



Account of a Preaching Tour

On Monday evening, July 12th, 1875, at the ordinary Weekly Prayer-meeting at Bethesda Chapel, Mr. Müller, in accordance with a previous announcement, gave an account of his recent tour to a large congregation. He said, -

“Nearly two years since my beloved wife and I visited Brighton. I preached there with evident marks of blessing both to believers and unbelievers, and I thereby was particularly led to consider how desirable it was - as I had ministered for more than forty-two years in Bristol, and almost exclusively during that time in Bristol - that I should not confine my ministry to Bristol. Last year we were in the Isle of Wight, and there I preached manifestly with blessing to those who heard. A very dear lovely brother in the Lord, who had been one of the leading ministers of Birmingham, said to me on the last Lord's Day I preached in his chapel, - 'Dear Mr. Müller, I do not wish to flatter you, but I must tell you this has been the happiest day of my life.' This spoke to my heart. I knew how God was with me; and how He had used me in the ministry of the Word. It spoke to my heart thus: 'Why confine your ministry to Bristol only.' It was this in particular which determined me, by the help of God, to go forth to other places ministering the Word. Many of you remember that after my return from the Isle of Wight I stated here that I had it laid on my heart thus to go forth. Peradventure one or other thought this would never be. Nevertheless it remained in my heart. I had not spoken lightly or unadvisedly, but to the glory of God, and in the fear of God. In process of time the thing came about. It was not simply that I looked at the result of the blessing I had seen in Brighton and elsewhere, but it was the deep consciousness, - I may speak egotistically, but I do not mind what is said about that, for I speak to the glory of God, - it was the deep consciousness that I had learned truth in the school of Christ during the forty-nine years I had been a believer, which I felt responsibility was laid on me to seek to communicate to others. I felt I knew God in a way which was not generally known. I felt I had an acquaintance with Scripture, and was able to apply truths in a way in which truths are not generally applied. I felt God was with me, and would help me, and that a blessing would come out of my labours. But more: I felt I had a place in the Church of Christ which not every one has; that I was known to hundreds or thousands and millions, and that these hundreds or thousands and millions loved me and esteemed me; and that therefore if I came to a place I should get hearers. The question was whether I should get places large enough to hold the hearers who would come. I felt therefore that on me was laid a responsibility to make good use - though at the evening of my life - of the opportunities God had opened for me to set forth the truth. After waiting on God, and seeing that the time had come, I went forth, and assuredly God has abundantly blessed my labours. I know some here thought little of it, and questioned whether I was called to this work. But as for myself I had the fullest assurance that it was the will of God, and that God would bless my labours abundantly. And what have I now to say? Ten times beyond my largest expectations, if not a hundred times, God has been with me blessing my labours. Now a few particulars. I wrote to a beloved Presbyterian clergyman at Brighton, and said I had it in my heart to go again to Brighton, and preach again in his church if he were willing. I had the most affectionate letter in return, in which he expressed the greatest delight at my coming. The first time I preached, not only was the place crowded to the utmost, but hundreds had to go away, and God wrought greatly in the way of blessing to the unconverted and to believers. And as soon as this dear brother found I was there, he gave out that I should preach every Sunday and twice in the week, and I readily accepted it. So I preached time after time whilst there in this place, besides preaching also in the Odd-Fellows' Hall, where the so-called Brethren met. I had then invitations from all quarters to come and preach. At first I felt a little the exertion with regard to my voice and chest; but the more I preached the more this passed off, and soon I felt no difficulty whatever. So I looked out for the largest place in Brighton - the Dome, - which will hold 3000 persons. But as it could not be had on the Lord's-day evening, - the reason I found out afterwards being that the ministers in the place did not like their own congregations to be disturbed, - I took it for a week-day. It so happened that evening, that for an hour before the service the rain poured down in torrents, and continued so till after the meeting. One thousand persons were there, and God helped me to preach; but with regard to this place I had not the

joy I had expected. The people did not sleep over what they heard at Brighton. I had the testimony of the Holy Ghost to my own soul how God blessed my labours there. I felt I had not strength for inquiry meetings, and therefore I did not attempt them, except once or twice; but felt I must leave this work to be done by beloved brethren and ministers stately labouring in the places in which I preached. I was delighted to meet the heavy expenses connected with these services.”

Mr. Müller also referred to visits paid by him to Lewes, and continued, -

“Now having been nearly six weeks at Brighton, I felt I must go forth elsewhere. Preaching, of course, was not my only service. I saw many persons who came to me about their souls. A little portion of my work followed me from Bristol daily: I wrote my Report, and had correspondence to attend to. My beloved wife helped me in all, especially in the correspondence and with the Report. My purpose had been to go now to Liverpool, to follow up Mr. Moody's work there. I had corresponded with a beloved brother who particularly advised me to seek to lend a helping hand to the young converts. But when I gave myself earnestly to prayer about this, I was led, contrary to my expectations, to Sunderland. It was most clearly and distinctly impressed on my heart to go to Sunderland instead of Liverpool. I prayed again and again, and Sunderland remained present to my heart, and I was delighted. There was a large Church there of about 800 believers, and a large chapel which would hold 1600 or 1800 persons, and my beloved friend Mr. Rees would give me a hearty welcome. I wrote him, and he was overwhelmed with joy. No sooner did he know I was coming, than he wrote to Mr. Spurgeon to say, that Brother Müller was passing through London on his way to Sunderland: I had then a most affectionate letter from this beloved brother asking me to preach on my way through London. This was done. I had no hesitation whatever about my voice, because my voice is very strong and very good. Moreover, I looked to the Lord for help regarding this as every thing else. The building holds 6000, and I judge that about 4000 persons were present, and that all heard me except any who were dull of hearing. God was with me, and helped me. I saw then how God helped me in every way. On the next day I prayed at the Haymarket Opera House, at Mr. Moody's meeting, and I believe everyone heard me distinctly. When I preached the first time at Sunderland, I found, to my great sorrow, that whilst about 1800 persons were crammed into the place long before the meeting commenced, many hundreds, could not get in. I preached for about four weeks at Sunderland, and also attended twice the noon-day prayer meeting, and spoke. The choicest part of my service during my absence from Bristol has been the opportunity of addressing many hundreds of ministers. The mere fact becoming known that Mr. Müller was to preach brought a number of ministers who had read my narratives and reports. Thus I judged my service particularly was used by God in bringing the simplicity of the truth before ministers, and the way of setting forth the truth and applying the truth. Whilst I was at Sunderland, two excellent ministers came to me, and in the name of all the Nonconformist ministers of Newcastle, asked that I would visit that town. I said, ‘I am unable to give an answer; but if you can get me the largest chapel there, I will come next week and preach there, and then consider the case further.’ They said, ‘We pledge ourselves to this, and will make arrangements.’ I went, and there I preached in the largest chapel. You cannot get to any place where the truth is more needed than at Newcastle, on account of the sceptical reading and the infidelity that prevail there.”

Mr. Müller then gave a detailed account of his labours at Newcastle, and of arrangements which were made for him to occupy the pulpits of the nine largest chapels in the town. Referring to one service, he said, -

“God was with me. If I had had an inquiry meeting I have no hesitation in saying that perhaps 200 would have stayed behind, but I felt that this was not my service. For many reasons it may be best to have a little time to see how far the work is real.

“I was asked to address a meeting of Christian workers. I consented, for I felt to decline would be false humility. If I said I had nothing to bring out to profit the people, it would be a shame and disgrace to me. For a servant of Christ, who for nearly fifty years has been engaged in the ministry of the Word, to have

nothing to say, would be shame and disgrace. What chiefly induced me to go to Newcastle was the desire to follow up Mr. Moody's work, and to seek to benefit young converts by - seeking to instruct them in the things of God. Mr. Moody began his labours in England at Sunderland. From Sunderland he went to Newcastle; and I desired to follow in his track."

Mr. Müller then referred to other places visited by him, and continued, -

"I state these facts to the glory of God, that all of you may have the deep conviction in your souls that it was of God that I should leave you for a time. I never spent a time in my whole life when I so enjoyed the presence and blessing and wondrous help of God. I bless and praise Him that at the close of my 70th year He has condescended to use a poor miserable worm to such an extent. I adore, praise, and magnify Him for His wonderful condescension, though it does not surprise me. I expected great things from God. I knew that if ever I went forth in this way, that God would be with me and would abundantly bless me. The last meeting I attended - which was for Christian workers - was so blessed, so precious, that if during my fifteen weeks' absence from Bristol, that had been the only opportunity I had of opening my mouth, I should have been repaid most abundantly. Now what is the conclusion of the whole matter? I bless and praise God for the great honour, the glorious privilege, bestowed on me at the evening of life to do this great and glorious work. My inmost soul is convinced it is all of God that I should be far more abundantly engaged in such service. I purpose, - as soon as the Lord permits, as soon as dear Mr. Wright has had some relief and change, together with my dear daughter, and as soon as the Report shall have been completed, and God in other ways shall make my path plain, - to sally forth again. The next place I visit will be Edinburgh, because Mr. Moody went from Newcastle to Edinburgh. Then I purpose to go to Dundee and Glasgow; and then as God may lead me, to other large towns and cities, with the determination, as much as lies in me, to set forth the truth in its simplicity, as God may help me. I doubt not He will further bless me in this glorious service, for in my inmost soul I give Him all the glory. I am a poor miserable worm in myself; but if I were not to say that God was with me, and that I had not ministered in the power of the Spirit, I should be ungrateful to Him; for the power of the word was felt, and I have no doubt the greatest blessing conveyed has been especially to the hearts of hundreds of ministers who will become thereby the better instruments in setting forth the truth as it is in Jesus."



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The George Müller Charitable Trust is a limited company registered in England and Wales
Registered Charity no. 1066832 Company no. 3471812
Registered Office: Müller House, 7 Cotham Park, Bristol BS6 6DA
Tel: 0117 924 5001 Email: admin@mullers.org