

THE MIRACLE HOUSE:

The Story of George Müller



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It may be interesting to understand the money used in George Müller's time and location, which was Victorian England. Listed below are the coins and their values in the 1830s (and thereabouts), followed by their approximate value today in US dollars (\$).

These are symbols for British money:

£ pound
s shilling
d penny

1 pound (£) = 20 shillings (s) or 1 sovereign

1 shilling (s) = 12 pennies, or pence (d)

1 pound in 1830 $\approx$ 100 US dollars in 2025

1 shilling in 1830 $\approx$ 5 US dollars in 2025



Copper Penny



Silver Shilling



Gold Sovereign

One four-pound loaf of bread in 1830 cost about 9d, or $\frac{3}{4}$ of a shilling.

Average weekly income for a male laborer was about 8–10s per week.

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CHAPTER I

George

1826—Halberstadt, Prussia

“You want to do what?!”

The vein in his father’s forehead was bulging like an angry snake that invariably appeared for such outbursts.

“A missionary?” His father’s tone escalated with each successive syllable, both in pitch and volume.

George loathed such altercations with his father, which had been numerous and quite severe at times. His heart was hammering, and he could now feel the blood flushing his face pink, exposing his anxiety, undermining him, revealing his inner turmoil when strength and fortitude were requisite for this confrontation.

His father chuckled then, a dangerous, throaty chuckle, as he loosened his tie, and with a measured, ominous tone, he gripped his cane and seethed, “George, do you know how much money I have invested in your education? Since you were ten years old, I have sent you to the finest schools money can buy, and you come to me eleven years into it and tell me you want to throw it all away”—his voice

and pitch rose again to a shout—“to be a missionary? All that time! All that work! All those years! All my money! Gone! And for what?! Certainly not to be the pastor of an honorable parsonage! Certainly not to provide a generous living for yourself, much less a family!”

“But Father, if you could just—” George tried to explain, but his father raged on.

“You cannot make a living as a missionary! If you want to preach about Jesus, do it where you can be *profitable*!” He practically spat the word. “Missionaries preach for free, do they not? No, no, no, no, they have to *pay* to go preach. *Someone* has to pay. Where is the sense in that? Have your foolhardy, impetuous ways and all that booze corroded your brain into mush?”

“F-Father,” George stammered, “I feel God would have me go bring people into His light, and . . .”

“His light? Hmph!” George’s father said mockingly. “Says the boy who frequently stole government money that I had to repay. Says the boy who was selfishly out drinking and playing cards while his mother was dying! Says the boy I had to bail out of prison for bamboozling good people out of their hard-earned money!”

He was not wrong, and he had every right to be angry. George had, in fact, pilfered coins and bills from him multiple times. The night his mother died, he had indulged in unsavory, immoral behavior at a tavern with comrades and cohorts, entirely oblivious—or perhaps, more accurately, apathetic—to the dire circumstances at home. His mother’s passing had no effect on George’s iniquitous behavior, except that he became even more entrenched in his vices.

Subsequently, George had spent Christmas at sixteen years old incarcerated for schmoozing his way into extravagant hotels and then

ducking out on the bill. Uninformed about his father's knowledge—or lack thereof—concerning his whereabouts, George had languished with hardened criminals until his father ultimately appeared and bailed him out, but not without making his extreme displeasure evident by punishing George unmercifully.

“Father, I know I have much to repent of. But I'm trying, and my heart has been changed. I once fully served Satan; now, drawn by the love of Christ, I am willing and ready to suffer affliction for His sake. He is transforming me. I feel a purpose and zeal for life that I have never before felt. I want to spread the joy I feel amongst—”

“You're being ridiculous!” his father cut in callously. “You're going to trample all over a coveted education at Halle University to be a pauper in the streets preaching of . . .” A look of utter disgust swept over his face. “I won't hear of it, George. And if you follow this harebrained idea, so help me,” he growled the words, “you are no son of mine!”

“But Father, if you could just hear what God has done for me—” George began desperately.

The explosive rage suddenly twisted into an anguished mask of disappointment. “And what about me, George? Have you given no thought to what will happen to me? I had hoped in my old age to live with my son, the head of a successful parsonage. George, please, think of your father.” The manipulative words tumbled into sobs as he clung to George's arm and wept emphatically on his shoulder. “Please, George! Just two more years of seminary at Halle and you can become a clergyman. If God has indeed changed your heart, don't be a selfish boy. Think of your poor old father, George. Please.”

Of all the harrowing interactions with his father, including the punishments, this one had been the most formidable, but George

knew it was steadfastness in the Lord that enabled him to stand firm in his resolve. He knew with utter confidence that his father was neither poor nor old. He decided, however, that he could no longer, in good conscience, accept his father's money, which raised a keenly substantial challenge: By what means would he support himself and afford his university expenses?

George pondered this question all the way back to Halle from Halberstadt and was still thinking about it as he arrived back at his dorm room. He hadn't the slightest idea what he would do. *Pray about it*, was the thought that came. George had just recently started to pray after attending prayer meetings with his friend Beta, a friendly classmate who, by his pious example, had helped George to find a way out of his vices.

"Dear God," he began as he knelt, "please help me to find a way to continue my education and make enough money to support myself. In Jesus's name, amen."

Later that evening, there was a knock at his door. George was surprised to see four men, one of whom was his divinity professor, Dr. Tholuck.

"Professor. Good evening. How may I help you?"

After introducing George to the three American professors, Dr. Tholuck said, "These colleagues of mine don't speak German and need someone to tutor them. I thought of you. I think you could be just the one."

"Thank you, sir. I really would love to help them. But you see, I don't know that I will have time with my studies, and now I need to find a job, and . . ."

Dr. Tholuck chuckled. "Son, we are not asking for your services for

free. The Americans are prepared to pay.” In German, he added with a wink, “And quite handsomely.”

In that moment, George’s circumstances transformed from having no money and no prospects to holding a job that paid well enough to cover his university expenses with some left over. In addition, Dr. Tholuck, once he learned George was supporting himself, invited him to live in a free room at the orphanage across from campus, which had been reserved for a university student. George’s former self would have been much too proud to accept such a humble dwelling. Now, however, the invitation was another blessed answer to his prayer.

University students at Halle walked past the large three-story orphanage every day, as had George, but he had not known much about it. After he moved in, he learned the fascinating story of Dr. A.H. Francke, who had been a divinity professor at Halle a hundred years earlier. Dr. Francke was a devout Christian who felt moved by God to care for the local orphans. The professor was not wealthy but somehow managed to gather enough money to construct an edifice that housed two thousand orphans! Here it was, one hundred years later, still caring for the mother- and fatherless. And because Dr. Francke had been a professor at Halle, he wrote in his will that a room in the orphanage should always be reserved for a deserving student at the university.

George was in awe of the man’s vision and generosity. Appreciation for the complimentary lodgings above the orphanage inspired him to convey the gospel of Jesus to every soul within his scope of influence and beyond. Each month, he distributed hundreds of missionary tracts and pamphlets. He felt a need to write to his friends with whom, for years, he had wasted away countless unwholesome

nights in pubs and taverns. Apologizing for his former shameful behavior, he gushed about the joy he possessed through Christ's atoning blood.

As George approached the completion of his college education, Dr. Tholuck invited him into his office, a summons frequently extended by the good-hearted professor to provide guidance and advice to his undergraduates.

"George," he said, "have you ever considered proselytizing among the Jews?"

"It's providential you should ask me that, Professor. I recently have taken an interest in studying Hebrew!"

"That is excellent. I would like to submit your name to the London Missionary Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews. How would you feel about that?"

"London? Why would I want to go to London? Will I have to move there? Are there even Jews in London?" George asked inquisitively.

"We will begin by submitting your name, for which I can draft a letter this very day. Then we will wait. We first need to know if you are accepted. If you are, they will place you where you are needed. And yes, there are plenty of Jews in London, but it does not mean you will end up there; the society sends its missionaries to many different locations."

The wait seemed nearly intolerable to George as he did his best to trust in the Lord's timing with patience and perseverance, all the time wondering in which country and under what circumstances he would end up. In the interim he obtained his degree from Halle and temporarily volunteered as a chaplain to the inmates of a new local workhouse.

George learned the hard way to preach sermons that were easy to understand and relatable to the congregation. His first sermon was meticulously written out in sophisticated, elaborate language. He spent hours memorizing it and articulated a flawless delivery. Only blank stares were returned from the farmers and other impoverished people who listened. From then on George decided against pompous words and eloquent phrases, convinced that simple and direct ones were much more effective.

One afternoon, as George was pondering verses in the book of Matthew for an upcoming sermon, he was interrupted by a knock on the door.

“George, are you there?”

He recognized the urgent voice as that of Dr. Tholuck.

“Please come in, Professor!”

“Young man, it is my pleasure to inform you that you have been selected as a missionary with the London Missionary Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews,” Dr. Tholuck said with a congratulatory smile.

“Thank you, Professor! Where do they want to send me? And when? I need to let my parish know that I’ll be—”

“Hold on there, my boy. They would like you to go to London and study for six months as a probationary period.”

“I see.” George could scarcely conceal his disappointment. Had he not already spent his entire existence in pursuit of further education?

Dr. Tholuck perceived his shift in demeanor. “I’m afraid there’s more.” The professor hesitated. “George, are you aware that the Prussian government requires every able-bodied young man to serve three years in the military?”

George's gut suddenly twisted into a tight, hostile knot. Mandatory military service was common knowledge. How had this important detail entirely slipped from his consciousness? Obtaining a passport to get to London without completing his duty in the military would be as elusive as receiving his father's blessing to proselyte as a missionary.

"If it's any consolation," Dr. Tholuck attempted to reassure George, "young men with university degrees need serve only one year."

George's shoulders dropped, a marked melancholy dulling his usually bright eyes. This felt like an insurmountable obstacle. What choice did he have but to complete his military obligation? Even one year of service stood as a wide, yawning gap between him and his calling. He could foresee no alternate course of action other than to enlist and fulfill the requirement.

"You know," Dr. Tholuck continued, "the one way you could be exempted from service is by decree of the king. Missionaries are often absolved from military duty."

The young chaplain's countenance brightened with fresh hope. It wasn't that he was opposed to military service, which was an honorable mission itself, serving one's country. But George had felt certain that God was calling him to the work of salvation—not of munition, not to warfare, but to the welfare of souls.

"I know some influential brethren in the church who owe me a favor." The professor winked sympathetically. "I'll see what they can do."

George had no other choice than to simply bide his time. And, of course, supplicate his Great Creator in mighty prayer.

THE MIRACLE HOUSE:

The Story of George Müller

“All our lives God sees us through.”

Travel to London to see God at work in the lives of two incredible people. Pastor George Müller feels called by God to sacrifice all he has and dedicate his life to his Heavenly Father’s work. Courageously, he follows the call through sickness, poverty, and tests of faith.

Similar formidable circumstances challenge young Felix as he and his brother seek to reunite with their mother and sisters. Explore Victorian England with George and Felix as they experience God’s loving hand and watchful eye through the miracles He performs throughout their lives.



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