat, side by side, her hand in mine, as an habitual thing, having a few words of loving intercourse, or being silent, but most happy in the Lord, and in each other, whether we spoke or were silent. And thus it was many times since October 7<sup>th</sup> 1869, viz in the fortieth year of our conjugal life. Our happiness in God and in each other was indescribable. We had not some happy days every year, nor a month of happiness every year; but we had twelve months of happiness every year, and thus year after year. Often and often did I say to that beloved one, and this again and again even in the fortieth year of our conjugal union – “My darling, do you think there is a couple in Bristol, or in the world, happier than we are?” Why do I refer to all this? To show what a remarkably great blessing to a husband is a truly godly wife, who also in other respects is fitted for him.

But while I own in the fullest degree that the foundation of true spiritual happiness in our marriage life was laid in that my dearest wife was a decided Christian, and fitted for me by God in other respects, and thus given to me by Him; yet at the same time I am most fully convinced that this was not enough for the continuation of real conjugal happiness during a course of 39 years and four months, had there not been more. I therefore must add here the following points – first, both of us by God’s grace had one object of life, and only one – to live for Christ. Everything else was of a very inferior character to us. However weak and failing, in a variety of ways, there was no swerving from this one holy object of life. This godly purpose and the godly aim, day by day to carry out this purpose, greatly added, of necessity added, to true happiness, and therefore to an increase of conjugal happiness also. Should this be wanting in any two Christians who are united by marriage ties, let them not be surprised if conjugal happiness, real conjugal happiness, is also wanting.

Second, we had all the 39 years and four months the blessing of having an abundance of work to do, and we did that work; by God’s grace we gave ourselves to it, and this abundance of work greatly tended instrumentally to the increase of our happiness. Our mornings never began with the uncertainty of how to spend the day, and what to do; for as the day began, we had always an abundance of work. I reckon this an especial blessing, and it greatly increased our happiness, and sweetened exceedingly the little while we had for rest in each other’s society. Many true Christians even make the mistake of aiming after a position in which they may be free from work, and have all their time on hand. They know not that they wish for some very great evil, instead of some very great blessing. They forget that they desire a time when, for want of regular occupation, they will be particularly exposed to temptation.

Third – but great as habitually our occupation was, and especially during the last 25 years, we never allowed this to interfere with the care about our own souls. Before we went to work we had, as an habitual practice, our seasons for prayer and reading the Holy Scriptures. Should the children of God neglect this, and let their work or service for God interfere with caring about their own souls, they cannot for any length of time be happy in God; and their conjugal happiness therefore must also suffer on account of it.

Fourth, lastly, and most of all to be noticed is this: we had for many years past, whether twenty of thirty years, or more, I do not know, besides our seasons for private prayer and family prayer, also habitually our seasons for praying together. For many years my precious wife and I had immediately after family prayer in the morning, a short time for prayer together, when the most important points for thanksgiving or the most important points for prayer, with regard to the day, were brought before God. Should very heavy trials press on us, or should our need of any kind be particularly great, we prayed again after dinner, when I visited her in her room, as stated before, and this at times of extraordinary difficulties or necessities might be repeated once or twice more in the afternoon; yet very rarely was this the case. Then in the evening, during the last hour of our stay at the Orphan House, though her or my work was never so much, it was an habitually understood thing, that this hour was for prayer. My beloved wife came then to my room, and now our prayer and supplication and intercession, mingled with thanksgiving, last generally forty minutes, fifty minutes, and sometimes the whole hour. At these seasons, we brought, perhaps, fifty or more different points or persons or circumstances before God. The burden of our prayer was generally of the same character, except when prayers were turned into praises, or when fresh points were added, or when peculiar mercies or blessings, or peculiar difficulties or trials, led during a part of the time to a variation. We never thus met for prayer without having, on various accounts, cause for thanksgiving; but, at the same time, our seasons for prayer never arrived without our having abundant cause to “cast our burdens upon the Lord”. These seasons for united prayer, I mean in addition to the family prayer, I particularly commend to all Christian husbands and wives. I judge that it was in our own history the great secret for the continuation, not only of conjugal happiness, but of a love to each other, which was even more abundantly fresh and warm than it had been during the first year, though we were then exceedingly fond of each other.

I now pass on to the second part of our precious text:

## **II The Lord was good and doing good in giving so long leaving to me my precious wife.**

I think it has been clearly shown to the Christians who hear me, that God, the Father of our Lord Jesus, and my father, through faith in His name, gave to me my beloved wife; and I will now endeavour to show us clearly, that in God's hand was most distinctly seen in leaving her to me as a companion in joy, and sorrow, and service for 39 years and 4 months. I have stated before that we were married on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1830. On August 9<sup>th</sup>, 1831, my beloved wife was, after seventeen hours suffering of the severest kind, delivered of a still-born child. Her life had been in the greatest danger, humanly speaking, and remained in the greatest danger for several weeks afterwards, so that two medical gentlemen visited her daily, or even two or three times a day. That she did not sink at that time, but was raised up again and given back to me for 38 years and six months more was of God, and was, I believe, the result of my most earnestly crying to God for this blessing. But my dearest wife never was fully again in health and strength what she had been before. The second time when her life was again, humanly speaking, in the greatest danger was when, four months after our arrival in Bristol, her confinement came on September 16<sup>th</sup>, 1832. She was very ill. She was in the greatest danger. I was the whole night in prayer. But God had mercy on me, and not only spared my precious wife to me, but made her also the living mother of a living child. Our beloved daughter was given to us on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1832. On March 19<sup>th</sup>, 1834, she became the living mother of a living male child; but that time was in as marked a way free from great peril, apparently, as the two previous times had been the reverse. In this, too, I own the hand of God. About a year after that, she was staying at the house of a Christian friend, at Stoke Bishop, and, while out walking, suddenly a carriage drove up and turned speedily round, and my beloved wife was all but killed; but God in a marked way preserved her life, though she was somewhat bruised by falling whilst she sought to save her life. On June 12, 1838 my beloved wife was taken ill. Often had I prayed expecting her hour. She continued in the most severe sufferings from a little after nine until midnight. Thus hour after hour passed away until eleven the next morning. Another medical gentleman was then called in, at the desire of the one who attended her. At three in the afternoon, she was delivered of a still-born child. The whole of the night I was in prayer, as far as my strength allowed me. I cried at last for mercy, and God heard me. For more than a fortnight after her delivery, my precious wife was so ill that her two medical attendants came twice or three times daily. Her life was in the greatest danger, humanly speaking. But this time also “He who is good and doeth good” gave her back to me to leave her yet 31 years and six months longer to me, and to make her more useful to me, and in the Orphan work than ever. The hand of God, in sparing her life in 1838, was most marked.



In 1845 my beloved wife accompanied me the second time to Germany, where I intended to labour in the Gospel, and especially in writing German tracts, and circulating them in many tens of thousands, together with my Narrative in German. Soon after our arrival in Stuttgart she was taken very ill, but God restored her then also, and gave her back to me for 24 years and six months longer. In the summer of 1859 she complained about the weakness of her left arm, which increased after a time more and more, instead of decreasing; and towards the end of October, being exposed to a draught, this weak left arm became exceedingly painful, and after a day or two swelled greatly, and especially her hand became greatly enlarged. Now that very ring which at the wedding on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1830, I had put on her finger needed to be broken off. Her arm and hand became worse, and continued thus week after week. That room in which I had been in the habit of paying those happy visits to my beloved wife after dinner and at other times, was now, week after week, for a long time, without her. But this was the state of my heart at that time. When this most heavy affliction began, I said to myself, "Twenty nine years the Lord has given me this precious wife with comparatively little illness, and shall I now be dissatisfied, because He has been pleased to afflict her thus in the thirtieth year of our conjugal union? Nay, it becomes me rather to be very grateful for having had her so long in comparatively good health, and fully to submit myself to the will of the Lord". This my soul was enabled to do. Keenly as I felt her absence from the Orphan work for almost nine months, with the exception of a very few times when she drove up to give various directions, yet, as I saw the hand of God in the whole, and was enabled to take the whole out of His hand, my soul was kept in peace, whilst day by day we were able still to have our precious seasons for prayer, and whilst day by day also we entreated God, that, if it might be, He would be graciously pleased yet to restore that feeble arm and hand again, and spare her longer to me for service. At last, in April 1860, my dearest wife was brought so far as that our kind and most attentive medical man would recommend her to go to Clevedon and use the warm sea baths for the benefit of her arm and hand. Therefore, I took her to Clevedon, our daughter remaining with her, and myself going down as often as I could. The warm sea baths seemed to agree with her well, and progress appeared to be made, when one day, returning from the bath, she slipped as she was stepping out of the road on the footpath near her lodgings, fell against the wall with her head, and on her weak arm, which she carried in a sling, and which had made her so helpless in not being able to break her fall. She seemed as dead, and our dear daughter ran to the lodgings to get help. But when she returned, her dear mother, who had been stunned by the fall, had revived, and could be moved to her bed. All now seemed gloomy and dark indeed. The prospect of removal of the rheumatism from the arm and hand appeared entirely gone, and my precious wife was worse than ever. I now went down evening after evening to Clevedon, after the day's work on Ashley Down, to wait on her by night. Her suffering was very great for some time, but gradually this wore off, and she was brought back to the state in which she had been when she first went to Clevedon; and, after a stay of more than three months at Clevedon, there had been granted considerable improvement. She now returned to Bristol spent about six weeks at home, and I then took her and my daughter to Teignmouth for a month, that she might have further change of air, and further the use of warm sea baths, which evidently had been of considerable use to her. By the time we returned from Teignmouth, my dearest wife was so far restored, as the use of her arm and hand, that she could take her work again at the Orphan Houses, and her dear hand was so far reduced in size, that her wedding ring, being put together again by a jeweller, could be put on again. How good was the Lord in sparing to me my dearest wife in this illness in 1859! How good to me in that she was not killed on the spot when she had that heavy fall in Clevedon! I magnify Him for it! "He is good and doeth good."

But I cannot dismiss this part without noticing one point in particular. My dearest wife had worked so hard in 1856, 1857, 1858 and 1859, when through the opening of the New Orphan House No 2, and the prospect of opening the New Orphan House No 3, there was such an abundance of work, that her health had been brought into a very low state and her strength had been greatly reduced. I begged her not to work so much, but it was in vain; she loved work; she never would bear to be idle. And thus it came on account of her very low state of health that the rheumatism had so much effect on her. But now see how the Lord worked. This very illness, most painful though it was to her, and most trying as it was to me, became God's precious instrument in sparing to the orphans their true friend, and to her own dear sisters a sister, to her own daughter and mother, and to her poor husband a precious wife for ten years more. This very illness obliged her to rest beyond what she otherwise would have done. She was also medically ordered to take more nourishment than she otherwise would have taken; and by October 1860 she was in a far better state of health than she had been for years. How

true that work, therefore, in this instance – “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God”. We have seen now how good the Lord was to me in sparing my dearest wife to me 39 years and four months, as she might have been removed from me sooner. It now remains to show:

### **III “That the Lord is good” and was doing good in the removal of the desire of my eyes.**

Perhaps all Christians who have heard me will have no difficulty in giving their hearty assent that “the Lord was good and doing good” in giving me such a wife; and they will also probably most readily admit that He was good and doing good in leaving her to me so long; but I ask these dear Christian friends to go further with me, and to say from their hearts “The Lord was good and doing good” in the removal of that useful, lovely, excellent wife from her husband, and that at the very time when, humanly speaking, he needed her more than ever. While I am saying this, I feel the void in my heart. That lovely one is no more with me to share my joys and sorrows. Every day I miss her more and more. Every day I see more and more how great her loss to the orphans. Yet without an effort, my inmost soul habitually joys in the joy of that loved departed one. Her happiness gives joy to me. My dear daughter and myself would not have her back, were it possible to produce it by a turn of the hand. God himself has done it; we are satisfied with him. During the last two or three years it was most obvious to my loving heart and eye, that my precious companion for so many years was again failing in her health. She did not only considerably lose flesh, but evidently seemed much more worse than she used to be. I begged her to work less, and to take more nourishment; but I could neither prevail as to the one nor the other. When I expressed my sorrow that she lay awake at night for two hours or more she would say “My dear, I am getting old, and old persons need not so much sleep”. When I brought before her that I feared her health would be again reduced, as in 1859, and that I feared the worst, she would say, “My darling, I think the Lord will allow me to see the New Orphan Houses No4 and No 5 furnished and opened, and then I may go home; but most of all I wish that the Lord Jesus would come, and that we might all go together”. Thus her dear mind and hands would be at work, and as there was such an abundance of work in such a great variety of ways to be done, she was generally all the day at work at the Orphan Houses. Under these circumstances she caught cold in the early part of January, which brought on a most distressing cough, and that to such a degree, that she never had had nearly as bad a cough all the previous 39 years. With difficulty only could I prevail on her to allow me to send for our dear medical friend; for she even made little of her own illnesses, whilst most solicitous about the health of others, especially myself and daughter and her sisters. I now pressed affectionately upon her she should drive to and from the Orphan Houses, also lie down a little on her couch after dinner, which had been advised by our kind medical friend. It was during the time of this distressing cough that I felt her pulse because I wished to know how it was with her health generally, and I found she had a very feeble, irregular and inremitting pulse, which only too much confirmed my fears about her health during the last two or three years. Still my precious wife would not allow that there was much the matter with her. Through the medical means, she entirely avoiding night air, going to and fro in a fly when she went to the Orphan Houses, the use of a more generous and somewhat altered diet, and the resting a little more than usual, the distressing cough was so entirely removed, that scarcely the least trace of it remained, and my beloved one was again able to get out to public worship in a fly in the mornings of the Lord’s Days January 23<sup>rd</sup> and January 30<sup>th</sup>, but stayed at home in the evenings to avoid a return of the cough. On Sunday January 30<sup>th</sup> there was an additional reason for not going out in the evening, because she felt a pain across the lower part of her back, and in her right arm. This pain was rather worse than better on Monday January 31<sup>st</sup>, and we considered it better to send for our dear medical friend to call and see her if possible before we started for the Orphan Houses; but as he was already from home, visiting his patients my dear wife set off in a fly to the Orphan Houses, our daughter accompanying her mother, to work for her under her direction, as it was feared her pain would prevent her doing anything actively herself. The day passed tolerably, though the pain increased, instead of decreasing.

At teatime she drove home with her sister Miss Groves, who also had been for weeks in a very feeble state of health and with my daughter. I remained to go in the evening to our normal public prayer meeting at Salem Chapel. When I came home, I found our dear medical friend, Mr Josiah Prichard, had been, ordered my dearest wife to bed, and to remain in bed, and to have a fire lighted in her bedroom, stating that it was acute rheumatism, or what is commonly called rheumatic fever. She suffered much pain during the following night, but the next day, and the night from Tuesday to Wednesday especially, the pain was still more severe, and her limbs became one

by one so painful, that she could neither move them, nor bear them to be touched, except the arm and hand which had been so weak ten years before. When I heard what Mr Prichard's judgement was, viz, that the malady was rheumatic fever, I naturally expected the worst as to the issue, on account of what I had found out about the action of my dearest wife's heart, when I felt her pulse, but though my heart was nigh to be broken on account of the depth of my affection, I said to myself – "The Lord is good, and doeth good", "all will be according to his own blessed character. Nothing but that which is good, like Himself, can proceed from Him. If He pleases to take my dearest wife, it will be good, like Himself. What I have to do, as His child, is to be satisfied with what my Father does, that I may glorify Him". After this, my soul not only aimed, but this my soul, by God's grace, attained to. I was satisfied with God. On Tuesday February 1<sup>st</sup>, I was alone in the room of my precious wife at the Orphan Houses. She was at home in bed, a thing which had not been the case for more than nine years, as far as I can recollect. There were hanging in her room a number of precious texts from the Holy Scriptures, printed in large type, arranged for each day of the month, called "The silent comforter". The sheet then turned up contained these words: "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me" (Psalm 199:75). I read this again and again, and each time my inmost soul responded "Yes, Lord, thy judgments are right. I am satisfied with them. Thou knowest the depth of the affection of Thy poor child for his beloved wife, yet I am satisfied with Thy judgments, and my inmost soul says that Thou, in faithfulness, hast afflicted me. All this is according to that love with which Thou hast loved me in Christ Jesus, and whatever the issue "all will be well". There was also written on that sheet of the "Silent Comforter" "My times are in Thy hand" (Psalm 31:15). My heart responded in reading these words "Yes, my Father, the times of my darling wife are in Thy hands. Thou wilt do the very best thing for her and for me, whether life or death. If it may be, raise yet up again my precious wife, Thou art able to do it, though she is so ill, but howsoever Thou dealest with me, only help me to continue to be satisfied with Thy holy will". During the whole week, whilst my beloved wife was lying on her deathbed, these lines of the precious hymn – "One there is above all others – Oh! How He loves!" were ever present with me:

"Best of blessings He'll provide us  
Nought by good shall e'er betide us  
Safe to glory He will guide us  
Oh, how He loves!"

My heart continually responded – "Nought but good shall e'er betide us". My inmost soul was assured, that however my loving Father acted with His poor child, it would be for his good. On Wednesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, my beloved wife being comparatively free from pain, I read to her before I went to the Orphan Houses, this verse out of the 84<sup>th</sup> Psalm – "LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly". Having read this verse I said, "My darling, we have both received grace, and we shall therefore receive glory; and as, by God's grace, we walk uprightly, nothing that is good for us will He withhold from us." She evidently was blessed through this verse, for she spoke about it to our daughter in the course of the day. To my own heart the verse was a great support, for I said to myself again and again: - "I walk uprightly, and therefore my Father will withhold nothing from me, that is good for me"; if therefore the restoration of my dearest Mary is good for me it will be surely given; if otherwise, I have to seek to glorify God by most perfect submission to His holy will.

On Thursday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, I evidently saw how grave Mr Prichard considered the case to be, indeed, on Wednesday evening already, for I was to give to my dear wife every two hours a small quantity of beef tea during the night, or a teaspoon of wine, but the sufferings of that night brought her soon to the close of her earthly pilgrimage. About ten in the morning, dear Mr Prichard, who from the first had called twice a day, and who to the utmost had done all that medical skill, coupled with Christian kindness, could do, called to see her, and found her, as I thought, much worse. He proposed at once to send for Dr Black, and to wait till he arrived. About eleven o'clock, Dr Black very kindly came, examined the dear invalid, and confirmed what Mr Prichard has told me just before, that all hope of recovery was gone. After the medical gentlemen had left, I felt it now my duty to tell my precious wife that the Lord Jesus was coming for her. Her reply was – "He will soon come". By this I believe she meant to indicate, the Lord will soon return, and we shall be reunited. As there was yet life, I felt it my duty to do to the last everything that medical skill could devise, and love on my



part could do. At half past one pm, when I gave her the medicine, and a little later, a spoonful of wine in water, I observed that she had difficulty in swallowing, and a few minutes later, that she could not distinctly articulate. She tried to make me to understand, but I could not. I sat quietly before her, and about a quarter of an hour later I observed that her dear bright eyes were set. I now called my dear daughter and her aunt, Miss Groves, stating that the love one was dying. They at once came to the bedroom and were presently joined by Mrs Mannering, another sister of my dearest wife. We all four sat quietly for about two hours and a half, watching the last moments of that much loved one, when about twenty minutes after four in the afternoon or Lord's Day February 6<sup>th</sup> 1970, she fell asleep in Jesus. I now fell on my knees and thanked God for her release, and for having taken her to Himself, and asked the Lord to help and support us. My soul was so sustained and so peaceful that had I the physical strength, and had I not had plain home duties, I could have preached immediately after; and the portion on which I should have preached would have been the one which forms the text of this sermon. I repeat again – "The Lord was good and doing good" in taking my beloved wife, because, 1<sup>st</sup> she had worked long, very long and very much on earth, and He was now pleased to appoint her to other service; 2<sup>nd</sup> "He was good and doing good" in releasing her from her pain and suffering, which she had endured to so great a degree during the last week of her life; 3<sup>rd</sup> "He was good and doing good" in taking her, instead of removing me and leaving her. I adore the Lord's kindness in this in sparing her this heavy trial, as I think it would have been to her, and I gladly bear it for her; 5<sup>th</sup>, He was, most of all, good and doing good in giving to my dearest wife what had been long the desire of her heart, ever to be with Jesus. As long as two years since, my daughter had seen the following, written by her dear mother, in one of her pocket books, kept at the Orphan Houses, of which I knew nothing, but which precious jewel my daughter pointed out to me two days after the death of her dear mother, and which is now before me. The words written are these – "Should it please the Lord to remove MM (Mary Müller) by sudden dismissal, let none of the beloved survivors consider, that it is in the way of judgment either to her or to them. She has so often, when enjoying conscious nearness to the Lord, felt 'How sweet it would be now to depart and to be for ever with Jesus that nothing but the shock it would be to her beloved husband and child etc etc has checked in her the longing desire that thus her happy spirit might take its flight. Precious Jesus! Thy will in this, as in everything else, and not her's be done". With such words before me, and knowing besides, as I do, the deep personal attachment my dearest wife had to that Blessed One, who hung for us on the Cross, can it be otherwise than that my inmost soul should rejoice in the joy in which my loved one has now in being with the Lord Jesus for ever. The depth of my love for her is rejoicing in her joy. Remember that word of our Lord "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said I go unto the Father" (John 14:25). As a husband, I feel more and more every day that I am without this pleasant, useful, loving companion. As the director of the five Orphan Houses, I miss her in numberless ways, and shall miss her yet more and more. But as a child of God, and as a servant of the Lord Jesus, I bow, I am satisfied with the will of my heavenly father, I seek by perfect submission to His holy will to glorify Him, I kiss continually the hand that has thus afflicted me; but I also say I shall meet her again to spend a happy eternity with her. Will all who hear me now meet my precious wife? Only those will who have passed sentence upon themselves as guilty sinners, and who have put their trust alone in the Lord Jesus for the salvation of their souls. He came into the world to save sinners, and all who believe in Him shall be saved; but without faith in the Lord Jesus we cannot be saved. Let all those who are as yet not reconciled to God by faith in the Lord Jesus be in earnestness about their souls, lest suddenly a fever should lay them low and find them unprepared, or lest suddenly the Lord Jesus should return again before they are prepared to meet Him. May the Lord in mercy grant that this may not be the case. Amen.

The logo for Mullers is written in a large, elegant, black cursive script. The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent 'M' at the beginning and a long, sweeping tail on the 's'.

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