

George Müller

• Indifference toward God •

“He sent His Spirit
into my heart.”



(1805-1898)

As a young man, George Müller lived a sinful and dissipated life. Because his indulgence in sinful pleasures occupied his time and heart, his attitude toward God was one of general indifference. However, while attending the University of Halle, he came into contact with a number of Christians who made a deep impression on him. He himself soon found Christ, which became the turning point of his life.

In the years that followed, Müller’s life of faith and prayers became a great inspiration to Christians and has continued to be to this day. The unique testimony of his life was that he established five large orphan homes during the nineteenth century, in which more than ten thousand children were completely cared for over a period of sixty-two years. More than seven million

dollars passed through Müller's hands for the care of the orphans, without his asking for a single penny from man. He relied solely on faith and prayer to supply all the needs. The following is taken from his autobiography and includes the period leading up to his conversion experience:

I WAS BORN at Kroppenstaedt, near Halberstadt, in the kingdom of Prussia, on September 27th, 1805....My father, who educated his children on worldly principles, gave us much money, considering our age; not in order that we might spend it, but, as he said, to accustom us to possess money without spending it. The result was that it led me and my brother into many sins....

When I was between ten and eleven years of age, I was sent to Halberstadt, to the Cathedral Classical School, there to be prepared for the University; for my father's desire was that I should become a clergyman; not, indeed, that thus I might serve God, but that I might have a comfortable living. My time was now spent in studying, reading novels, and indulging, though so young, in sinful practices. Thus it continued till I was fourteen years old....

...I grew worse and worse. Three or four days before I was confirmed (and thus admitted to partake of the Lord's supper), I was guilty of gross immorality; and the very day before my confirmation, when I was in the

vestry with the clergyman to confess my sins (according to the usual practice), after a formal manner, I defrauded him, for I handed over to him only the twelfth part of the fee which my father had given me for him.

In this state of heart, without prayer, without true repentance, without faith, without knowledge of the plan of salvation, I was confirmed, and took the Lord's supper on the Sunday after Easter, 1820....I also made resolutions to turn from those vices in which I was living, and to study more. But as I attempted the thing in my own strength, all soon came to nothing, and I still grew worse....

...I became a member of the University and...obtained permission to preach in the Lutheran Establishment, but I was as truly unhappy and as far from God as ever. I had made strong resolutions, now at last to change my course of life, for two reasons: first, because, without it, I thought no parish would choose me as their pastor; and secondly, that without a considerable knowledge of divinity I should never get a good living; as the obtaining of a valuable assignment, in Prussia, generally depends upon the degree which the candidates for the ministry obtain in passing the examination. But the moment I entered Halle, the University town, all my resolutions came to nothing....

At this time [September, 1825] Halle was frequented by 1,260 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.

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

One Saturday afternoon, about the middle of November, 1825, I had taken a walk with my friend Beta. On our return he said to me that he was in the habit of going on Saturday evenings to the house of a Christian, where there was a meeting. On further inquiry he told me that they read the Bible, sang, prayed, and read a printed sermon. No sooner had I heard this, than it was to me as if I had found something after which I had been seeking all my life long. I immediately wished to go with my friend, who was not at once willing to take me; for

knowing me as a lively young man, he thought I should not like this meeting. At last, however, he said he would call for me.

I would here mention that Beta seems to have had conviction of sin, and probably also a degree of acquaintance with the Lord, when about fifteen years old. Afterwards, being in a cold and worldly state, he joined me in a sinful journey to Switzerland. On his return, however, being extremely miserable, and convinced of his guilt, he made a full confession of his sin to his father; and while with him, sought the acquaintance of a Christian brother named Richter. This Dr. Richter gave him, on his return to the University, a letter of introduction to a believing tradesman by the name of Wagner. It was this brother in whose house the meeting was held.

We went together in the evening. As I did not know the manners of believers, and the joy they have in seeing poor sinners even in any measure caring about the things of God, I made an apology for coming. The kind answer of this dear brother I shall never forget. He said: "Come as often as you please; house and heart are open to you." We sat down and sang a hymn. Then brother Kayser, afterwards a missionary in Africa in connection with the London Missionary Society, who was then living at Halle, fell on his knees, and asked a blessing on our meeting. This kneeling down made a deep impression upon me; for I had never either seen anyone on his knees,

nor had I ever prayed myself on my knees. He then read a chapter and a printed sermon; for no regular meetings for expounding the Scriptures were allowed in Prussia, except an ordained clergyman was present. At the close we sang another hymn, and then the master of the house prayed. While he prayed, my feeling was something like this: I could not pray as well, though I am much more learned than this illiterate man. The whole made a deep impression on me. I was happy; though if I had been asked why I was happy, I could not have clearly explained it.

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

Now my life became very different, though all sins were not given up at once. My wicked companions were

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

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

What all the exhortations and precepts of my father and others could not effect; what all my own resolutions could not bring about, even to renounce a life of sin and profligacy; I was enabled to do, constrained by the love of Jesus. The individual who desires to have his sins forgiven, must seek for it through the blood of Jesus. The

individual who desires to get power over sin, must likewise seek it through the blood of Jesus. ¹

Often God makes Himself known to a person when they are in a condition of careless indifference. This was the case with George Müller. In your own life you may not have been that concerned about your relationship with God, but for some unknown reason your interest has been drawn toward spiritual things. Perhaps a friend or an unexpected turn of events or a message you heard has caused you to reflect on God, and you are now thinking about becoming a Christian.

You should realize that this kind of inward activity *is* the working of the Holy Spirit in your life. Notice how Jesus describes what happens to a person when he is born again: “The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit” (John 3:8). This means that something is happening to you, yet you are not sure why it is happening. You are just mysteriously drawn to God. At this point in your life you must recognize that Christ is closer to you than you thought.

Jesus said, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him” (John 6:44). Your feelings of being drawn to the Lord must be understood not as a

passing emotion but as God Himself bringing you to Christ. Your part is simply to respond to this drawing by receiving the gift of God, which is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 6:23). To receive this gift you need only to pray from your heart the following suggested prayer: “Lord Jesus, I am a sinner and I confess my sins to You. I believe that You died on the cross and shed Your blood for me. I accept Your forgiveness, and I open myself and receive You now as my Savior and Life. Thank You for coming into me. I do believe You have given me the gift of eternal life and that You now live in me. I do believe in Your Name and confess with my mouth, Lord Jesus! Amen!”

