



# **Open Thy Mouth Wide, and I Will Fill It**

A Sermon by George Müller of Bristol

*A sermon preached by George Müller at the Gospel Hall, St Nicholas Road, Bristol, on Sunday morning, January 10th, 1897*

“I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it” – Psalm lxxxix v 10

This is a figure we all understand, “Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it;” that is, “Ask great blessing from Me, very great blessings, and I am ready to bestow them.” O what a precious, glorious promise at the opening of the New Year, for poor weak ones, as we are. “Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.” The great point is to apply this to our various particular positions, and to the circumstances in which we are placed.

We often find that the hindrance to the answer of prayer lies in ourselves, because our hearts are not yet prepared for a blessing. Now, in connection with this verse, “Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it,” I will refer, for the comfort and encouragement of beloved Christian friends, to my own experience in connection with the Orphan work, in order that you all increasingly may be comforted and encouraged to expect great things at the hands of God. It is now 68 years ago that my heart was greatly tried, when again and again I saw dear children losing both parents, and there was no one to take a real deep interest in their well-being.

I felt deeply for such bereaved children, and I said again and again to myself, “O I wish I had a little Orphan institution, into which I could take these children.” But the desire remained for years only a desire, though I had much prayer in connection with it. In the November of the year 1835, a particular circumstance occurred, through the instrumentality of which I was made to know how to be able to do something for destitute orphans, and I began to pray more earnestly than ever I had done before that God would be pleased to guide and direct me whether I should make a beginning of a little Orphan institution. Thus I prayed month after month, and at last I came to the decision that I would do something in this way; and though it might have never so small a beginning, I would make a beginning.

After having come to this decision, I passed one evening – namely, on the 5th of November, 1835 – reading the Scriptures, and, as my habit has been since July, 1829, going consecutively through them. That is, not picking out here and there a little portion and reading it, or a few verses here and there, or half a chapter here and there, but going on straight forward, through the whole of the Old Testament, and then through the New Testament. Then, having finished the whole of the Holy Bible, beginning again from the commencement, and so going on. This has been my habit now ever since July, 1829, and I have read four times every year through the whole Bible, with prayer and meditation, and especially with meditation in reference to myself. How does this comfort you? How does it instruct you? How does it warn you? How does it reprove and rebuke you? Thus do I read the Holy Scriptures in regards to myself.

Now, just reading through the whole Bible, I came, at that time, to this 81st Psalm and to this 10th verse, “I am Jehovah thy God, Who brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.” When I read this verse, I shut the Bible, went to the door of my room and locked it, and then I cast myself on the floor and began to pray. I said to my Heavenly Father, “I have only asked Thee, Heavenly Father, that Thou shouldest show me whether I shall begin the Orphan work or not.

Thou hast been pleased to make that plain to me, and now 'I will open my mouth wide.' Be pleased to 'fill it.' Give me, my Heavenly Father, a suitable house to begin the work; give me suitable helpers to take care of the children; and give me a thousand pounds sterling to make a beginning."

A thousand pounds was a very great sum at that time. At the present day it is a very small sum for me, for often and often I have in one day to pay away – a thousand pounds? No, not merely a thousand, but £2,000, £3,000, in one day; yea, again and again £4,000, £5,000, and £6,000 in one day. But at that time a thousand pounds was a great sum to me. Nevertheless, I expected to get it, though I did not know how. I expected to get it from my Heavenly Father, on the ground of this promise. The next day I received a shilling from a German missionary staying in my house. I had for six months, staying with me, six missionaries, brethren and sisters, and one of these brethren gave me a shilling. Another German missionary staying in my house, out of the six, gave me another shilling. This was the first money I received in connection with the thousand pounds.

Every one of you say, "A very little beginning;" but it was a beginning. I received also on the same day a second gift, a very large wardrobe for the house I was going to open for destitute orphans. Then I went on praying, and by little and little I received more; and very soon there was one especially remarkable answer to prayer. There was in fellowship with us a sister, a seamstress. She earned by her needle half-a-crown, or three shillings, or three-and-six; but the very utmost that now and then she earned was five shillings – never more than this. And this weakly, afflicted sister, this seamstress, sent me £100 for the Orphan work. I would not accept it. I knew not how this came about, that this poor, weakly sister, who earned so very little, should have sent me £100.

I therefore sent for her, and had an interview with her. I found that her grandfather had died, and by a legacy, in which he had left to his children and grandchildren, this money had come to her. The sum of £480 had been left to her, and out of this she would give £100 for the Orphan work. When I saw her, I said, "I cannot accept your £100, for I am afraid you have done all this in haste, and you may regret it afterwards, and that would be a sad affair. I cannot take this money." She said, "I have not done it in haste; I have well considered it; I have prayed much over it. I must entreat you to take the money. My brothers and sisters each gave to my mother £50, out of the money that they had inherited; but, as I am a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, I gave my mother £100. Then my brothers and sisters would pay the debts of my father when he died, though they were not bound to do it; but they agreed with the creditors, the public-house keepers to whom he owed the money, for he was fond of drinking, that they would give five shillings in the pound.

"Now, though my father did not as he ought to have done, in incurring these debts at public-houses, yet he was my father, and I am a child of God, and I ought to honour my father, though he did not walk as he should have done, and I agreed with these public-house keepers that I would repay the whole of their debt. So I went and paid the fifteen shillings in the pound which my brothers and sisters had not paid. And you must take the £100. I feel so deeply interested in your purposing to open a little Orphan institution, that I would rather give the whole of the money than that it should not come to pass; and to show to you that I do it after much consideration, here is not merely the one hundred pounds, but five pounds more, which I request you to give to the poor as a proof that I do this heartily, and have well considered it."

Under these circumstances, I saw how this godly sister had well weighed the matter, and I took the hundred pounds just as God's plan of giving. And thus by little and little, and with large help from some,

came in the money, and I was able to open a large house in Wilson Street, in St. Paul's parish, with the extremely useful help of two sisters who gave themselves to the work, one as a teacher and the other as a seamstress. Thus I was able to fit up and furnish a house, and had a small sum in hand to make a beginning. The house was now ready, and a day was fixed when I would receive the applications for the reception of orphans. I went to the vestry. I had appointed two hours to see the relatives of destitute orphans. I sat there half-an-hour. Nobody came. I sat a whole hour. Nobody came. I sat an hour and a half. I sat two hours. Nobody came to make application for orphans, and I had to go away without one single application.

On my way home, I said to myself, "I have prayed about everything, but I have never asked God to send me orphans." For I took it for granted that there were tens, and hundreds, and thousands of orphans in England, and that the orphans would be coming in hundreds. But the Word of God says, "In everything by prayer and supplication, let your requests be made known to God."

I had prayed for the right house, for the right helpers, for the money; and, when I had finished the house, I prayed about the furniture, almost every article. But I had never asked God to send orphans. Well, I cast myself down on the floor before God, and confessed that I had erred in this matter, and asked His forgiveness, and asked Him if, after all, I had been deceiving myself, and that He would be more glorified by bringing the whole thing to nought than by my getting an Orphan institution to do so – to bring the whole thing to nought. If He could be more glorified, I should rejoice.

But I could not help thinking that it would be for the glory and honour of His Name if He brought it to pass, and I asked Him to send me orphans. The next morning, at eleven o'clock, I went again, and before one month had passed 42 orphans had applied, though the house was only large enough for 30. So God answered prayer, and the house was filled. Six months later I opened a second house for 36 children. That was filled very soon. Twelve months later I opened a third house for 30 children. That was filled, and a short time after I opened a fourth house for 30 more children. Now I had 126 orphans, with eleven helpers, who laboured among these children.

But the applications continued more and more. I therefore felt I must build a house, large enough to hold hundreds of orphans. But this would cost an immense sum of money. However, I said, "The Lord is able to give it to me," and for thirteen weeks I prayed for land. The Lord gave it to me on Ashley Down. Then I continued praying for money, as I wanted to build a house for 300 orphans. By little and little it came in. I began the house. The house was finished. All was paid for, though it cost more than £15,000. Yet I had £676 over and above, after all was paid. But the house soon filled, and the applications increased more and more.

Then I said, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" And after much prayer, it was to go on building accommodation for 700 more, that I might have 1,000 orphans under my care. Now, when I had nothing but £30 in hand, the devil said, and had it circulated, that I had £30,000 in hand. Instead of contradicting it in the newspapers, saying that it was a lie of Satan, I simply spoke to my Heavenly Father, "Lord, Thou knowest that this is a lie of Satan; confound him; Lord, confound him, and influence the hearts of Thy children to help me." So by little and little the money came in, and after a number of years there stood another house, and all paid for, and a third house for 350 more began!

That also was finished. Now I had accommodation for 1,150 orphans, and, after all was paid for, there were between two and three thousand pounds over and above in hand! But, remarkable to say, nine

hundred orphans were yet waiting for admission! I had now accommodation for 1,150, but 900 were yet waiting. So I prayed, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? I do not want orphan houses, but if Thou wilt help me to go on, here is Thy servant, and I am ready." Well, I began two houses more, each for 450, that I might be able to accommodate those 900 that were waiting, and there stood the houses after some years, erected at a cost of £60,000. Now these five houses accommodate at one time 2,050 orphans, and I have accommodation for 112 helpers and assistants as matrons, teachers, etc., for the destitute orphans. *And in all God has been pleased to give me, simply in answer to prayer, £1,416,000 sterling! One million, four hundred and sixteen thousand pounds sterling, without asking a single human being!!*

There is none, in this whole city, who can say that I ever asked them for a penny; there is none, in the whole of England, who can say that I ever asked them for a penny; there is none under heaven, in the whole wide world, who can say that I ever asked them for a penny. To God, and God alone, I went; and I did this because I knew ever since my conversion that one of the greatest necessities for the Church of God at large was an increase of faith. Therefore, I determined to dedicate my whole life to this one great lesson, for the Church of God to learn, and the world at large to learn: real, true, lasting dependence on God.

Thus I have now been going on for 68 years, not only regarding the work of God, but regarding my own temporal necessities and the necessities of my family, and I have laid every burden on God, and God again and again has helped me. He has also led me to the founding of many schools. I have had 117 schools under my direction throughout England, Scotland, India, the Straits of Malacca, British Guiana, Demerara, Essequibo, Berlice, in Spain, in France, in Italy, and in other parts of the world. And in these schools have been educated 122,000 young people. One hundred and twenty-two thousand young people; and from among them, more than 20,000 have been converted that we know of. In heaven I expect to meet more than 40,000 or 50,000; but we know that more than 20,000 were converted while they were in the schools, the masters having given reports. Sometimes fifty and sixty in half-a-year in one single school have been brought to the knowledge of the Lord, and thus has it gone on that God has abundantly blessed the work.

Then, in regard to the circulation of the Holy Scriptures, God has abundantly blessed that. Bibles in various languages to the number of 279,000 I have been enabled to circulate, and 1,440,000 New Testaments, 21,000 copies of the Book of Psalms, and 222,000 other portions: and God has also abundantly blessed this part of the work, especially in Spain, in Italy, and in Ireland. Then as to missionary operations, I have been enabled to aid a large number of missionaries and helpers, and altogether I have spent £258,000 on missions alone. The matter of the circulation of tracts was also particularly laid on my heart, and God has granted me the privilege of circulating 109 millions of Scriptural books, pamphlets, and tracts – not 109 thousand, but a thousand times as much. One hundred and nine millions of books, pamphlets, and tracts, in various languages – so many that this large hall would not hold them, and 400 big cart horses would not be able to drag them away! To such an extent have tracts and books been circulated.

Thousands of souls have been brought to Jesus through the instrumentality of the four or five hundred missionaries that I have sought to assist, and as for the Orphan work, I have been enabled to receive 9,750 orphans. That may seem a small number in comparison with what we can have at one time in the houses. The reason is this: we have the orphan girls and boys from their earliest days, and often and often we have girls in the houses fifteen years, sixteen years, even seventeen years, and in a few instances longer than seventeen years. That is the reason why the number has been comparatively so

small, though we have the accommodation of the greatest Orphan institution under heaven. There is not a second Orphan institution in the whole wide world so large as that on Ashley Down. Out of these 9,750 orphans, between 4,000 and 5,000 have been brought to the knowledge of Jesus; more than 2,000 are already in heaven; over 2,000 are walking in various parts of the world as believers, and we have at present over 1,000 in the Orphan houses who are believers.

One single point more for your encouragement, and for the sake that my beloved Christian friends may be led increasingly to give themselves to prayer, especially for the conversion of sinners. When I came to Bristol, sixty-four years and seven months since, and we met for the first time in the breaking of bread at the Lord's Supper, there were seven of us. That was all "seven of us." Since then there have been received by us, as a Church, more than 6,000 into fellowship. Let this be another encouragement to go forward. And when the branch Churches that have sprung out of the Church at Bethesda are taken in, O how many thousands more! So let this be a great encouragement for prayer. Seven, meeting the first time round the Lord's table! And now look at the many, many thousands who have been converted since, and been received at the Lord's table.

Are there any here who have not yet believed? See what God is willing to give in answer to prayer. See what He is willing to give to you, my dear young man, my dear young woman, and you elder friends. If any of you do not know the Lord, see what God is willing to do in answer to prayer. I am a poor, miserable sinner myself, deserving nothing by hell if I had my desserts; but see what God has given to a poor miserable sinner, simply for Christ's sake. I trust in Him, and therefore, for Christ's sake, He has given to me; and what He has given to me, He is willing to give to you. O expect blessings from Him, and He will give them to you, if you seek them by earnest prayer.

For instance, are any weak and feeble as to the body, suffering pain, or needing anything in reference to their health? This text applies to them, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." The very connection in which this stands here in this verse gives to us the assurance that we shall have blessing in God's own time and way, for it was He Who brought, under the most difficult circumstances, the Israelites out of Egypt. Neither Pharaoh nor his servants would let them go; he had kept them long as slaves, made them to work continually under the most trying circumstances. Everything that the Scripture tells us was done to them was done with rigour, whether they were brick-makers, or were working in the fields, or were building stone cities for Pharaoh. Nothing in that treatment escaped.

Jehovah says, through Moses and Aaron, to Pharaoh, "Let them go." The reply of Pharaoh is against Jehovah, "I know not Jehovah; I do not mean to let them go." Presently, when this request is repeated and neglected, and there comes a judgment on him, he minds it not. There comes one judgment after the other, and one judgment after the other increased more and more; but he will not let them go. At last comes the most awful of all the judgments; in every house throughout the country one is taken, the firstborn throughout the land slain in one night by the destroying angel who goes through the land. Now the Israelites are allowed to go; yea, driven out of the country for fear they should all be dead men if they were not to let them go.

Thus we see what God is able to do on Man's behalf, seeing that He, under these circumstances, could get out of the state of bondage and slavery those hundreds of thousands of Israelites. And not merely is the power of Jehovah seen in this verse, but His love also. Who were these Israelites? Were they better than the Egyptians? They were decidedly worse than the Egyptians, because they had more knowledge than the Egyptians, and yet were a stiff-necked, rebellious, hard, wicked people. But

notwithstanding all this, Jehovah brings them out of the country by reason of the love He has for them, and by reason of the covenant into which He had entered with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and because He is Jehovah, the covenant-keeping God. Now in all this can we not see especial encouragement in regard to our own case? If, therefore, we need anything in reference to our bodies, let us go to our Heavenly Father. Do we need anything in reference to our family positions? Tried by our children, tried, greatly tried it may be, by the husband or wife, or perhaps by our relatives? Let us bring these things before God! It is no use complaining, speaking about it particularly to one another; no, instead of murmuring, bring this matter often before God in prayer, look to Him for help and support, and entreat Him again and again that He would, in the riches of His grace, deliver you out of your trials.

Then again, in reference to our business, our earthly occupation, our profession. Are there particular trials? Are there particular difficulties? Instead of continually talking and fretting about the competition, the difficult times, the tricks manifested in trades and businesses, the matter should be carried to the Lord. Meekly, quietly, gently, submissively behaving ourselves under the circumstances, and again, again and again bringing the matter before God and leaving it there. And we should find that this is the very best remedy which could be used! Then not merely in reference to temporal matters, but to spiritual things also, this is to be applied. For instance, in our spiritual conflict there is nothing better than to remember this gracious, the most precious, promise, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." We feel the natural evil tendencies within us, we struggle against them, we seek to overcome them, we find ourselves too weak, but God is able to help us, and out of these things He will bring us. Our text says, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it," and so it encourages us to come to God and ask great blessings in respect to these things, and we shall find how ready He is to help us so that pride and high-mindedness, carelessness and slothfulness, indulgence in natural evil tendencies, can be overcome by the power of God the Holy Spirit.

Then in reference to our work and labour and service for the Lord, as Sunday School teachers, as tract distributors, as visitors of the sick. In all these matters we can obtain help from God. In ourselves extremely weak, let us seek help in the right way. As teachers in the Church of God, as pastors, as labourers in any way spiritually, wonderful help can be obtained from God in answer to prayer, so that if we "open our mouths wide" we shall find the text fulfilled.

The second point in connection with this is especially to be noticed. "He will fill it." "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." "I will fill it." "I will fill it." It is not stated, "Perhaps I will fill it," or "I shall see if I will do it or not." No promise of this kind. He does not say, "If thou are doing so and so, I will fill it." We have not to fill our mouth after we have opened it wide; that is, we have not by our own power and ability and skilfulness to bring about the fulfilment of the promise. We have to leave this to God. He will do it. We have not to look to our fellow-men to bring about the answer to prayer, as often is the case on the part of dear children of God. They look to their fellow-men, instead of having the eye fixed upon the almighty power of God and the loving heart of God; they look to their fellow-men to answer their prayers. "I will fill it," He says. We have not to look to circumstances, or to a contingency in everyday things and affairs, but to God Himself is the eye to be directed. "I will fill it." "I will fill it."

Then, in the third place, we have not to be discouraged because our mouth is not at once filled; we have not to be discouraged because the answer does not come immediately. Beloved brethren and sisters in Christ, ever be mindful of the fact that in connection with all the many hundreds of promises given to us in connection with prayer, in the Old and New Testaments of the Holy Scriptures, there is not one single passage to be found where God makes in connection with this promise a statement

regarding the time when He will fulfil it. He simply states everywhere, “I will do it,” “I will answer it.” He never says, “At such a time I will answer;” “At such a time I will fill your mouth.” But He simply states “I will do it.” And often and often the delay is appointed by God so that when the answer comes it may be all the more lovely to us and more suitable to us than if the answer had been immediately given. Yes, and another reason, in order that by the exercise of faith and patience, faith and patience may develop further and further, and increase more and more. There is another, a third, reason. That we may, by the exercise of faith and patience, glorify God. The world looks on to see how shall we behave ourselves under especial trials and difficulties, what we shall do. Now, if they find us waiting without fretting, without complaining, and especially without murmuring, then they may perceive that we are looking after the things of God, and this may lead to blessing too. Thus by such behaviour we strengthen the hands of our fellow-men.

And then often and often in the experience of the children of God answers to prayer are delayed because their hearts are not yet prepared for the reception of the blessing. I will give you an illustration. Suppose there is a young convert going to work in the Sunday School; he has heard a great deal about answers to prayer, and he longs for answers to prayer, and begins to pray that it may please God very speedily to convert all the children in his class. He goes the first Sunday; he does not find that they are all converted. He goes the second Sunday, the third, and the fourth Sunday, and it is not accomplished. He is tried now, and becomes distressed. He says to himself, “I pray so much that all the children under my care in the class may be converted, and yet I go Sunday after Sunday, and they remain unconverted. How comes this?” The reason is because this dear brother is not yet prepared for receiving the blessing, for if the class so very easily were brought to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, he would take the credit to himself, and begin to look upon himself and to say what an excellent teacher he is, and how much he could accomplish in the conversion of those scholars, instead of its all being done by the power of the Holy Ghost. The heart is not yet prepared for the reception of the blessing; therefore the blessing is delayed. But let this beloved young brother go on waiting upon God, coming more and more to see that he can do nothing in the way of converting sinners, that all must be accomplished by the power of the Holy Ghost, then when the blessing is given, and the class converted, he will be prepared to give all the honour and glory to God.

Thus often and often we find that the hindrance to the answer to prayer lies in ourselves, because our hearts are not yet prepared for a blessing.



**Müllers** is a working name of the  
**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](mailto:admin@mullers.org)